

butter-knife, 2 silver salt-spoons, 1 pair of binoculars, 2 pairs of gold-rimmed spectacles, 1 greenstone penholder, 2 pairs of gold and 1 pair of greenstone sleeve-links, 1 miner's right, 1 fire-brigade long-service medal, 25 lottery-tickets, 10 pawn-tickets, 2 share-certificates, 4 books, 100 packets and 7 sheets of used postage-stamps, and 1 third-class-passage order, London to Wellington.

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number delivered within the Dominion was 0.42 per cent.

174,730 letters were opened and returned to the writers through the Dead Letter Office; 47,665 were returned unopened to other countries; 737 were reissued; 19,238 were destroyed; 186,396 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 428,766 letters, as compared with 410,474 in 1908.

40,621 other articles were returned to foreign countries; 14,897 were returned to senders through the Dead Letter Office; 180,170 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 235,688 other articles, as compared with 269,621 in 1908.

2,462 letters were wrongly addressed; 43 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 5,742 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

5,195 newspapers and 3,363 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

21,585 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

1,790 letters and letter-cards were posted without addresses.

63 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

3,160 inquiries for postal packets alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1909. In 1,863 of the inquiries—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.	Result.
382	Sender responsible for delay.
382	Addressee responsibility for delay.
275	Post Office responsible for delay.
824	No delay, or responsibility not fixed.
<hr/> 1,863	

Amongst these inquiries the two following may be deemed worthy of brief notice:—

A letter, posted in Wellington, containing a cheque for a large sum failed to reach the addressee, who also lived in Wellington, until some months after the date of posting, the cause of the delay being due to the fact that the letter had been misaddressed to London.

A registered letter, posted at Chadron, Nebraska, containing one 10-dollar gold piece and one 5-dollar gold piece, addressed to Masterton, was received at its destination without the coins, which were subsequently found loose in the mail-bag, having escaped from the envelope.

UNDELIVERABLE LETTERS.

From the 1st January, 1910, all undeliverable inland letters addressed to the four principal centres, except those for delivery at the post-office itself, are immediately returned to the senders. The system has worked well, and appears to give public satisfaction. Obviously it is better for the sender of a faultily addressed letter to have it returned at once rather than to have it held in the post-office whilst attempts are being made, often without result, to effect delivery.

A special stamp, "Return to sender," was brought into use in January, 1910, for stamping unclaimed special-request correspondence having the names and addresses of the senders thereon, thus obviating the necessity of enclosing such letters in a fresh envelope. This plan has proved in every way successful, and has resulted in a substantial saving of labour and expense.

OFFENCES.

On a charge of forging the signature to a money-order for £5 on the 19th July, 1909, a man was sentenced in Christchurch to six months' imprisonment.

On a charge of stealing a letter, containing a cheque, at Hamilton, on the 2nd September, 1909, a man was sentenced to imprisonment.

A letter containing a pictorial post-card with a match attached ignited in the post on the 20th September, 1909. The sender was severely cautioned. It is a punishable offence to send inflammable articles through the post.

On a charge of forging a telegram a man was, on the 28th September, 1909, sentenced at Hamilton to six months' imprisonment.

On the 11th October, 1909, a youth was fined at Napier for sending an indecent post-card through the post.

On a charge of attempted forgery of a savings-bank withdrawal notice, a man was sentenced in November, 1909, at Hamilton, to three years' imprisonment.

Two persons who posted packages, in November, 1909, and December, 1909, respectively, containing in one case matches, and in the other cartridges, were severely cautioned.

The post-office, Douglas, was broken into on the 2nd December, 1909, and several letters stolen.

For sending through the post letters bearing words of an improper character a man was fined at Wellington, on the 7th December, 1909, £5 and costs on each of three charges, in default one month's imprisonment.