

DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE TECHNICAL CLASSES.

The departmental correspondence classes, by means of which members of the service receive instruction in technical subjects, were reinstated in October, 1919, and the scope was extended to cover five courses instead of three. The number of students enrolled for the first term was 510. The largeness of the number shows the value of and necessity for the facilities provided. The course for linemen was completed on the 19th February, 1920. The percentage of students who completed the course and passed the Lineman's Competency Examination held in March was 93·2.

POST AND TELEGRAPH AMENDMENT ACT, 1919.

The Post and Telegraph Act was amended in 1919; and, in addition to machinery alterations, the amending Act contains a number of important provisions.

The Governor-General in Council is empowered to make regulations requiring the registration of postal packets that contain, or are reasonably supposed to contain, money or other valuable property, and prescribing rules for the purpose of giving effect to transfers of accounts authorized by reciprocal arrangements entered into with foreign savings-banks.

Provision has been made for the insurance of postal packets without registration; the defining and registration of magazines; the free transmission through the post of matter prepared in raised characters for the use of the blind; the establishment of a safe-deposit system; and the carriage by post of strychnine.

Power is given the Department to compel proprietors or others in charge of passenger-coaches, or other vehicles plying for hire, to carry mails; to charge the sender of any unpaid or insufficiently prepaid postal packet the postage due if such article is undeliverable; and to collect the return postage on postal packets (other than letters) returned to the sender on his own application.

The minimum amount of a Post Office Savings-bank deposit to be acknowledged from the General Post Office is raised from £1 to £20.

Authority is given for the payment of the amount at credit of a deceased depositor in the Post Office Savings-bank, in any case in which the amount does not exceed £100, without requiring probate or letters of administration.

The offences are extended to cover the recording on postal packets of the incorrect time of posting; the divulging of information obtained by a person from a letter or other postal packet opened in error; the making of false statements in regard to the value of enclosures in, the non-receipt of, and the abstraction of the contents of, postal packets; the wilful wrong delivery of postal packets; the wilful obstruction of a Post officer in the performance of his duties; the recording on telegrams of the incorrect time of receipt, transmission, or delivery; the improper divulging of the whole or part of the contents of a telegram; and the improper use of departmental forms.

The use of private telephone-lines is prohibited, save pursuant to license. It is also provided that the Department may remove dangerous electric lines at the expense of the person making default.

The definitions of "telegram" and "telegraph" are amended, and "telegraph-office" and "telegraph officer" are defined.

The duplicate copy of a telegram is given the validity of a transcript for production in Court as evidence.

Provision is made for the making of a declaration of secrecy by Telegraph officers, and the form of a Post officer's declaration is amended.

The rights of appeal of officers of the Department, under the Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1918, are extended.

POST OFFICE LOAN CERTIFICATES.

The popularity of the loan certificates issued by the Post Office is proved by the fact that there is a regular and steady demand for them, and sales go on whether a loan is on the market or not. Up to the 31st March, 1920, the amount received from the sale of Post Office war-loan certificates was £4,597,482, an amount that compares very favourably with the amount raised by similar methods in other countries.

POSTMARKING-MACHINES AND TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES: ADVERTISING NEED OF WORK BY RETURNED SOLDIERS.

In connection with the repatriation of discharged soldiers, it was arranged for postmarking-machines at the four principal offices in the Dominion to print on correspondence passing through the post superscriptions advertising the need of work by discharged soldiers. Similar advertisements appear in the principal telephone directories.

ABOLITION OF CENSORSHIP OF TELEGRAMS.

The censorship of telegrams was abolished throughout the British Empire at midnight on the 23rd July, 1919. The restrictions imposed on messages addressed to former enemy territory occupied by British troops were, however, not then removed.

STORES.

The work of this branch has been well up to the average. The figures showing stores dealt with as compared with the previous year are—

	1919.	1920.
	£	£
Stock on hand, 31st March	259,749	161,331
Purchases	185,941	202,575
Issues	209,472	268,235