

Employees not on permanent staff:—

31st March, 1908.

Country Postmasters and Postmistresses	...	...	...	...	2,034
Night-watchmen	...	...	...	...	1
Mail-cart drivers	...	...	...	...	8
Postmasters and telegraphists or telephonists who are Railway officers	...	...	...	...	178
Total	...	...	...	...	5,999

Comparative Return of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st March, 1907, and 31st March, 1908.

	Mar. 31, 1907.	Mar. 31, 1908.		Mar. 31, 1907.	Mar. 31, 1908.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Brought forward	162	190
Secretary	1	1	Sub-Inspector of Telegraphs	1	1
Superintendent of Electric Lines	1	1	Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices	4	4
Assistant Secretary and Inspector	1	1	Chief Postmasters	17	17
Chief Clerk	1	1	Officers in Charge (separate)*	6	6
Inspector of Post-offices	1	1	Postmasters on permanent staff	130	136
Inspector of Telegraph-offices	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange)		
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Cadettes and Cadets in post-offices	1,718	2,006
Assistant Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Assistant Accountant	1	1	Operators (including Cadets in telegraph-offices)		
Clerks in General Post Office—			Post Office Sorters	36	50
Secretary's Office	23	31	Letter-carriers	336	390
Inspector's and Dead Letter Branch	9	12	Messengers (Post Office)	78	99
Inspector of Telegraph-offices' Branch	4	4	Linemen	81	93
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant's Branch	90	97	Distributors, Sorters, and Folders (Tele-graph Office) †	7	79
Controller of Stores, Assistant, and Clerks	13	17	Telegraph Message-boys	581	704
Chief Electrician	1	1	Night-watchmen	1	2
Assistant Electricians	2	2	Drivers	7	10
Mechanicians, Clerks, and Cadets in Laboratory	11	11	Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers	167	178
Telegraph Inspectors	5	5	Country Postmasters, Postmistresses, and Telephonists	1,870	2,034
Assistant Inspector of Telegraphs	1	1	Totals	5,202	5,999
Carried forward	162	190			

* Hitherto included in next following item.

† Distributors and Folders, hitherto shown among Clerks.

The continued rapid expansion of telegraph business has necessitated the continuance of the school for learners at Oamaru practically throughout the year. In addition to the usual course of instruction, the learners are now being instructed in the working of the Wheatstone automatic instrument. As the lads qualify and pass a technical examination they are drafted for duty at offices.

HEALTH OF STAFF.

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

	Numbers comprised.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Sick-absence per each Officer employed.
		Days.	Days.
Men	1,844	8·87	6·68
Women	312	22·88	18·11

Twelve officers died during the year.

APPEAL BOARD.

A meeting of the Appeal Board under "The Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1894," began at the General Post Office on Monday, 5th August, 1907, and ended on the 12th idem. Thirteen appeals were considered. In seven cases the Board had no recommendation to make; in one case the appeal was not sustained; and in the five remaining cases the Board made various recommendations. It was decided to give effect to the findings of the Board in each case as early as practicable.

CLASSIFICATION.

"The Post and Telegraph Classification Act, 1907," makes important changes in the classification of officers of the Department. Instead of there being twenty-five classes, some identified by number and some by name below the First Division, the Department has now thirteen classes. This in itself makes greatly for simplification of treatment of the scheme of classification; but when it is considered that the former distribution of officers interposed arbitrary distinctions to keep apart officers doing work of the same relative importance and value for the Department, the amelioration appears still more clearly. For instance, officers of the First Grade in the First Class and Chief Postmasters at the four principal centres were formerly separated, and some slight difference in salary