

COMPARATIVE Return of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st March, 1904, and 31st March, 1905.

	Mar. 31, 1904.	Mar. 31, 1905.		Mar. 31, 1904.	Mar. 31, 1905.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Brought forward	125	130
Secretary	1	1	Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices	4	4
Superintendent of Electric Lines	1	1	Chief Postmasters	17	17
Assistant Secretary and Inspector	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on permanent staff	116	114
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange cadettes and cadets in post-offices)	1,360	1,466
Chief Clerk	1	1	Operators (including cadets in telegraph-offices)		
Assistant Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Post Office Sorters	13	18
Clerks in General Post Office—			Letter-carriers	273	285
Secretary's Office	18	19	Messengers (Post Office)	66	77
Inspector's and Dead letter Branch	7	8	Linemen	76	69
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant's Branch	69	73	Telegraph message-boys	524	525
Storekeeper and assistants	10	10	Nightwatchmen	3	2
Master cable steamer "Tutanekai"	1	*	Mail-cart drivers	4	4
Electrician	1	1	Postmasters and telegraphists or telephonists who are Railway officers	160	168
Assistant Electrician	1	1	Country Postmasters, Postmistresses, and telephonists	1,713	1,760
Mechanicians and cadets	6	6			
Telegraph Inspectors	5	5			
Carried forward	125	130	Totals	4,454	4,639

* Now treated as attached to Marine Department.

The conduct of the staff has on the whole been satisfactory. There have, however, been several cases of serious misconduct necessitating criminal prosecutions.

Regret has again to be expressed that so small a proportion of the younger officers qualify for the Civil Service examinations.

HEALTH OF STAFF.

The following table gives the average absence of officers on sick-leave:—

	Numbers comprised (Principal Offices).	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Sick-absence per each Officer employed.
		Days.	Days.
Men	1,451	20·64	6·80
Women	201	24·33	15·74

The principal causes of absence on account of sick-leave were pulmonary troubles, nervous debility, and surgical operations. The fact that the average absence on sick-leave is increasing appears to point to the urgent necessity for the appointment of Departmental medical officers.

There were four deaths.

APPEAL BOARD.

Seven appeals were dealt with by the Board of Appeal in April last year, of which two were reported against, four reported upon in favour of the appellants, and one reported upon partly in the appellant's favour. One was a question of departmental arrangements, in which the Postmaster-General was unable to agree entirely with the Board's finding, three were on the subject of the promotion of the officers appealing, and the fifth referred to the promotion of specially qualified officers.

Under "The Public Officers' Appointment and Powers Act, 1904," subsection (2) of section 5 of "The Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1894," has been amended so as to provide that the non-elective members of the Board shall be such persons as the Governor from time to time appoints.

Mr. John McGowan, Commissioner of Taxes, who had rendered valuable service as Chairman of the Appeal Board from its inception, died in September last. The late Mr. McGowan possessed the full confidence of the Administration and the service, and his sudden death was keenly regretted. Mr. F. W. Waldegrave, Under-Secretary, Justice Department, has been appointed Chairman in the place of Mr. McGowan, and Mr. Logan, Superintendent of Electric Lines, reappointed.

NEWSPAPER POSTAGE.

As announced in last year's report, the London Post Office agreed, subject to certain conditions, to deliver in the United Kingdom without surcharge newspapers posted in New Zealand prepaid 1d. each, irrespective of weight.

The penny rate on newspapers from New Zealand has now been extended to the following countries: Ascension, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Honduras, Caicos Islands, Canada, Ceylon, Egypt, Falkland Islands, Federated Malay States, Gambia, Gibraltar, Hongkong, Jamaica, Johore, Labuan, Leeward Islands, Malta, Mauritius, Natal, Newfoundland, North Borneo, Orange River Colony, St. Helena, Sarawak, Sierra Leone, Southern Nigeria, South Sea Islands, Straits Settlements, Transvaal, Trinidad, Turks Islands.

The Australian Commonwealth Post Office was unable to see its way to agree to a penny rate irrespective of weight, in place of the present charge of 1d. for the first 20 oz. and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each additional 10 oz.