

344. The increase in the number of registered letters in 1885 was much smaller than usual, being only 60,000 over 1884, as against 350,000 in 1884 over 1883, while the average annual increase since 1868 has been 130,850. At the same time, the number of letters that miscarried, and that were sent to the Dead Letter Office, was exceptionally large.

345. Of the 229 registered letters that failed to reach their destination, 56 were accidentally burnt in steamboat and railway trains, 37 were stolen from post offices by burglars, and 132 were stolen from mails in transit.

346. The large number of registered letters sent to the Dead Letter Office was caused by the number of registered letters coming to Canada for foreigners employed in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the unsettled region north of Lake Superior. Many of these letters, owing to vague and incorrect addresses, failed in delivery, and were in consequence returned through the Dead Letter Office to the office of origin.*

347. In 1879 the number of registered letters sent to the Dead Letter Office was 0·49 per cent. ; in 1884 it had fallen to 0·43, though a million more letters were registered. The exceptional circumstances above mentioned raised the percentage in the past year to 0·53.

348. The system of free delivery of letters by carriers began in 1875 ; and with this system began more perfect delivery of letters to the parties to whom addressed.

LETTERS, Post Cards, Circulars, Books, Parcels, &c., received at the Dead Letter Office, during the Years 1868 to 1885.

Year ended 30th June.	Total Number	How Disposed of.							
		Returned to other Countries.	Delivered or Forwarded to Address.	Returned to Writers.	Remaining in Office or with Postmaster.	Failed of delivery contained no value, destroyed.	Returned to Printed Address	Returned to Government Department.	Lost in Transmission.
1868.....	312,220								
1869.....	307,889								
1870.....	324,291								
1871.....	335,508								
1872.....	380,810								
1873.....	426,886								
1874.....	508,160								
1875.....	572,127								
1876.....	587,376								
1877.....	563,484								
1878.....	630,847								
1879.....	540,429	49,952	12,645	195,689	558	262,464	19,119	2
1880.....	592,385	63,755	12,546	219,728	1,380	270,764	19,622	4,590
1881.....	617,712	69,857	14,387	235,686	1,454	270,621	18,259	7,448
1882.....	658,762	76,820	12,083	279,566	2,258	264,122	19,166	4,744	3
1883.....	717,271	88,553	13,198	284,771	2,480	298,478	21,909	7,881	1
1884.....	764,731	106,843	24,124	275,497	2,269	321,229	25,254	9,515
1885.....	787,110	111,681	25,111	268,725	2,000	343,838	26,239	9,516

*Postmaster General's Report, 1885.