

efficiently and carefully discharged. The principal complaints of importance that have reached me have been those resulting from the reduction in the Steam Mail Services, which has been carried out in compliance with the desire to this effect expressed by the General Assembly. In very few instances have the persons by whom these complaints have been circulated taken the trouble to ascertain, or had the candour to admit, that these reductions were the necessary result of those measures of economy which the financial condition of the Colony has rendered indispensable. I have myself visited several of the Post Offices during the past year; and nearly the whole of the chief offices, as well as a considerable number of the subordinate offices, have been examined by the Inspector. I cannot forbear reiterating the opinion I expressed last year, that a constant and vigilant inspection is the best guarantee for the efficiency of a postal service in any country, and to express a wish that circumstances would enable increased provision to be made for that purpose in this Colony.

Tables 16 and 17, appended to this Report, show the amount of correspondence in proportion to population in the United Kingdom, in the Australian Colonies, and in New Zealand. These tables give some curious and interesting results. It appears that the average number of letters to each individual in New Zealand is about one-half of the average of the United Kingdom, while it is nearly twice that of the Colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. Of newspapers, however, the colonists, and especially those of New Zealand, seem to be much larger consumers than the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, the proportion being about fourteen per head for the former to six for the latter country. There is also a remarkable difference in the statistics in these respects between the different Provinces of New Zealand. Nelson has the smallest correspondence in proportion to its population, while Canterbury has the largest, each resident in the latter Province receiving two and a half times as many letters as in the former. In newspapers the consumption appears also less in Nelson than in other parts of the Colony, the largest number per head being distributed in Hawke's Bay and Otago.

DEAD LETTERS.

During the year 1867, 37,628 letters, including 518 registered letters, were received at the Dead Letter Office. Of these, 29,999, including 485 registered, were despatched from the office by post; and 79 letters were delivered to personal applicants; 7,550 have been destroyed, as neither the writers nor the persons to whom they were addressed could be found. Of the above dead letters, 16,829, including 200 registered, originating in New Zealand, were opened in the Dead Letter Office and returned to the writers; and 13,170, including 285 registered, originating in places beyond the Colony, were returned unopened to the several offices from whence they reached this Colony. The following Returns give a clear view of the amount of work performed in this branch of the Department.

RETURN OF LETTERS received at the DEAD LETTER OFFICE in the years 1866 and 1867, showing the manner in which they were disposed of:—

	1866.		1867.	
	ORDINARY LETTERS.	REGISTERED.	ORDINARY LETTERS.	REGISTERED.
Received at the Office	46,172	521	37,628	518
Opened in the Office	22,750	227	16,829	200
Despatched to places beyond the Colony	14,367	267	13,170	285
" to places within the Colony	22,750	227	16,829	200
Delivered	100	...	79	...
Destroyed	9,000	...	7,550	...

RETURN OF PROPERTY found in DEAD LETTERS during the years 1866 and 1867.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY.	1866.			1867.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Bills of Exchange	5,642	4	4	4,214	6	2
Bank Notes	168	0	0	128	0	0
Money Orders	177	13	4	188	3	6
Coin	4	17	0	5	5	6
Postage Stamps	1	16	2	...	...	...
Cheques	190	6	11	69	19	0
Orders	56	9	7	35	1	0
Promissory Notes	1,516	13	4	52	0	2
Bank Receipts	55	17	6	...	...	...
Letters of Credit ... ..	...	...	...	3	0	0
Warrants	8	15	0	...	...	...
Rings, lockets, brooches, chains, &c.	Five	...	...	Ten	...	...
Totals	7,822	13	2	4,695	15	4