

While Mr. Markman is absent from New Zealand attending the Postal Union Congress at Stockholm Mr. McNamara will act as Secretary of the Department, and Mr. Robertson, Second Assistant Secretary, and Mr. Kelly, Chief Inspector, will act as First Assistant Secretary and Second Assistant Secretary respectively. Mr. M. B. Esson will act as Chief Inspector.

STAFF.

COMPARATIVE RETURN OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT ON THE 1ST APRIL, 1923 AND 1924.

The total number of persons employed on the 1st April, 1923 and 1924, was as under :—

					1st April, 1923.	1st April, 1924.
Permanent staff—						
Administrative Division	..	..	..	..	4	4
Clerical and Engineering Divisions	..	..	..	..	3,271	3,218
General Division	..	..	..	..	4,267	4,495
					<hr/>	<hr/>
					7,542	7,717
Temporary staff	..	..	..	..	395	243
Casual staff	..	..	..	..	861	970
					<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	..	..	..	..	8,798	8,930
Non-permanent staff—						
Country Postmasters and Postmistresses	..	..	..	..	2,087	2,074
Postmasters who are Railway officers	..	..	..	..	118	102
					<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	..	..	..	..	11,003	11,106

HEALTH OF PERMANENT STAFF.

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

			Number on Staff.	Average Absence per Sick Officer. Days.	Average Absence for each Officer employed. Days.
Men	...	...	6,393	9·7	5·4
Women	...	...	936	13·8	10·2

Thirteen officers died during the year.

APPEAL BOARD.

The Post and Telegraph Board of Appeal, under the chairmanship of E. C. Cutten, Esq., S.M., sat on two occasions during the year. Forty-eight appeals were dealt with, of which one was allowed. One appellant was called upon to pay his own expenses.

Messrs. R. B. Reynolds and R. H. Brown, the Postal and the Telegraph representatives respectively on the Board, resigned, and were subsequently re-elected unopposed.

DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES.

The departmental correspondence classes—which previously were confined to the instruction of officers in technical matters appertaining to the Department—were extended during the year to include tuition in “English and Correspondence.” This resulted in an increased number of students, necessitating an addition to the instructional staff.

Tuition is now being provided for eight examinations, and the popularity of the classes is evidenced by the number of students participating. During the year 830 students were enrolled for instruction; and of the total number of students who presented themselves for examination 80 per cent. obtained passes. This is an indication that the high standard of instruction given hitherto is still being maintained.

EXAMINATIONS.

During the year 1923–24 the number of officers who sat for efficiency examinations was 1,900, of which number 980 were either wholly or partially successful.

“HOUSEHOLDER” CIRCULARS.

The revenue from this class of matter for the period 1st April, 1923, to 31st March, 1924, was £4,845, as against £6,416 for the preceding twelve months. The decrease is accounted for by the reduction in postage rates, whereby printed papers up to 2 oz. may be sent for $\frac{1}{2}$ d., the initial rate also for a “householder” circular.

DISTRIBUTION BY PRIVATE PERSON OF CIRCULARS INSCRIBED “HOUSEHOLDER,” “POSTAGE-PAID.”

It was brought to the notice of the Department that several firms had been distributing to householders, otherwise than by post, circulars marked “Postage-paid,” thereby infringing the Post and Telegraph Act. Legal action was taken against one of the firms concerned, and resulted in judgment being given in favour of the Department, the Magistrate entering a conviction and ordering the company concerned to pay solicitors’ and Court fees. A nominal penalty only was asked for, as the main object of the prosecution was to give publicity to the illegality of the action taken by the