

MISSING LETTERS.

1,641 inquiries for letters and 1,472 for other articles alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1904. In 874 of the inquiries for letters and 903 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.		
63	75	...	Missent, misdelivered, or otherwise delayed through fault of Post Office.
44	43	...	Delayed in delivery through fault of addressees.
34	44	...	Not posted.
28	63	...	Posted later than advised; forwarded by slower routes than letters of advice, &c.
106	146	...	Defectively or wrongly addressed.
95	49	...	Mislaid or lost after delivery.
65	49	...	Returned through Dead-letter Office as unclaimed, &c.
439	434	...	Delivered. Reason for inquiry not given, but probably in most cases omission by addressees to acknowledge receipt.
<u>874</u>	<u>903</u>		

MONEY-ORDERS.

Fourteen money-order offices were opened during the year—namely, Brooklyn, Colac Bay, Henderson, Islington, Kaipara Flats, Kinohaku, Leigh, Moana, Puponga, Raurimu, Tangowahine, Te Rauamoā, Tiniroto, and Upper Matakītaki.

Three offices were closed—namely, Golden Cross, Oio, and Whangapara.

The number of offices open at the end of the year was 537, as against 526 twelve months previously.

417,441 money-orders were issued for £1,541,711 19s. 10d., as compared with 407,783 for £1,476,887 8s. 5d. in 1904, an increase of 9,658 in number and £64,824 11s. 5d. in amount.

318,127 money-orders amounting to £1,310,810 1s. 2d. were paid, as against 313,267 for £1,267,351 0s. 11d. during 1904, an increase of 4,860 orders and £43,459 0s. 3d.

There were 63,682 telegraph money-orders issued for £228,423 5s. 10d., as compared with 61,057 orders for £210,790 7s. 6d. in 1904; an increase of 2,625 in number and £17,632 18s. 4d. in amount.

130,047 orders for £352,326 6s. 6d. were issued on places beyond New Zealand, as against 126,128 orders for £328,661 5s. 5d. during 1904.

30,007 orders for £120,087 2s. 3d. were issued in places beyond New Zealand for payment in the colony, as compared with 30,844 orders for £117,617 8s. 6d. during the previous year.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £17,073 9s. 6d., as against £16,385 9s. received during 1904.

Money-order exchanges were established between New Zealand and the Orange River Colony as from the 1st July, 1905, and with Tonga as from the 1st January, 1906.

The Administration of the Straits Settlements has fallen into line with others, and increased the maximum amount for which a single order may be drawn to £40.

Exchanges are in course of negotiation with Austria and Tahiti.

SAVINGS-BANK.

There were thirteen offices opened during the year for the transaction of Savings-Bank business—namely, Brooklyn, Colac Bay, Henderson, Islington, Kaipara Flats, Kinohaku, Leigh, Moana, Puponga, Raurimu, Tangowahine, Te Rauamoā, and Upper Matakītaki.

Three offices were closed—namely, Golden Cross, Oio, and Whangapara.

There were 520 offices open at the end of 1905, as against 510 at the end of the previous year.

60,015 accounts were opened and 43,113 closed, the net gain on the year's working being 16,902 accounts. The number of depositors on the 31st December was 276,066, and the proportion of accounts per head of population was 1 in 3·20, as compared with 1 in 3·31 at the end of the previous year.

The deposits numbered 509,112, representing £6,625,744 0s. 10d., an average of £13 0s. 3d. per transaction. The withdrawals numbered 346,022 for £5,984,184 12s. 2d., an average of £17 5s. 11d. for each withdrawal.

The net amount added by the depositors to their savings during the year was therefore £641,559 8s. 8d., plus £259,081 7s. 6d. interest earned and credited, making a total of £900,640 16s. 2d.

The total amount at credit of depositors increased from £7,761,382 0s. 11d. at the close of the previous year to £8,662,022 17s. 1d. on the 31st December last, representing a sum equal to £9 16s. 4d. per head of the entire population, and £31 7s. 6d. to each depositor. Last year the figures were £9 1s. and £29 18s. 11d. respectively.

The interest credited to depositors since the Post-Office Savings-Banks were established in 1867 now amounts to £3,166,229 0s. 6d.

The cost of working the Savings-Banks amounted to 4·63d. per transaction, or £16,500 for the year.

The cost of management per cent. on the total amount at credit of depositors was 0·19 per cent., or 3s. 10d. per £100.

The excess of deposits over withdrawals during the year constituted a record, amounting to £641,559, a sum most nearly approached in the year 1904–5, when the figures were £425,173.