

## DEAD LETTERS.

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

Manner of Disposal.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.
Opened and returned to the writers ..	52,038	53,507	69,452	68,942	66,592	66,729	62,847	55,118
Returned unopened to other countries ..	9,372	8,539	8,143	9,134	8,115	8,359	7,237	6,892
Reissued .. .. .	159	54	47	107	185	251	96	88
Destroyed .. .. .	3,969	6,189	3,302	3,986	2,872	6,600	5,974	5,246
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters .. .. .	12,810	14,378	15,833	17,593	19,187	21,144	20,185	19,963
Totals .. .. .	78,348	82,667	96,797	99,762	96,951	103,083	96,389	87,307

The unclaimed letters dealt with show a decrease of 9·42 per cent. compared with the number disposed of in the previous year.

18,168 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries, 4,442 were returned to the senders through the Dead Letter Office, and 9,194 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 31,804 book-packets and circulars, against 43,283 in 1887.

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

	£	s.	d.
132 Post Office orders .. .. .	355	2	1
67 postal notes .. .. .	18	3	0
29 bank drafts .. .. .	950	10	9
75 cheques .. .. .	701	12	6
1 dividend warrant .. .. .	0	12	0
3 promissory notes .. .. .	79	17	0
Stamps .. .. .	10	8	11½
Bank-notes .. .. .	116	0	0
Gold .. .. .	12	10	0
Silver and copper .. .. .	2	6	7½

Representing a total of .. .. . £2,247 2 11

In addition, 1 gold hunting-watch, 4 silver hunting-watches, 1 Waterbury watch, 1 ladies' silver watch and silver chain, 1 gold locket with pearls, 1 greenstone (silver-mounted), 1 silver brooch set with cairngorms, 2 silver brooches, 1 New Zealand war medal brooch, 1 New Zealand war medal, 1 silver bracelet, 1 gold ring, 1 gold ring set with precious stones, 1 silver ring, 1 gold nugget, and 2 silk handkerchiefs were received.

3,713 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

1,035 newspapers and 333 books and other articles without addresses were received, a number of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

64 letters were posted without addresses.

13 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

182 letters were imperfectly and wrongly addressed.

4,962 letters were refused by the addressees.

12 letters were posted with previously-used stamps.

## BUILDINGS.

The restoration of the General Post Office building (destroyed by fire on the 28th April, 1887) was finished on the 30th April last, and the transfer of the several branches of the department completed on the 1st June last.

The building has been materially strengthened by the addition of three brick party-walls—one longitudinally and two transverse—which have been carried 2ft. above the roof. Special provision has otherwise been made to minimise the risk from fire. Johnston's patent wire-lathing, in the place of the usual wooden laths, has been used in connection with the interior plaster-work, and 4in. of concrete filled in between the floor-joists. Water-services for fire-extinguishing purposes, two on each floor, have been provided, and provision made, in the event of fire, for dividing the first and top floors into sections by fire-proof doors. The interior accommodation has been slightly varied, where experience had shown that this was desirable or where the position of the party-walls made an alteration imperative. The tower is carried to a height of 129ft., and an illuminating four-dial clock (the dials 8ft. 3in. in diameter), with chiming-bells (Cambridge chimes) and hour-bell, placed in position. The clock and chiming-bells have been provided jointly by the City Council and Harbour Board, and the hour-bell (which weighs over 29cwt.) presented by Mrs. Sarah A. Rhodes, in memory of her late husband, the Hon. W. B. Rhodes. Messrs. Littlejohn and Son, of Wellington (the makers of the former clock), secured the contract for the clock and bells. The bells, it may be mentioned, were cast at the Lion Foundry, Wellington.

An office has been erected at Clyde.

Repairs, additions, and alterations have been made to the following offices: Masterton, alterations, repairs, and renovating; Wanganui, repairs; Marton, additions; Bulls, repairs; Coromandel, repairs; Blenheim, repairs; Reefton, repairs; Greymouth, repairs; Christchurch,