

of the officers performing the detail administrative work under his direction has been restored. Under the Act there are established a Promotion Board and an Appeal Board. The Promotion Board consists of the Secretary, the Chief Telegraph Engineer, the Chief Inspector, the Superintendent of Staff, and an officer of the Department elected by the officers. All appointments will first be considered by the Promotion Board, and the Public Service Commissioner's duty will be to make the appointments as recommended by the Promotion Board if he is satisfied that the recommendations have been made in accordance with the Act. If any disagreement should arise between the Commissioner and the Board on that point the matter is to be referred to the Postmaster-General, whose determination shall be final. The constitution of the Appeal Board established under the Act is the same as that established under the Public Service Act—viz., two persons appointed by the Governor-General, and one officer each of the postal and telegraph branches elected by the officers themselves. As under the previous arrangement only one elected member will sit at a time. Every officer of the Department is given the right of appeal to the Appeal Board against any determination of his superior officers relative to his classification or salary, and the decision of the Board is to be final. The Act provides also for restricting the transfer of officers to other Departments. No officer is to be appointed to any other Department except with the consent of the Permanent Heads of both Departments. It is expected, however, that the inducements to remain in the Post and Telegraph Department will be such that officers will not seek removal to other Departments.

BOARD OF APPEAL: PUBLIC SERVICE ACT, 1912.

The Department received from the Chairman of the Board of Appeal established under the Public Service Act, 1912, a letter expressing appreciation of the manner in which promotions throughout the Service had been made. The Chairman stated that the fact that a comparatively small percentage of appeals was successful was valuable testimony to the nature of the investigation undertaken before officers were recommended for promotion. The Chairman added that he was pleased to be able to say that the Board had never felt when allowing an appeal that the original recommendation of the Department was in any way due in the slightest degree to a desire to favour one officer to the detriment of another, and that the Board had been deeply impressed by the absolute fairness of the Department to its officers. The Board automatically dissolved on the 31st March, 1919.

EPIDEMIC OF INFLUENZA.

In common with other institutions which employ considerable staff the Department was seriously affected by the epidemic of influenza which prevailed throughout the Dominion during November and December, 1918. It was the cause of the death of seventy officers (permanent and temporary). In a period of two months practically every office in the Dominion was visited by the disease, and in some cases all the members of the staff were struck down, necessitating the sending of urgent relief to keep the services going. The state of affairs was so serious that hours of attendance had to be reduced and business generally curtailed. At the same time special efforts were made to facilitate the work of the Health Officers, medical men, and the various committees organized to fight the scourge. Notwithstanding the serious position the Department was placed in there was no disorganization.

In recognition of the whole-hearted efforts made to meet the unprecedented difficulties by officers who escaped the disease or were able to return to duty early, every officer of the Department was granted for 1919 one week's extra annual leave, and every officer who was on duty throughout the epidemic was granted a further three days' leave. Also, no deduction was made from annual leave or from pay on account of absence through influenza during the epidemic, and payment at schedule rates was made to officers for daily excess duty worked in consequence of and during the time of the epidemic.

NON-PERMANENT POSTMASTERS: REMUNERATION.

Alterations in the method of remunerating non-permanent Postmasters and Telephonists were made in order to improve the scale of the salaries of these officers.

RESTORATION OF SERVICES.

The release from military duty of officers of the Department, following on the cessation of hostilities, enabled services that had been reduced in consequence of the drain on the Department's man power to be restored.

EXAMINATIONS.

The number of officers who sat for efficiency examinations during the year 1918-19 was 796. Of this number 469 (59 per cent.) were either wholly or partially successful.

THE WAR AND THE DEPARTMENT.

From the outbreak of war the Department telegraphed for exhibition at post-offices connected with the telegraph system war news received by Government; and from May, 1915, when casualties in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force began to be reported, similarly dealt with casualty lists and hospital reports. From the 3rd March, 1916, the circulation of the hospital reports was restricted to principal offices. From the 11th February, 1918, the casualty lists and hospital reports were divided into four sections—one for each of the four military districts, Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago. The casualty lists were then telegraphed only to the offices in the district concerned, and hospital reports to the principal offices in that district. The district to which a soldier belonged was determined by the address of his next-of-kin. The transmission of casualty and hospital reports ceased on the 15th October, 1918. The transmission of war news continued until the cessation of hostilities.