

MISSING LETTERS.

1,183 inquiries for letters and 1,049 for other articles alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1902. In 584 of the inquiries for letters and 588 for other articles—over one-half the total number—the investigations by the Department resulted in the missing articles being traced or accounted for. These may be summarised as follows:—

Number of Traced Cases.		...	Found to have been
Letters.	Other Articles.		
61	59	...	Missent, misdelivered, or otherwise delayed through fault of Post Office.
46	48	...	Delayed in delivery through fault of addressees.
35	35	...	Not posted.
59	60	...	Posted later than advised; forwarded by slower routes than letters of advice, &c.
121	119	...	Defectively or wrongly addressed.
32	30	...	Mislaid or lost after delivery.
33	37	...	Returned through Dead-letter Office as unclaimed, &c.
197	200	...	Delivered. Reason for inquiry not given, but probably in most cases omission by addressees to acknowledge receipt.
584	588		

MONEY-ORDERS.

Twenty-one money-order offices were opened during the year—namely, Ahuroa, Anuanu, Aramoho, Halswell, Hawea Flat, Kiripaka, Koputarua, Lichfield Street, Mamaku, Niue, Northcote, Okaiawa, Penrhyn Island, Rarotonga, St. John's, Saies, Tariki, Toko, Towai, Turua, Whakapara.

Four offices were closed—namely, Anuanu, Motupiko, Porootarao, Tahekeroa.

The number of offices open at the end of the year was 494, as against 477 twelve months previously.

367,207 money-orders were issued for £1,277,059 2s. 3d., as compared with 405,967 for £1,286,508 1s. 10d. in 1901—a decrease of 38,760 in number and £9,448 19s. 7d. in amount. The decrease is due to the suppression of racing-lotteries in Tasmania. In 1901 there were 69,012 orders for £62,184 1s. 8d. drawn in New Zealand for payment in Tasmania, while in 1902 there were only 14,589 for £15,628 8s. 8d., a falling-off of 54,423 orders, representing £46,555 13s.

286,642 money-orders, amounting to £1,117,137 12s. 8d., were paid, as against 283,611 for £1,108,399 6s. 2d. during 1901—an increase of 3,031 orders and £8,738 6s. 6d.

There were 49,230 telegraph money-orders issued for £152,407 14s., as compared with 46,570 orders for £147,524 14s. 9d. in 1901—an increase of 2,660 in number and £4,882 19s. 3d. in amount.

109,097 orders for £262,335 6s. 3d. were issued on places beyond New Zealand, as against 150,623 orders for £284,451 9s. 9d. during 1901.

28,259 orders for £103,530 3s. 11d. were issued at places beyond New Zealand for payment in the colony, as compared with 27,770 orders for £103,821 19s. 2d. during the previous year.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £14,915 18s. 2d., as against £17,518 11s. received during 1901. The loss of revenue is due to the cause already mentioned.

SAVINGS-BANKS.

There were nineteen offices opened during the year for the transaction of savings-bank business—namely, Anuanu, Aramoho, Ahuroa, Halswell, Hawea Flat, Kiripaka, Koputarua, Lichfield Street, Mamaku, Nireaha, Northcote, Okaiawa, St. John's, Saies, Tariki, Toko, Towai, Turua, and Whakapara.

Four offices were closed—namely, Anuanu, Motupiko, Porootarao, and Tahekeroa.

There were 481 offices open at the end of 1902, as against 466 at the end of the previous year.

53,587 accounts were opened and 38,558 closed, the net gain on the year's working being 15,029 accounts. The number of depositors on the 31st December was 227,465, and the proportion of accounts per head of population was 1 in 3.51, as compared with 1 in 3.66 at the end of the previous year.

The deposits numbered 411,215, representing £5,069,619 6s. 2d., an average of £12 6s. 7d. per transaction. The withdrawals numbered 273,454 for £4,708,771 11s. 2d., an average of £17 4s. 5d. for each withdrawal.

The net amount added by the depositors to their savings during the year was therefore £360,847 15s., plus £172,926 1s. 7d. interest earned and credited, making a total of £533,773 16s. 7d.

The total amount at credit of depositors increased from £6,350,013 9s. 2d. at the close of the previous year to £6,883,787 5s. 9d. on 31st December last, representing a sum equal to £8 10s. 5d. per head of the entire population, and £30 5s. 3d. to each depositor.

Last year the figures were £8 3s. 3d. and £29 17s. 10d. respectively.

The interest credited to depositors since the Post-Office Savings-banks were established in 1867 now amounts to £2,519,087 4s. 3d.

The cost of working the savings-banks amounted to 4.90d. per transaction, or £14,000 for the year.

The cost of management per cent. on the total amount at credit of depositors was 0.203 per cent., or 4s. 1d. per £100.