

STAFF.

The total number of officers on the staff on the 31st March was as under:—

	31st March, 1902.
Postmaster-General	1
Classified staff:—	
First Division	3
Clerical Division	1,139
Non-clerical Division	627
Distributors and messengers	468
Total, classified staff	2,238
Employees not on permanent staff:—	
Country Postmasters and Postmistresses	1,601
Nightwatchmen	3
Mail-cart drivers	4
Postmasters and telegraphists or telephonists who are Railway officers	144
Total	3,990

COMPARATIVE Return of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st March, 1901, and 31st March, 1902.

	Mar. 31, 1901.	Mar. 31, 1902.		Mar. 31, 1901.	Mar. 31, 1902.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Brought forward	108	123
Secretary	1	1	Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices	3	3
Superintendent of Electric Lines	1	1	Chief Postmasters	17	17
Assistant Secretary and Inspector	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff	119	111
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange cadettes and cadets in post-offices)	1,031	1,167
Chief Clerk	1	1	Operators (including cadets in telegraph-offices)		
Assistant Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Letter-carriers	227	234
Clerks in General Post Office—			Messengers (Post Office)	46	49
Secretary's Office	16	18	Linemen	73	70
Inspector's and Dead-letter Branch	6	7	Telegraph distributors and message boys	437	468
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant's Branch	57	66	Nightwatchmen	3	3
Storekeeper and assistants	7	7	Mail-cart drivers	..	4
Electrician (also Telegraph Inspector)	1	1	Postmasters and telegraphists or telephonists who are Railway officers	151	144
Assistant Electricians	2	2	Country Postmasters, Postmistresses, and telephonists	1,500	1,601
Mechanicians and cadets	8	7			
Telegraph Inspectors	4	4			
Carried forward	108	123	Totals	3,715	3,990

Provision for increased staff required to overtake the rapidly expanding business was again at times a matter of some difficulty, but has been met by a thorough change in the recruiting arrangements. The policy of the Department of offering inducement to lads and others in the non-clerical division to qualify for promotion has not been disturbed, and it is gratifying to find that the spirit of emulation thus created has produced an increased desire for self-improvement among juniors in the service, and the consequent discovery of many promising officers. The classes for training telegraph cadets were not carried on throughout the whole of the summer months, but have had again to be resumed. Besides providing staff on account of resignations, deaths, and increased business, the vacancies caused by the fifty-one employees who have gone to South Africa with the several contingents had also to be filled. The positions of these officers are kept open for them, and this had always to be borne in mind when filling the vacancies. Several telegraphists have left this service for South Africa, and others contemplate applying for positions in the Transvaal now that the war has ended.

The conduct of officers has been extremely good, and the almost total absence of complaint and the loyalty of the staff on both sides of the service is a credit to its members. A word of acknowledgment should be given to the letter-carriers throughout the colony, particularly those in the principal centres, for the efficient manner in which they overtook the suddenly increased delivery of mail matter which followed the introduction of the penny post. An endeavour has been made to reward the men as a body by making as many promotions as possible from their ranks to the clerical division, and it is hoped by the establishment of a special class of sorters to give promotion to suitable letter-carriers who are not educationally or otherwise qualified for the clerical division.

It is intended to introduce to Parliament an amending Classification Bill, which will, among other things, improve the lower grades of the non-clerical division.

The employment of night staffs at Wellington and Dunedin having proved an undoubted success, it was decided in September last to appoint a night staff, consisting of a clerk and a messenger, at the Chief Post Office, Auckland. This arrangement enables mails arriving by small coastal steamers during the night to be sorted, and the clearances made from the letter-receivers to be stamped and sorted ready for the morning staff, which has now more time to attend to the despatch of the country mails.