

1892.

NEW ZEALAND.

POST AND TELEGRAPH CLASSIFICATION BOARD

(REPORT OF THE).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Ward, with Leave of the House.

SIR,—

Invercargill, 16th January, 1892.

We, the persons appointed by you on the 31st day of December, 1891, under the 25th section of the regulations under "The Post and Telegraph Classification and Regulation Act, 1890," have the honour to report as follows:—

We commenced our duties, in pursuance of the said appointment, on the 8th day of January, 1892; and continued our sittings on the 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th days of the same month, and were occupied altogether forty-five hours.

There were 232 appeals submitted for our consideration and report. Some of the appellants complain that the salaries set opposite their names in the seventh column of the departmental list for the year 1891–92 are not sufficiently high for the duties they have to perform, or for their length of service, or other considerations.

After careful deliberation we consider our duties are limited by the regulations to the question whether the name of the officer appealing has been placed in a class lower than that in which, from the nature of the services he performs, it ought to be placed. We have, however, gone through all the papers in each case, and wherever it appeared to us that an error had been made in the amount of salary placed against an officer's name in the list we have drawn attention to the same, in order that it may receive your consideration.

There are also cases where appellants have not expressly claimed that their names should be placed in a higher class or grade, but who claim higher salaries than are consistent with their classification, the inference being clear that they claim to be placed in such positions in the classification as will entitle them to higher salaries; and these cases we have dealt with as being intended to be appeals to be placed in a higher class than that in which their respective names appear.

There are other appellants who complain that their names are inserted too far down in the list of their grade or class. This is not a ground of appeal under the regulations, nor do the regulations require that names shall be inserted in each class or grade in order of seniority; and therefore an officer is not prejudiced by the position in which his name appears, so long as it is within his proper class or grade, the senior officer not necessarily being the one whose name is highest in the list of his class or grade.

The ground upon which some of the officers of the sixth class appeal is that their names have been placed in the second grade of that class instead of in the first grade; but all these objections have been met by "The Post and Telegraph Classification and Regulation Act Amendment Act, 1891," and there is now only one grade in the sixth class.

A large number of officers have appealed upon the ground that their length of service while engaged and employed as messengers has not been included in the column of the departmental list appropriated to length of service. Their position appears to be this: A messenger is an officer under Schedule B of "The Civil Service Act, 1866," but messengers are excluded from some of the provisions of that Act.

Section 45 shows which of the Parts and sections of the Act apply to those officers. Section 12 entitles them to compensation for loss of office through no fault of their own, to be computed upon length of service; and Part V. gives them a right to superannuation allowance, in which length of service is a material element. It is an important feature in their cases that they are not admitted to the classification provisions in Part I. of the Act, because classification implies a right of promotion by seniority, or that is an important element in respect to it, and there is no other provision which creates a right to promotion independent of classification, but increment to the salaries of that class of officers is provided for in another way under section 46 of the Act.

These officers therefore seem to have no right that length of service as messengers shall be computed for classification purposes, but that it shall be computed in respect to compensation for loss of office, and for superannuation purposes. These remarks apply principally to the officers appointed messengers before "The Civil Service Act Amendment Act, 1871," came into operation. Those officers who entered the Service as messengers since that Act came into force are certainly not in a better position.