

1 jewelled gold stud, 1 silver and greenstone bread-fork, 3 silver medals, 11 silver serviette-rings, 1 silver shoe-horn, 1 pearl card-case, 1 tusk, 1 piece of greenstone, 1 shark's tooth, 1 Royal Geographical Society's medal for Antarctic discovery 1902-4, 1 King's medal for Antarctic discovery 1902-4, 1 New Zealand war medal, 1 set of artificial teeth, 1 mine-manager's certificate, 5 pawn-tickets, 6 share-certificates, 3 miners' rights, 1 certificate of title, 1 return-passage order (Liverpool to Lyttelton), 3 lottery-tickets, and 11 Tattersall tickets.

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number handled within the Dominion was 0·42 per cent.

46,744 other articles were returned to foreign countries; 18,720 were returned to senders through the Dead Letter Office; 210,247 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 269,621 book-packets and circulars, as compared with 267,500 in 1907.

11,911 letters were wrongly addressed; 30 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 4,978 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

4,720 newspapers and 3,023 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

29,436 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

2,531 letters were posted without addresses.

Fifty-eight letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

1,513 inquiries for letters and 1,054 for other articles alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1908. In 750 of the inquiries for letters and 594 for other articles—over one-half the total number—the investigations by the Department resulted in the missing articles being traced or accounted for. These may be summarised as follows:—

Number of Traced Cases.			
Letters.	Other Articles.	Found to have been	
70	42	...	Delayed in delivery through fault of addressees.
38	10	...	Not posted.
16	24	...	Posted later than stated; forwarded by slower routes than letters of advice, &c.
119	78	...	Defectively or wrongly addressed.
88	26	...	Mislaid or lost after delivery.
60	22	...	Returned through Dead Letter Office as unclaimed, &c.
278	318	...	Delivered. Reason for inquiry not given, but probably in most cases omission by addressees to acknowledge receipt.
81	74	...	Missent, misdelivered, or otherwise delayed through fault of Post Office.
750	594		

As illustrating how the Department is often blamed wrongfully for the loss of articles passing through the Post Office, it may be mentioned that a postal packet containing six watches was wrongly delivered at a boardinghouse. Owing to the address being so badly written it was believed to be intended for a person who resided there. Whilst the packet was awaiting disposal at the boardinghouse, a friend of the supposed addressee noticed it and readdressed it to him, and it was only when the article was passing through the Post Office a second time that the rightful owner was identified and delivery effected after a delay of about five months.

A letter, unregistered, from Christchurch to Wellington, containing £425 in bank-notes, was discovered open in the post.

A case occurred at Palmerston on the 25th June, 1908, of the abstraction of a letter from the posting-box by a starling. The occurrence was witnessed by a passer-by. Another similar case was reported from Palmerston North, where, to prevent future depredations, a hinged flap was fixed to the aperture of the box.

#### OFFENCES.

On a charge of forging a receipt for a money-order for £40 on the 4th August, 1908, a man was sentenced at Wellington to eighteen months' imprisonment with hard labour.

For sending an indecent post-card through the post on the 17th August, 1908, a man was fined £5.

The Post-office, Mount Roskill, which is conducted in a store, was robbed on the 21st August, 1908.

A person charged at Dunedin on the 12th September, 1908, with forging and uttering the name of a depositor to a Post-Office Savings-bank withdrawal receipt for £85 was convicted, and admitted to probation for twelve months.

A man was convicted at Auckland on the 24th September, 1908, of the theft of a bag of mail for Taupiri. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

On a charge of signing false telegrams on the 8th and 9th October, 1908, asking for money to be remitted, and also on a charge of obtaining payment on the 21st idem of two money-order telegrams of £3 and £1, by forging the name of the real payee, a man was sentenced at Auckland to two years' imprisonment.

On the 2nd November, 1908, two lads were convicted at Palmerston North for interfering with posting-boxes at Longburn.

On the charge of forging a telegram asking for a remittance of money, a man was sentenced at Dunedin on the 21st December, 1908, to six months' imprisonment.

On the 10th January, 1909, two boys were fined for putting objectionable matter into a letter-box at Dunedin.