

exact amount of postal accommodation each Department had received. So soon as the system is fully arranged, it will be submitted for approval, and no time lost in bringing it into operation should it be deemed advisable to do so.

The following is a statement of the number and weight of franked letters which passed through the various post offices during the year, and the amount of postage which they represent:—

Franked letters	...	...	...	...	...	...	187,222
Weight in ounces	...	...	...	...	...	...	413,112
Postage value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£8,678 1s. 2d.

#### *Dead Letters.*

As intimated in the Postmaster-General's Report for 1864, unclaimed letters, instead of being opened at the different Chief Post Offices, are now forwarded to the Central Office, and there disposed of according to the regulations:—During the six months ended 31st May, 1866, 22,758 letters, 245 of which had been registered, were received at the Dead Letter Office, of which 20,862, including 239 registered letters, were returned to the writers. Among those opened for the purpose of discovering the writers, 200 contained property representing £6,883; of which, property representing £1,902 has been claimed and delivered. A considerable portion of the property thus found in dead letters consists of bills of exchange and as these are issued in triplicate, (first, second, and third of exchange), many of them, doubtless, are of no value, the amounts they represent probably having been paid. Still, there is reason to believe many remain unpaid; and it is matter for consideration whether the Government as holders of these unpaid bills of exchange, &c., or the banks who issued them, are the proper custodiers of the value they represent on behalf of the parties interested.

The beneficial results anticipated from the centralization of this Department have been fully realized. Not only are the supervision and inviolability more complete than when the duties were performed at nine different offices, but a useful check is provided for detecting and correcting irregularities occurring at the Provincial offices. During the period referred to, over a hundred letters, which, on account of indistinct and imperfect addresses, and, in some instances, irregularities at the Provincial offices, were sent to this Department as dead, have by this check been delivered to their proper owners.

#### *Registered Letters.*

The system of compulsory registration of letters unquestionably containing coin, was introduced during the year, and so far as the short experience of its working indicates, the results have been satisfactory. To induce greater advantage being taken of the system of registration, the fee on registered letters for places within the Colony was reduced from one shilling to sixpence, on the 1st February, 1865. From the subjoined return it will be seen that while the number of registered letters for places beyond the Colony—the fees of which had not been reduced—decreased 30 per cent. during the year, those for places within the Colony increased 35 per cent.

	1864.			1865.		
	Without the Colony.	Within the Colony.	TOTAL.	Without the Colony.	Within the Colony.	TOTAL.
Auckland	2,132	3,005	5,137	1,806	3,072	5,508
Taranaki	253	216	469	278	329	607
Hawke's Bay	115	222	337	122	297	419
Wellington	392	754	1,146	631	1,775	2,406
Nelson	389	732	1,121	419	1,035	1,454
Marlborough	292	803	1,095	225	1,076	1,301
Canterbury	1,741	1,759	3,500	2,608	3,936	6,544
Otago	7,217	4,859	12,076	3,772	5,016	8,788
Southland	2,298	745	3,043	479	479	958
	14,829	13,095	27,924	10,340	17,645	27,985

#### *Money Orders.*

This branch of the Department has continued to make steady progress during the year. The large extent to which the public avail themselves of its facilities shows that its advantages are highly appreciated. Notwithstanding that considerable reductions appear in the transactions between certain places, there is still, on the whole, such an increase as to warrant the conclusion that the system, as at present administered, works satisfactorily. The principal reductions have been in the transactions with Victoria, both as regards orders issued and orders paid. In 1864, the former were 3826,—£19,646 9s. 4d.; and the latter, 528,—£2865 4s. 9d.; but in 1865 they were 2284,—£10,897 0s. 4d., and 462,—£2498 11s. 5d., respectively. There has also been a reduction as regards South Australia and Western Australia.

The principal advance has been in the transactions between the various Provinces within the Colony. In 1864 these amounted to 4267,—£19,427 4s. 4d., orders issued; and 4248,—£19,417 0s. 5d., paid. In 1865 there were 6292 orders issued, £29,742 15s. 1d.; and 6177 orders paid, £29,128 19s. 10d. There has also been an increase as regards New South Wales and Queensland. In the transactions with the United Kingdom there has been an increase in the number of orders paid, and a decrease in the number issued. The system was not in operation with the Colony of Tasmania till 1st June, 1865.

The exchange against the Colony decreased from £52,079 5s. 11d. in 1864, to £41,552 11s. 4d. in 1865.

#### *Post Office Savings Banks.*

This important subject made considerable progress during the year under report. After mature deliberation a Bill was prepared, and introduced to the General Assembly during last Session, and was passed. This Act authorizes the establishment of Post Office Savings Banks, under the