

BURGLARIES.

Twenty-nine post-offices were entered by burglars during the year. In eight instances safes were opened by explosives. Three persons were arrested in connection with the burglaries at five of the offices and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. As only a minimum amount of money is held at offices overnight, the average loss as a result of the burglaries was small.

A number of offenders were arrested for thefts from street posting-boxes, public call offices, and stamp-vending machines. The loss to the Department as a result of the offences was no greater than usual.

DEAD-LETTER OFFICE.

	1938.	1937.
Letters returned to senders in New Zealand	518,570*	451,846†
Other articles returned to senders in New Zealand ..	397,134	465,271
Letters returned to other Administrations	49,829‡	47,815§
Other articles returned to other Administrations ..	56,313	49,202
Letters destroyed (senders unknown and contents of no value)	32,526	28,828
Letters intercepted addressed to persons and firms on prohibited list	178	289

* Including 16,696 registered.
492 registered.

† Including 16,463 registered.

‡ Including 580 registered.

§ Including

The proportion of undelivered letters to the total number of letters delivered was 0·38 per cent.

POSTAL PACKETS REPORTED MISSING.

During 1938, 7,973 complaints were received by the Department concerning the non-delivery of postal packets. In 4,027 cases, or more than half the total, the articles were traced or accounted for satisfactorily as follows :—

Sender responsible	1,463
Addressee responsible	1,380
Post Office responsible for delay or loss	379
Responsibility not fixed	805

In 3,946 cases the manner of the disposal of the postal packet could not be determined. This represents 0·0013 per cent. of the total number of articles posted during the year.

MONEY-ORDERS.

Money-order business increased appreciably during the year, 848,050 orders, of a value of £4,802,293, being issued. This represents an increase compared with the previous year of 63,555 in number and £489,664 in value.

POSTAL NOTES.

Postal-note business also increased, the sales being 3,806,503, of a value of £1,469,125, compared with 3,746,560 notes, of a value of £1,454,793, during the previous year.

The commission totalled £35,616 5s. 8d., an increase of £358 12s. 10d. on the commission earned in 1937–38.

BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS.

The British postal orders issued increased in number and amount, 97,620 orders, of a value of £46,109 8s. 9d., being sold, as against 95,391, of a value of £44,577 16s. 4d., during the previous year. British postal orders paid decreased in number and amount, 28,719 orders, of a value of £13,986 7s., being cashed. In the previous year 32,293 orders, of a value of £15,791 12s. 6d., were paid.

SAVINGS-BANK.

Deposits lodged in the Post Office Savings-bank during the year amounted to £30,434,292, and the withdrawals to £34,597,708, an excess of withdrawals of £4,163,416. The interest credited to depositors was £1,726,573 11s. 2d., and the amount at the credit of depositors at the end of the year was £60,710,086.

Savings-bank ledger offices were established at Matamata and Pahiatua on the 16th July and at Waitangi (Chatham Islands) on the 1st April, 1938.

SCHOOL SAVINGS BRANCH.

At the end of the year the school savings-bank scheme, the object of which is to encourage thrift among children, was in operation in 764 schools, an increase for the year of 205. The deposits amounted to £38,851 4s. 4d. and the withdrawals to £21,360 15s. 11d., an excess of deposits of £17,490 8s. 5d. The total number of operative accounts at the 31st March was 68,268, the amount at credit being £67,665 14s. 2d. Interest to the amount of £1,115 5s. 9d. was credited to depositors.

On leaving school 3,483 depositors transferred their accounts to the Post Office Savings-bank.