

## OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The estimated volume and value of official and other free correspondence posted during 1904 is given in the statement below :—

District.	Letters.	Packets.	Registered Articles.	Newspapers.
Auckland .. .. .	918,853	10,817	26,772	70,561
Thames .. .. .	88,777	2,764	1,730	36,866
New Plymouth .. .. .	147,849	15,300	3,684	62,835
Gisborne .. .. .	47,749	2,296	992	19,459
Napier .. .. .	241,956	14,100	1,817	60,036
Wanganui .. .. .	253,747	4,670	7,800	110,729
Wellington .. .. .	1,424,254	565,699	37,156	497,694
Blenheim .. .. .	53,872	1,906	1,020	25,000
Nelson .. .. .	139,958	7,164	6,038	52,608
Westport .. .. .	39,026	1,016	1,971	33,722
Greymouth .. .. .	55,809	3,270	2,913	23,158
Hokitika .. .. .	44,824	3,875	4,109	32,200
Christchurch .. .. .	586,157	25,480	22,204	124,956
Timaru .. .. .	104,247	3,335	968	24,752
Oamaru .. .. .	50,037	1,200	884	32,199
Dunedin .. .. .	467,987	58,567	17,746	232,228
Invercargill .. .. .	346,619	20,117	5,314	81,370
Totals .. .. .	5,011,721	741,576	143,118	1,520,373

The estimated value of official correspondence was £83,075 1s.

## DEAD LETTERS.

The following comparative table shows the number of unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards dealt with in the Dead-letter Office and by Chief Postmasters during the undermentioned years :—

Manner of Disposal.	1884.	1885.	1887.	1890.	1895.	1896.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Opened and returned to the writers	68,942	66,592	62,847	60,540	61,065	63,112	68,872	74,132	76,692	100,036	107,476	107,271	119,642
Returned unopened to other countries	9,134	8,115	7,287	7,779	12,929	7,546	8,899	9,706	9,707	12,251	14,401	18,176	26,048
Reissued .. .. .	107	185	96	141	199	148	219	178	265	*5,112	†13,373	203	234
Destroyed .. .. .	3,986	2,872	5,974	2,660	3,617	4,069	3,368	4,536	4,900	5,705	6,249	9,579	12,167
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters	17,593	19,187	20,185	21,931	25,980	26,414	33,273	22,915	40,282	44,523	54,285	93,920	85,670
Totals .. .. .	99,762	96,951	96,389	93,051	103,790	101,289	114,631	111,467	131,846	167,627	195,784	229,149	243,761

\* Including 4,911 troopers' letters.

† Including 13,180 troopers' letters.

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number dealt with in the colony was 0·35 per cent., as against 0·36 per cent. in 1903.

37,715 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries; 19,131 were returned to senders through the Dead-letter Office; 88,830 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 145,676 book-packets and circulars, as compared with 139,742 in 1903.

1,538 letters were wrongly addressed; 25 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 2,939 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

2,479 newspapers and 1,738 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

1,800 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

681 letters and 200 letter-cards were posted without addresses.

25 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

The undermentioned articles of value were found in letters opened in the Dead-letter Office, and returned to senders where practicable :—

476 post-office orders	...	...	...	...	...	£	s.	d.
45 bank drafts	...	...	...	...	...	1,154	15	9
376 cheques	...	...	...	...	...	4,431	14	11
19 dividend warrants	...	...	...	...	...	2,769	6	1
10 promissory notes	...	...	...	...	...	28	10	4
Credit notes	...	...	...	...	...	365	16	7
Postal notes	...	...	...	...	...	300	0	0
Stamps	...	...	...	...	...	211	8	2
Bank-notes	...	...	...	...	...	28	7	5½
Gold	...	...	...	...	...	327	0	0
Silver and copper*	...	...	...	...	...	38	0	0
	...	...	...	...	...	14	4	0¼
Representing a total of	...	...	...	...	...	£9,669	3	3¼

\* Including a United States silver dollar bill.