

HEALTH OF PERMANENT STAFF.

The following table shows, in comparison with the figures for the preceding year, the average number of days on which officers were absent on sick-leave during the year:—

		Number on Staff.	Average Absence per Officer.	Average Absence for each Officer employed.
Year ended 31st March, 1936—				
Men	8,659	9.52	3.78
Women	639	11.2	6.81
Year ended 31st March, 1935—				
Men	8,071	9.67	4.59
Women	614	12.49	8.3

Twenty-four officers died during the year. One death was the result of an accident on duty.

PERSONAL.

Mr. J. M. McLean, Chief Postmaster, Wellington, retired on superannuation on the 7th January, 1936, after completing forty-four years' service. Mr. McLean was succeeded by Mr. J. Madden, Chief Postmaster, Dunedin, Mr. Madden, in turn, being replaced by Mr. N. R. McIsaac, Chief Postmaster, Invercargill.

Mr. A. H. Campbell, District Telegraph Engineer, Dunedin, retired on superannuation on the 24th July, after completing forty-two years' service.

INCREASE IN SALARIES.

Under the provisions of the Finance Act, 1935, the salaries and wages of employees of the Department were increased by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as from the 1st August.

PAYMENT OF SCALE INCREMENTS.

For the convenience of the lower-salaried members of the Service, arrangements were made early in the year for scale increases in salary to be paid in advance of the issue of the departmental list of officers, which is the usual authority for such payments.

APPEAL BOARD.

The Post and Telegraph Appeal Board, under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. D. Mosley, Stipendiary Magistrate, Wellington, who was appointed Chairman of the Board in succession to Mr. E. Page, sat on one occasion during the year. Appeals totalling 245 received from eighty-eight officers were adjudicated upon with the following results: Allowed, 1; withdrawn, 79; does not lie, 1; disallowed, 164.

Three appellants were conceded the same grading and salary as the appointees appealed against, and, on the recommendation of the Board, one other appellant was given improved status.

ESTABLISHMENT OF POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICERS' SICK BENEFIT FUND.

Of considerable interest to officers was the establishment, from the 1st December last, of the Post and Telegraph Officers' Sick Benefit Fund. It had long been felt by the Administration that an endeavour should be made by the Service as a whole to lighten the burden of those unfortunate officers who, having exhausted the period of sick-leave with pay authorized by the regulations, were unable, as the result of prolonged sickness, to provide for themselves and their dependants. A regrettable aspect of the plight of many of these officers was that, when their position became desperate through the loss of their means of subsistence, the mental suffering induced by this situation was a serious obstacle to their restoration to health.

EXAMINATIONS.

Officers who were candidates for departmental examinations during the year numbered 1,624, of whom 878 were either wholly or partially successful.

SUGGESTIONS BOARD.

The encouragement given to officers to formulate suggestions for the better working of the Department continues to meet with a ready response from the staff. During the year 217 suggestions were received, and eighteen awards for meritorious suggestions, involving a total sum of £42 10s., were made. Since the establishment of the Suggestions Board nine years ago, over three thousand suggestions covering all phases of the Department's activities have been received.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH.

The operations of the Commercial Branch continue to be attended with success. During the year the revenue value of the business handled by the Branch reached the record amount of £60,005, compared with £52,699 for the preceding year—an increase of £7,306 (13.8 per cent.). Of the total amount, £33,778 represented telephone business and £26,227 advertising and miscellaneous services. A considerable proportion of the business obtained can be classified as "new business"—that is, business which would not have been secured or which would have been deferred but for the interest created and the information supplied by commercial officers.