

HEALTH OF STAFF.

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

			Numbers comprised.	Average Absence per Sick Officer. Days.	Average Absence for each Officer employed. Days.
Men	...	...	4,001	9.48	1.92
Women	...	...	562	13.71	6.15

Nine officers died during the year.

CLASSIFICATION.

By Orders in Council of the 20th September, 1909, and the 24th March, 1910, applicable to the whole of the Civil Service, the annual leave granted to officers of this Department was reduced to three weeks for officers with more than fifteen years' service, and two weeks for all others. Previously permanent officers with above fifteen years' service received four weeks' leave; those with above ten years, three weeks; and all others, two weeks, except telegraph message-boys, who received one week.

Examinations under Classification Regulations 50 and 51 have been instituted for senior and junior counter-clerks, junior exchange clerks, despatch clerks, and telephone-exchange clerks.

DEPARTMENTAL CLASSES.

During the year the departmental classes to enable officers of the Department to qualify for test and promotion examinations have been materially enlarged. Last year the classes were conducted in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington alone. This year a scheme of teaching by correspondence has been instituted, enabling every officer of the Department to enjoy the advantages of the instruction; and the classes will be both technical and general in character. They will include instruction in the subjects of the Civil Service Senior and Junior Examinations, and of the Sixth Standard Examination, and in the subjects of the Cadets' Technical and of the Telegraph Second Examinations.

BOARD OF APPEAL.

The departmental Board of Appeal sat from the 21st to the 29th April, 1909. The main feature of the appeals was the protest by several appellants against the numerical position of an officer in the Sixth Class. Twenty-six appeals were considered, eight of which were appeals against a decision of the previous Board. In fifteen cases the appeals were sustained, in eight instances no recommendation was made, and in the remaining three the appeals were dismissed. In thirteen cases the recommendations of the Board were carried out; in the remaining two the recommendations will be given effect to as soon as the opportunity occurs. The Minister's right of veto was not exercised in any case.

PARCEL-POST SYSTEM.

A new system of dealing with parcels commenced on the 1st March, 1910. The sender, on presenting a parcel, receives a card, on half of which must be written the name and address of the addressee. The other half of the card bears the sender's name and address, also written by the sender. The parcel is numbered with an adhesive stamp, and a similar number affixed to the counterfoil of the card, which is then posted to the Postmaster of the delivery-office, thus notifying him that a parcel bearing the corresponding number is being forwarded to his office for delivery. By this system all book and list entries are dispensed with.

A special device invented by an employee of the Department for fastening parcel-post hampers has been brought into use. By this device labour and material are both saved.

POST OFFICE.

On the 1st September last a system was inaugurated whereby the inspection of a number of the small non-permanent post-offices was undertaken by the permanent Postmasters, who were instructed to inspect selected non-permanent offices in their vicinity. This was found necessary owing to the increase which has taken place in the number of small post-offices during recent years, the work of inspection having outgrown the existing staff of inspectors. The system has been found to work both satisfactorily and economically, the average cost of the inspection of these small offices by Postmasters being very moderate. During the year the Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices inspected 2,142 offices, and relieved Chief Postmasters in several districts.

Eighty-one post-offices were established (of these, 2 were reopened offices) and 20 closed.

The number of post-offices open at the end of the year was 2,194.

The names of 27 offices were changed to meet altered circumstances, or to agree more nearly with local designations.

The number of articles delivered in the Dominion, including those received from places outside, during the year 1909, as compared with the number in 1908, was as under :—

			1909.	1908.	Increase.
Letters and letter-cards	..	..	93,650,908	89,089,871	4,561,037
Post-cards	..	..	8,049,808	7,643,831	405,977
Other articles	..	..	48,195,407	47,420,009	775,398
Totals	..	..	149,896,123	144,153,711	5,742,412
Parcels	..	..	1,122,029	930,267	191,762