

The total increase for the year was 31,081 articles, or 18·88 per cent., entirely of letters registered in the colony. Indeed, the number of letters received from beyond the colony decreased by 52.

## 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.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.
Opened and returned to the writers .. ..	53,507	69,452	68,942	66,592	66,729	62,847	55,118	62,654	60,540
Returned unopened to other countries .. ..	8,539	8,143	9,134	8,115	8,359	7,287	6,892	6,220	7,779
Reissued .. ..	54	67	107	185	251	96	88	92	141
Destroyed .. ..	6,189	3,302	3,986	2,872	6,600	5,974	5,246	4,340	2,660
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters .. ..	14,878	15,833	17,593	19,187	21,144	20,185	19,963	21,164	21,931
Totals .. ..	82,667	96,797	99,762	96,951	103,083	96,389	87,307	94,470	93,051

The unclaimed letters dealt with show a decrease of 1·5 per cent. compared with the number disposed of in the previous year.

The percentage of dead or unclaimed letters to the total number of letters posted in the colony was 0·43 per cent. For 1889, the proportion in the United Kingdom was 0·38 per cent.; United States, 0·48; Canada, 0·67; Victoria, 1·08; New South Wales, 1·05; Queensland, 1·07; and Tasmania, 0·59. With the exception of the United Kingdom, New Zealand's proportion was the lowest.

The number of missing letter inquiries to the total number of letters posted was in the proportion of four to every thousand. In the United States the proportion was three, and in Queensland six, to every thousand letters. No other returns available.

45,597 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries, 8,460 were returned to the senders through the Dead Letter Office, 44 were re-issued, and 10,843 were returned by Chief Postmasters; a total of 64,903 book-packets and circulars, against 51,943 in 1889. 4,236 newspapers were returned to the publishers as unclaimed.

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.
194 Post Office orders .. ..	518	5	3
114 postal notes .. ..	55	5	4
37 bank drafts .. ..	2,992	0	9
137 cheques .. ..	1,470	17	0
2 dividend warrants .. ..	16	13	7
13 promissory notes .. ..	410	6	3
Stamps .. ..	26	16	11
Bank-notes .. ..	126	0	0
Gold .. ..	6	0	0
Silver and copper .. ..	3	14	7

Representing a total of .. .. £5,625 19 8

In addition, 1 gold and 1 silver watch, 1 white-metal watch-chain, 1 hair watch-chain (gold-mounted), 3 gold rings, 1 silver ring, 2 silver brooches, 2 pairs of gold earrings, and 1 silver pencil-case were received.

1,100 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

954 newspapers and 350 books and other articles without addresses were received, a considerable number of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

155 letters were posted without addresses.

19 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

208 letters were imperfectly or wrongly addressed.

4,301 letters were refused by the addressees.

16 letters were posted with previously-used stamps.

## BUILDINGS.

The new office at Longford, built on a site fronting the main road, has been completed. Minor offices have been erected at Fern Flat and Whakatane. A small building was purchased at Te Puke and made suitable for office purposes.

The Cable Company's station at Wakapuaka has been added to and altered.

The following are some of the principal alterations, additions, or repairs effected during the year: General Post Office, drainage overhauled and iron shutters fixed on strong-room windows fronting Customhouse Quay; Reefton, new foundation-piles, &c.; Napier and Spit, repairs; Pembroke, erection of porch; Dunedin, telegraph office renovated; Albany Street, repairs and sanitary arrangements improved; Palmerston South, drainage provided; Thames, mail-room