

The late fee for letters intended to be forwarded from one post office for delivery from another within the colony was reduced from 2d. to 1d.

The publication of a monthly circular containing official instructions and other notices was commenced on the 1st January last, from which date the usual form of circular was abolished.

COMPARATIVE RETURN of POSTAL OFFICERS for the Years 1882 and 1883.

Officers.				Officers.			
	1883.	1882.			1883.	1882.	
Postmaster-General	1	1		Chief Postmasters	17	17	
Secretary	1	1		Postmasters	13	13	
Inspector of Post Offices ..	1	1		Clerks and Cadets	110	106	
Accountant, Money Order and Savings				Sub-Postmasters	904	870	
Bank Department	1	1		Letter-carriers	67	67	
Clerks in General Post Office ..	6	6		Messengers	12	12	
Clerks in Money Order and Savings				Shipping Officers	2	
Bank Department	8	7					
Mail Agents	2	2		Totals	1,148	1,106	

The sum paid for the carriage of interprovincial and intercolonial mails by unsubsidized vessels was £4,322 16s. 7d.

3,874 private boxes were let, which, together with the fees on 253 private bags, produced a revenue of £3,977 10s.

The following statement gives the value of the services performed for other Government departments by the Post Office, for which no payment was received :—

FREE OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Postal District.	Letters.	Books.	Value.	Postal District.	Letters.	Books.	Value.
	lb.	lb.	£ s. d.		lb.	lb.	£ s. d.
Auckland ..	19,110	16,141	5,694 14 3	Hokitika ..	2,430	2,939½	745 19 8
Thames ..	665	1,169	217 14 11	Blenheim ..	478	1,521	178 18 10
New Plymouth ..	3,605	1,027	1,024 15 11	Christchurch ..	9,371	28,662	3,558 15 1
Gisborne ..	521	632	161 10 5	Timaru ..	2,897	3,529	892 8 1
Napier ..	2,239	834	624 18 0	Oamaru ..	1,395	1,100	408 13 8
Wanganui ..	4,016	3,720	1,196 17 7	Dunedin ..	14,366	12,732	4,370 5 1
Wellington ..	173,800	61,656	52,852 6 4	Invercargill ..	1,813	1,976	550 15 7
Nelson ..	2,633	3,425	820 7 10				
Westport ..	1,239	1,056½	365 15 4	Totals ..	247,194	147,134	75,596 2 7
Greymouth ..	6,616	5,014	1,931 6 0				

The estimated value of this class of correspondence for 1882 was £63,752 16s. 5d.

DEAD LETTERS.

The number of unclaimed letters received and disposed of in the Dead Letter Office during the under-mentioned years is shown in the following table :—

Manner of Disposal.	1870.	1875.	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.
Opened and returned to the writers ..	17,516	39,051	60,977	52,038	53,507	69,452
Returned unopened to other countries..	6,688	10,321	10,503	9,372	8,539	8,143
Reissued	63	78	240	159	54	67
Destroyed	2,960	6,081	5,135	3,969	6,189	3,302
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters	11,160	12,810	14,378	15,833
Totals	27,227	55,531	88,015	78,348	82,667	96,797

The unclaimed letters dealt with show an increase of 17·09 per cent. compared with the number disposed of the previous year.

4,160 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries, 3,647 were returned to the senders through the Dead Letter Office, and 5,271 were returned by Chief Postmasters : a total of 13,078 book-packets and circulars, against 13,741 in 1882.

The under-mentioned articles of value were found enclosed in letters opened in the Dead Letter Office, and returned to the senders where practicable :—

158 money orders	£	s.	d.
37 bank drafts	564	4	8
86 cheques	1,850	6	4
2 promissory notes	491	13	6
Stamps	50	0	8
Bank notes	7	14	3
Gold	168	0	0
Silver and copper	25	10	0
	3	14	2½
Representing a total of	£3,161	3	7½