

UNDELIVERABLE POSTAL PACKETS.

The following is a comparison of letters and other articles dealt with as undeliverable during the year 1927, compared with those so dealt with during 1926 :—

Year.	Returned direct to Senders from Chief Offices ("Special Request").	Returned direct to Senders from Dead Letter Office.	Returned to other Administrations from Chief Offices ("Special Request").	Returned to other Administrations from Dead Letter Office.	Destroyed (Senders unknown and Contents of no Value).	Total.
<i>Letters.</i>						
1927..	306,421	292,897	63,173	44,146	35,542	742,179
1926..	316,578	302,307	52,856	38,011	31,496	741,248
<i>Other Articles.</i>						
1927..	211,056	8,846	121,599	26,571	..	368,072
1926..	201,193	10,142	87,987	25,156	..	324,478

The proportion of undeliverable letters to the total number of letters delivered was 0.49 per cent. In 1926 the proportion was the same.

MISCELLANEOUS.

	1927.	1926.
Letters and letter-cards posted without addresses	17,289	20,659
Letters imperfectly or insufficiently addressed	25,348	23,508
Letters intercepted on account of libellous addresses	204	304
Registered letters unclaimed	10,621	9,973
Newspapers received without addresses	7,613	6,454
Other articles received without addresses	4,485	4,893
Newspapers returned to publishers as undeliverable	41,447	39,085
Articles bearing previously used stamps	65	93

During 1927 there were dealt with in the Dead Letter Office 5,398 packets (other than parcels) the contents of which gave little or no indication of the senders' names or addresses. In the majority of these cases special effort on the part of the Dead Letter Office was successful in tracing either the senders or the addressees. Five hundred and seventy-four letters from overseas bearing insufficient or wrong addresses were specially dealt with, and a large proportion was delivered.

An auction of unclaimed packets and parcels was held during the year, at which 189 bundles of miscellaneous articles were sold.

PROHIBITED POSTAL PACKETS.

During the year 980 letters addressed to persons or firms the transmission of correspondence for whom is prohibited under section 28 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908, were intercepted and forwarded to the Dead Letter Office. (In 1926 the number was 1,338.) The letters for the most part were addressed to agents of art unions or lotteries in other countries. Some were addressed to recognized "quack" doctors, while others were addressed to persons who deal in obscene books or pictures, or are engaged in fraudulent business.

REGISTER OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

Twenty-six newspapers were registered for transmission by post, and twenty-four were removed from the register. Six magazines were registered, and twenty-eight were removed from the register.

The number of registered newspapers on the 31st March, 1928, was 300, and the number of registered magazines 304.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

New postage-stamps of the denominations of 2½d. for the Islands of Aitutaki and Penrhyn, and 2½d. and 4d. for the Islands of Niue and Rarotonga, were issued in October, 1927. The new stamps are in keeping with the style of the current series of Island pictorial stamps, of which series they form a part.

The design of the 2½d. stamp, which is identical for each island, has as a central figure a Rarotongan chief in ancient costume. The chief is wearing a head-dress made of feathers from the wood-dove (or kukupa) and the boatswain-bird (or tavake). A spear held in his left hand denotes hostility; but a fan held in his right hand denotes peace, also that he is a man of rank. The background of the stamp consists of a Native hut and a clump of palm-trees, while trunks of palm-trees form the sides of the frame.

The design of the 4d. stamp, which also is the same for each island, depicts Rarotonga Harbour, and, in the background, Mount Rarotonga.

In consequence of the new issues, the New Zealand 2½d. stamp overprinted for use in each of the four islands and the 4d. stamp overprinted for use in Rarotonga were withdrawn from sale on the 31st March, 1928.

The 2s. "King George" stamp was overprinted "Official" in February, 1928, and the 3s. "King George" was overprinted "Rarotonga" in January, 1928.