

switchboards and parts, 75 to 100 per cent.; dry cells, 100 per cent.; brass screws, 300 per cent.; telephones, 70 per cent.; copper earth-plates, 50 per cent.; insulators, 75 to 200 per cent.; battery zines, 160 per cent.; soldering preparations, 300 per cent.; lead seals, 88 per cent.; checking and copying pencils, about 300 per cent.; the cheaper qualities of paper, 300 per cent.; canvas for mail-bags, according to quality, from 91 to 173 per cent.; twine, 90 per cent.; and stationery generally, about 40 per cent. These are simply quoted as leading examples, and will give some idea as to how the increased expenditure has arisen.

STAFF.

Comparative Return of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st March, 1917, and 31st March, 1918.

The total number of officers on the staff on the 31st March, 1917 and 1918, was as under:—

				31st March, 1917.	31st March, 1918.
Postmaster-General	...	...	...	1	1
Classified staff—					
Permanent—					
Administrative Division	...	...	...	3	3
Professional Division	...	...	...	38	38
Clerical Division	...	...	...	3,266	3,463
General Division	...	...	...	3,652	3,464
Temporary—					
Night-watchmen	...	...	...	4	2
Postmistresses and assistants	...	...	...	118	164
Switchboard attendants	...	...	...	337	520
Note-sorters, distributors, &c.	...	...	...	69	146
Postmen, messengers, and chauffeurs	...	...	...	185	306
Night telephonists	...	...	...	21	50
Total, classified staff	...	...	...	7,694	8,157
Employees not on classified staff—					
Country Postmasters and Postmistresses	...	...	...	2,357	2,303
Postmasters and telegraphists or telephonists who are Railway officers	...	...	...	143	140
Total	...	...	...	10,194	10,600

HEALTH OF PERMANENT STAFF.

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

			Number on Staff.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Absence for each Officer employed.
Men	...	...	6,121*	Days. 12·6	Days. 3·7
Women	...	...	847	18·31	12·09

Thirteen officers died during the year, exclusive of casualties in the Expeditionary Force.

PERSONAL AND STAFF.

The decoration of the Imperial Service Order was conferred in June, 1917, on Mr. W. R. Morris, Secretary of the Department.

Mr. J. Orchiston, who filled the position of Chief Telegraph Engineer for the Dominion for over seven years, retired on superannuation at the end of May, 1918.

The following senior officers, each with many years of service to his credit, retired during the year: C. Hill, Chief Postmaster, Tinaru; S. Inder, Postmaster, Palmerston North; C. Whelan, Chief Postmaster, Blenheim; M. C. Corliss, Superintendent, Telegraph-office, Wanganni; A. W. Oxley, Superintendent, Telegraph-office, Nelson; F. Perrin, Postmaster, Hastings; and W. Callaghan, Postmaster, Hawera.

Mr. R. M. Baird, Telegraph Engineer, Auckland, died on the 7th October, 1917. He had completed over forty years' service in the Department.

Up to the 31st March, 1918, the number of permanent and temporary officers of the Department accepted for service with the Expeditionary Forces was 2,302. Of these officers, 154 have been killed in action or have died from wounds or sickness, and 330 have been wounded.

The Department has supplied regular reinforcements to the wireless-telegraphy troop recruited in 1916 from its officers. It has provided also a number of expert telegraphists, mechanics, linemen, and postal sorters for special military service.

During the year the Department has employed many returned soldiers, mostly men with no previous training in clerical duties.

In the ballots for Second Division Reservists many of the Department's most useful officers have been selected for service, but up to the 31st March the Department has sought exemption for

* Including 1,508 officers absent with the Expeditionary Force.