The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number delivered within the Dominion was 0·50 per cent.

292,266 letters (including letters addressed to soldiers and registered letters) were opened and returned to writers through the Dead Letter Office; 47,800 were returned unopened, to other countries; 23,046 (including those addressed to soldiers) were reissued; 46,213 were destroyed; 198,174 were returned to senders by Chief Postmasters; 22,515 were returned by Chief Postmasters to other countries: a total of 630,014 letters, as compared with 596,360 in 1915.

11,113 other articles were returned to foreign countries; 4,675 were returned to the senders through the Dead Letter Office; 123,497 were returned by Chief Postmasters; 23,953 were returned by Chief Postmasters to other countries: a total of 163,238 other articles, as compared with 184,897 in 1915.

21,261 letters were wrongly addressed; 73 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 5,699 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

4,249 newspapers and 3,445 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

21,184 newspapers were returned to publishers, 3,255 letters and 1,674 letter-cards were posted without addresses.

302 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

In January, 1916, a special branch of the Dead Letter Office was set up for the purpose of dealing with returned letters, &c., addressed to soldiers on active service.

Buildings.

The following new office buildings were opened: Kaitieke, Mokau, Tokomaru, Ruatorea, Upper Moutere, Waituna West, Wairio.

The Chief Post-office, Dunedin, was removed to temporary premises in the Garrison Hall pending rebuilding.

Money-orders.

The money-order business for the year shows an increase in the number of transactions and in the total of the amount remitted.

Eleven money-order offices were opened, and thirteen closed, leaving 804 offices open at the close of the year.

The money-orders issued numbered 669,355, for a total of £3,607,087; those paid to 567,184, for £3,286,472.

The business with countries outside New Zealand also shows an increase, the total amount sent abroad being £498,890, and the amount received from abroad being £178,865.

The total commission received for the transaction of money-order business amounted to £15,966.

Postal Notes.

The postal-note business shows a slight decrease. 2,286,463 postal notes, for £695,819, were issued, and 2,280,188 were paid. On this business the commission of £10,111 was received.

Twenty-four offices were opened and 19 closed, leaving 1,021 postal-note offices in operation at the end of the year.

British Postal Orders.

The number of British postal orders sold was 108,612, as compared with 101,859 for the previous year. The amount sent away by means of this very useful form of remittance was £63,456. The twenty-shilling and ten-shilling notes still continue to have the greatest sales.

Savings-bank.

The business of the Post Office Savings-bank again shows a remarkable increase in the excess of deposits over withdrawals. It amounted to no less than £2,618,988; and, in addition to this, there was credited to depositors' accounts an amount of £817,856 for interest. Thus the total amount at credit of depositors was increased during the year by no less than £3,436,844. The total balance at credit of depositors on the 31st December, 1916, was £25,603,209. These results are an indication of the unabated confidence reposed in the institution by the people of the Dominion.

There were 11 new savings-bank offices opened during the year and 12 closed, leaving a total of 786 offices at which savings may be deposited and withdrawals made.

84,833 new accounts were opened and 55,846 closed, leaving 538,072 still in operation at the end of the year. This gives a proportion of one account in every 2·13 of the population.

Full particulars as to the numbers of deposits and withdrawals will be found in the tables. The total transactions show a material increase. The deposits reached a total of £15,576,408 and the withdrawals £12,957,420. The average deposit amounted to £13 18s. 7d. and the average withdrawal to £18 16s. 2d., while the average amount at credit of each depositor was £47 11s. 7d. If the total at credit be divided equally between the entire population it would amount to £22 5s. 3d. per head.

The working-expenses of the Savings-bank amounted to 4·25d. per transaction, which gives a cost per cent. on the total amount at credit of depositors of 0·12 per £100.

The system of nominations by depositors in favour of relatives who receive moneys at their credit in case of death is steadily growing in favour. During the year 354 nominations were made. The system is an excellent one, particularly for those persons whose whole estate is the amount of their savings in the bank, as it relieves their nominees from the procedure necessary in connection with the proving of the will or the obtaining of letters of administration.