

7 letters with obscene and libellous addresses.
58 letters imperfectly and wrongly addressed.
612 refused letters.
4 letters with previously-used postage stamps.

Reference was made in the last report to the amended regulations under which unclaimed letters, having the names and addresses of the writers or senders printed on the address side of the covers, were returned unopened by Chief Postmasters to the senders, instead of being forwarded to the Dead Letter Office for the purpose of being opened and returned to the writers. It was ascertained, however, that, while the principle of returning unopened this description of letters was appreciated by the public, the requirement that the name of the writer or sender must be *printed* on the address side of the envelope prevented general advantage being taken of the regulations. On reconsidering the matter, it was decided to extend the regulations, which, as amended, provide that the names and addresses of the senders may be either written, printed, or embossed on the address side or on the fly of the envelopes.

With respect to the return of "special request letters," *i.e.*, letters having the names and addresses of the senders written, printed, or embossed on the address side or on the fly of the envelopes, in addition to a request on the address side that the letters should be returned if not claimed within a stated period, the regulations also provide for their return unopened to the writers or senders. Such letters, however, cannot be returned unless they shall have remained in the Post Office to which addressed at least ten days. Letters of this class originating at hotels, clubs, or places of public resort are forwarded to the Dead Letter Office for disposal, unless, in addition to the printed or embossed address on the cover, the name of the actual sender also appears.

These extended regulations came into force on the 1st January last. It is of importance, particularly to commercial houses, that letters which cannot be delivered to the addressees should be returned to the senders as speedily as possible. The public would greatly assist to secure this by more generally affixing their names and addresses upon the covers of letters they may forward through the post.

The period during which letters posted in the colony for delivery within the colony (but not having on the covers the address of the writers or senders) remain unclaimed prior to being sent to the Dead Letter Office for return to the writers, has been reduced from two clear months to one clear month. No alteration has been made in the period during which foreign letters are retained at post offices as "unclaimed."

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The total number of articles registered during the year was 88,538, against 68,978 registered in 1878, an increase of 19,560, or 28·35 per cent. The increase is unusually large. The number of letters registered in the previous year was only 8,391 over the number registered in 1877. The increase is believed to be largely due to the exhibition of enamelled notice-plates at nearly all the post offices, directing public attention to the fact that no letters, &c., containing money, coin, or other valuable enclosure should be posted without first being registered. Over 700 of these plates (600 of which serve also as a sign for the Post Office) have been affixed over the posting boxes of the more important post offices. Notwithstanding the increase of registered articles, an unusually large number of letters containing bank-notes has been delivered through the post as ordinary letters. This is particularly the case with letters addressed to the promoters of racing "sweeps" and "consultations;" and the department is now considering how best the evil may be checked, more especially with the desire to relieve its officers from undue temptation.

RETURN of the Number of Registered Letters received from Places beyond the Colony, and the Number of Letters Registered in the several Postal Districts during the Years 1876, 1877, 1878, and 1879.

Postal Districts.	1876.			1877.			1878.			1879.		
	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.
Auckland	1,799	6,468	8,267	1,818	8,405	10,223	2,055	10,374	12,429	2,735	12,569	15,304
Thames	290	887	1,177	123	1,051	1,174	145	919	1,064	154	922	1,076
New Plymouth	230	517	747	186	951	1,137	179	992	1,189	290	1,429	1,719
Napier	483	2,286	2,769	483	2,862	3,345	591	3,095	3,686	627	3,828	4,455
Wanganui	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	309	4,004	4,313
Wellington	2,134	7,946	10,080	1,791	10,358	12,149	2,121	12,510	14,631	2,743	12,167	14,910
Nelson	320	685	1,005	381	1,273	1,654	362	1,407	1,769	487	1,894	2,381
Westport	146	409	555	52	485	537	84	697	781	82	862	944
Greymouth	602	1,451	2,053	181	1,685	1,866	230	1,420	1,650	182	1,205	1,387
Hokitika	394	1,195	1,589	257	1,495	1,752	214	1,636	1,850	219	1,343	1,562
Blenheim	175	665	840	88	767	855	127	740	867	132	938	1,120
Christchurch	3,139	5,846	8,985	1,542	8,242	9,784	2,281	10,786	13,067	2,856	12,640	15,496
Timaru	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	373	2,532	2,905
Oamaru	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	176	1,454	1,630
Dunedin	5,270	6,024	11,294	2,591	11,086	13,677	2,819	9,613	12,432	3,584	11,889	15,473
Invercargill	681	2,824	3,505	234	2,200	2,434	444	3,119	3,563	482	3,381	3,863
Totals	15,663	37,203	52,866	9,727	50,860	60,587	11,670	57,308	68,578	15,431	73,107	88,538