

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number dealt with in the colony was 0·36 per cent., as against 0·31 per cent. in 1902.

34,286 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries; 19,179 were returned to senders through the Dead-letter Office; 86,277 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 139,742 book-packets and circulars, as compared with 128,327 in 1902.

1,066 letters were wrongly addressed; 13 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 2,318 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

2,578 newspapers and 1,639 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

1,650 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

601 letters and 163 letter-cards were posted without addresses.

16 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

The undermentioned articles of value were found in letters opened in the Dead-letter Office, and returned to senders where practicable:—

	£	s.	d.
538 post-office orders	1,002	5	3½
54 bank drafts	4,233	5	7
313 cheques	1,993	11	10½
38 dividend warrants	113	0	4
13 promissory notes	257	13	2
Credit notes	130	0	0
Postal notes	143	3	0
Stamps	23	6	11
Bank-notes	299	0	0
Gold*	46	13	4
Silver and copper	12	5	10½

Representing a total of ... £8,254 5 4½

* Including a United States \$20 gold piece, value £4 8s. 4d.

In addition, 1 gold watch and chain, 4 ladies' silver keyless watches, 2 ladies' silver watches, 1 ladies' watch and chain, 4 silver watches, 6 silver keyless watches, 1 Elgin watch, 1 silver keyless wrist watch, 1 Waterbury watch and silver chain, 1 keyless metal watch and chain, 13 gold rings, 2 gold band rings, 1 gold ring with diamond, 1 metal ring, 1 gold brooch with diamonds, 4 gold brooches, 9 gold-mounted greenstone brooches, 5 gold-mounted brooches, 1 brooch of gold greenstone and quartz, 3 brooches, 1 gold brooch medal, 4 greenstone hearts, 5 greenstone and gold tie-pins, 3 gold-mounted greenstone hearts, 2 gold-mounted greenstone pendants, 1 gold-mounted greenstone bean, 1 gold-mounted greenstone paper-knife, 3 pieces of polished greenstone, 1 gold tie-pin, 1 gold medal of the New Zealand Amateur Swimming Association, 1 gold chain bangle, 1 gold-mounted greenstone Maltese cross, 1 pair of gold and greenstone sleeve-links, 1 pair of gold sleeve-links, 1 gold-mounted pencil, 1 gold tooth-pick, 1 silver fork with greenstone handle, 1 silver spoon with greenstone handle, 1 pair of silver-mounted greenstone ear-rings, 1 silver fork, 2 silver serviette-rings, 1 silver sovereign-case, 1 silver scollop, 1 silver serviette-clip, 1 silver spoon, 2 silver pocket-knives, 1 silver medal, 1 aneroid compass and thermometer, 2 purses, 1 leather purse, 1 locket, 1 piece of quartz, 1 leather case (containing scissors, needles, and silks), 2 small trinkets, 1 ladies' blouse, 1 ladies' cape, 1 match-box, 1 discount coupon, 2 kauri-gum licenses, 11 sheets of foreign stamps, 4 books of foreign stamps, 7 packets of foreign stamps, 11 tickets on Tattersall's sweeps, 3 pawn tickets, 1 shell necklace, 12 share certificates, 2 bank pass-books, 1 white-silk scarf, 1 photo. lens, 3 orders for trophies, 5 debenture certificates, 1 order for a second-class ticket San Francisco to Auckland, 1 order for a third-class ticket London to Lyttelton, 1 second-saloon ticket San Francisco to Auckland, 1 saloon ticket Auckland to Napier, 1 third-class ticket Naples to Wellington, 1 steerage ticket Onehunga to Picton, 1 railway ticket New Plymouth Breakwater to Wanganui, 1 excursion ticket Invercargill to Kingston were dealt with.

The number of inland, intercolonial, and international articles received and disposed of during the years 1902 and 1903 was as under:—

	1902.					1903.				
	Letters.	Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Packets.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Packets.	Newspapers.
<i>Inland.</i>										
Returned, delivered, &c., through Dead-letter Office	100,699	2,225	1,035	35,245	1,613	88,463	2,000	452	17,698	1,650
Returned by Chief Postmasters direct	49,986	..	4,299	54,664	..	88,132	..	5,788	86,277	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	5,061	114	160	1,348	31,596	8,333	166	183	1,229	50,787
<i>Australian.</i>										
Originally addressed to other States:—										
Returned to writers	7,143	..	259	662	..	5,366	..	144	515	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	386	..	14	67	..	218	25	56	33	..
Returned to other States as unclaimed	5,948	..	249	4,851	..	8,387	..	400	4,831	..
<i>International.</i>										
Originally addressed to other countries:—										
Returned to writers	9,156	..	332	684	..	10,679	..	370	966	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	496	..	18	85	278	386	63	149	60	..
Returned to other countries as unclaimed	7,874	..	330	32,221	536	8,890	..	499	29,455	350
Totals	186,749	2,339	6,696	129,327	34,023	218,854	2,254	8,041	141,064	52,787