

COMPARATIVE Return of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st March, 1900, and 31st March, 1901.

	Mar. 31, 1900.	Mar. 31, 1901.		Mar. 31, 1900.	Mar. 31, 1901.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Brought forward	94	108
Secretary	1	1	Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices	3	3
Superintendent of Electric Lines	1	1	Chief Postmasters	16	17
Assistant Secretary and Inspector	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff	111	119
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange) Cadettes and Cadets in Post-offices)	969	1,031
Chief Clerk	1	1	Operators (including Cadets in Telegraph-offices)		
Assistant Contr. M.O.S.B., and Accountant Clerks in General Post Office—			Letter-carriers	202	227
Secretary's Office	13	16	Messengers (Post Office)	37	46
Inspector's and Dead-letter Branch	6	6	Linemen	67	73
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant's Branch	49	57	Telegraph Distributors and Message Boys	349	437
Storekeeper and Assistants	6	7	Nightwatchmen	2	3
Electrician (also Telegraph Inspector)	1	1	Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers	149	151
Assistant Electricians	1	2	Country Postmasters and Telephonists	1,474	1,500
Mechanicians and Cadets	8	8			
Telegraph Inspectors	4	4			
Carried forward	94	108	Totals	3,473	3,715

The establishing of the penny-post and the almost phenomenal expansion of the telegraph business has resulted in a busy time for the staff generally during the past year. A severe strain has been put upon the principal officers of the General Post Office, particularly in connection with staff matters, as may be realised from the fact that, in consequence of the absence of officers in South Africa, resignations and daily demands for additional staff on the part of the principal offices, the supply of lads eligible for operating cadetships for the first time for many years fell practically to zero. Since 1891 a considerable number of boys with a knowledge of telegraph operating had been constantly available from among junior letter-carriers and telegraph messengers at country offices, and others in the non-clerical division, but the rapid promotions during the year exhausted the supply. It has in consequence been necessary to establish classes for training telegraph cadets at Wellington and Invercargill. A number of lads has already passed through the classes. At the same time the establishing of classes has had a good effect in stimulating juniors to strive to attain the necessary qualifications for a position as a learner, with the result that there is now a reserve of telegraphists for emergencies.

On the postal side of the service the shortage of staff has been made up as far as possible by promoting deserving letter-carriers and others who have shown, by endeavouring to learn office-work in their own time, that they will be likely to become good clerks. In some few instances lads not previously employed in the department have been selected from the list of Civil Service scholars.

In August last amended regulations in connection with promotion and vacancies were made under the Classification Acts. The principal effect of the new regulations has been to group the officers in certain of the clerical and postmasters' classes, giving officers in classes of equal importance equal rights to vacancies occurring in the grouped class next above that in which they happen to be. The interchangeability of officers in the classes concerned had been followed to some extent in practice, but the regulations remove all possibility of misunderstanding. Opportunity was taken at the same time to offer rewards by providing special increments to cadets passing the Junior or Senior Civil Service Examination, with the gratifying result that a healthy rivalry has been created among cadets to improve their education. The minimum age for entry for telegraph messengers was raised from twelve to thirteen, and the maximum from fifteen to sixteen, a provision found necessary owing to the department having been compelled to reject many promising lads on account of the age-limit. Message-boys passing the Junior or Senior Civil Service Examinations are now given prior claim to cadetships.

HEALTH OF STAFF.

As is shown in the table below, the health of the staff generally during the year was good:—

	Numbers comprised.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Sick-absence per each Officer employed.
Men	1,075	Days. 9·52	Days. 3·54
Women	136	9·89	8·58

There were six deaths of officers in the service.

By the death of Dr. Lemon, late Superintendent of Electric Lines, and for many years head of the Department, who retired some years ago, the colony lost a valued citizen. Dr. Lemon's name will be long remembered in connection with New Zealand Telegraphs. Assuming charge of the Electric Telegraph Department shortly after its inception, he saw the carrying out of many changes and reforms. Dr. Lemon was well known for his scientific attainments and the electrical work done by him under the adverse conditions which obtained many years ago.