

Mr. E. Northcroft, Chief Postmaster, Christchurch, retired in February, 1920. Mr. Northcroft had served for nearly forty-nine years.

Mr. D. St. George, Chief Postmaster, Invercargill, retired at the end of March, 1920. Mr. St. George had served for about fifty years.

Mr. J. J. Pickett, Chief Postmaster, Timaru, retired in November, 1919. Mr. Pickett had served for about forty-five years.

Staff conditions are rapidly becoming normal, but throughout the Dominion demands are being made for additional staff, principally on account of the increased business following on the termination of the war. All of the staff who had been absent on military service have now resumed, but new appointments are still being made in order to meet requirements.

Notwithstanding the fact that the remuneration of message-boys in Wellington is in excess of that of message-boys in any other part of the Dominion, great difficulty has been experienced in securing lads for the delivery of telegrams in that city. To relieve the situation it was decided to engage men for the purpose, and several disabled returned soldiers are now employed. They are paid 10s. a day and provided with uniforms.

Four Natives of the Cook Islands who had secured scholarships at the islands have been given apprenticeships in the departmental workshops at Wellington.

#### COST-OF-LIVING BONUS AND MARRIED OFFICERS' ALLOWANCE.

In order to assist officers in meeting the increased cost of living, Government decided to grant a cost-of-living bonus, from the 1st January, 1920, of £15 per annum to married officers and £7 10s. per annum to unmarried officers. From the same date the minimum payment to married men of twenty-one years of age and over was fixed at £187 16s. per annum for salaried officers and 12s. per diem for wages-men, irrespective of the cost-of-living bonus.

#### APPEAL BOARD.

Subsection (1) of section 16 of the Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1918, provided for any officer appealing against the determination of the Secretary in regard to his salary only. This section was subsequently repealed by section 30 of the Post and Telegraph Amendment Act, 1919. An officer now has recourse to the Appeal Board in any matter affecting his classification, grade, salary, or promotion. An officer may also appeal against any fine exceeding £2 in amount, any reduction in salary, reduction in grade or class, or dismissal.

At the 1919 sitting of the Post and Telegraph Appeal Board approximately 1,300 appeals from officers were dealt with. This number was larger than usual, but the increase is explained by the fact that the Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1918, introduced entirely new principles of classification and promotion.

The number of appeals allowed by the Board was very small, although a considerable percentage of the number lodged was conceded by the Department following a decision that the increase over the previous year should approximate £45 in each case. The Appeal Board reported that it had accepted the general principles adopted by the Promotion Board, and had where necessary extended those principles so as to make the scheme of reclassification more harmonious and logically complete. This was possible in the light of evidence submitted to the Board concerning individual cases, which evidence was more comprehensive than that available to the Promotion Board when it classified the service.

Mr. F. V. Frazer, Stipendiary Magistrate, who was Chairman of the Post and Telegraph Appeal Board for a number of years, has been appointed an Assistant Public Service Commissioner.

#### EXAMINATIONS.

Regulations have been made under the Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1918, providing for the examination of candidates for appointment as to their fitness for employment and for the examination of officers as to their fitness for promotion.

Examinations are required to be passed for appointment as an engineering cadet, technical clerk, Assistant Engineer, and Engineer, as a cadet, and as a shorthand-writer, typist, or machinist. Shorthand-writers, typists, and machinists, before advancement beyond a salary of £156 per annum, are required to pass an examination of a higher standard than that for appointment to the same positions. An officer in the Seventh Class, before advancement beyond a salary of £165 per annum, is required to pass a Competency Examination, which is an examination in the duties he performs. An officer is not eligible for promotion in the Clerical Division to any position with a salary exceeding £270 per annum unless he has passed the Controlling Officer's Examination. The Controlling Officer's Examination comprises a general paper, to be taken by all officers of every branch of the service, and a special paper dealing with the work of the branch of the service in which the officer seeks promotion. The examination is designed to test an officer's capacity to deal with matters which arise for the decision of a senior officer in the conduct of the Department's business, as regards his management of the office, and his relations with the staff, the public, and his controlling officer. The style and general composition of the replies are essential factors in awarding a pass. For officers in the General Division, special examinations are provided to enable them to qualify for positions graded higher than the rank and file.

During the year 1919-20 the number of officers who sat for efficiency examinations was 791, of which number 469 were either wholly or partially successful.