

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

	£	s.	d.
201 Post-office orders	573	16	5
40 bank drafts	3,233	2	7
154 cheques	1,019	19	4
3 dividend warrants	117	16	11
10 promissory notes	211	9	9
Postal notes	76	15	3
Stamps	21	9	9
Bank-notes	160	0	0
Gold	15	10	0
Silver and copper	2	19	3
Representing a total of	£5,432	17	3

In addition, 1 gentlemen's gold watch, 3 gentlemen's silver watches, 1 ladies' gold watch, 3 metal watches, 1 gold-mounted hair chain, 1 patent silver watch-key, 1 silver pendant, 1 greenstone pendant, 1 gold brooch, 4 silver brooches, 1 greenstone brooch, 1 gold bracelet, 1 silver bracelet, 4 gold rings, 1 combination diamond stud and gold pin, 1 gold pin, 2 scarf-pins, 1 old naval war-medal, 1 purse containing coin and tram-tickets, 2 purses containing coin, 1 packet containing purse and butterfly-belt, 1 small packet of rough diamonds, 3 silk handkerchiefs, 1 blue pocket-book containing cheque and ticket Feilding to Wanganui, 1 card-case, 1 steerage ticket Gisborne to Napier, 1 second-class railway-ticket Wanganui to Wellington, 2 pawn tickets, 1 savings-bank warrant for 2s. 6d., 1 deposit receipt for £100, 1 packet old New Zealand stamps, 4 sheets of foreign postage-stamps.

1,556 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

1,919 newspapers and 1,080 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

770 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

290 letters were posted without addresses—at the rate of 9 per million.

123 letter-cards were posted without addresses—at the rate of 187 per million.

30 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

The number of inland, intercolonial, and international unclaimed articles received and disposed of during the years 1895 and 1896 was as under:—

	1895.					1896.				
	Letters.	Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Packets.	News-papers.	Letters.	Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Packets.	News-papers.
<i>Inland.</i>										
Returned, delivered, &c., through Dead-letter Office	48,631	1,202	2,212	34,314	722	51,117	1,086	2,118	47,478	770
Returned by Chief Postmasters direct	25,380	..	600	24,764	..	22,724	..	3,690	26,986	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	2,871	71	131	2,121	5,071	3,265	81	148	978	42,264
<i>Intercolonial.</i>										
Originally addressed to other colonies:—										
Returned to writers	5,148	..	14	452	..	4,509	..	12	461	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	304	..	1	24	..	290	..	1	9	..
Returned to other colonies as unclaimed	8,379	..	24	3,950	..	3,335	..	9	18,848	..
<i>International.</i>										
Originally addressed to other countries:—										
Returned to writers	4,046	..	11	510	..	4,406	..	12	516	..
Destroyed in accordance with law	238	..	1	27	..	283	..	1	11	..
Returned to other countries as unclaimed	4,513	..	13	81,051	..	4,190	..	12	24,814	..
Totals	99,510	1,273	3,007	97,213	5,793	94,119	1,167	6,003	120,101	43,034

Seven hundred and fifty inquiries for letters and 587 for other articles which were stated to have been posted and not delivered were received during 1896. In 375 of the inquiries for letters and 298 for other articles—over one-half of the total number—the investigations by the department resulted in the missing articles being traced. The result may be summarised as follows:—

Number of "Traced" Cases.		Found to have been
Letters.	Other Articles.	
21	17	Missent or misdelivered by post-office.
18	15	Delayed in delivery through fault of post-office.
31	24	Delayed in delivery through fault of addressees.
43	34	Posted later than advised, or delayed in transit through accident to mail-steamers, &c.
77	61	Defectively or wrongly addressed.
58	46	Mislaid or lost after delivery.
21	18	Returned through Dead-letter Office as unclaimed, &c.
3	2	Delivered to persons of same name as addressees and retained by them until recovered by post-office.
103	81	Delivered. Reason for inquiry not indicated, but probably in most cases omission by addressees to acknowledge receipt.
375	298	