

HEALTH OF PERMANENT STAFF.

The following table gives the average absence of officers on sick-leave this year as compared with last :—

				Number on Staff.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Absence for each Officer employed.
Year ended 31st March, 1932—						
Men	..	..	..	7,886	9.14	3.83
Women	..	..	..	699	13.6	7.91
Year ended 31st March, 1931—						
Men	..	..	..	8,151	10.5	4.22
Women	..	..	..	750	14.29	7.9

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

PERSONAL.

Mr. A. Gibbs, Chief Telegraph Engineer, retired on superannuation from the 14th March, after completing forty years of service. He was succeeded by Mr. C. S. Plank, Deputy Chief Telegraph Engineer.

Mr. A. P. Bennett, Chief Inspector, retired on the 8th October, having served the Department for over forty years. Since Mr. Bennett's retirement, Mr. F. J. Shanks, Chief Postmaster, Christchurch, has acted as Chief Inspector, as required.

Mr. H. P. Donald, Chief Postmaster, Auckland, retired on the 20th October, with over forty year's service. He was succeeded by Mr. S. M. Harrison, Chief Postmaster, Dunedin, Mr. Harrison in turn being succeeded by Mr. J. P. P. Clouston, of the General Post Office staff.

Also on completion of forty years' service, Mr. H. W. Allan, Superintendent of the Wellington Telegraph Office, retired on the 7th September. Mr. Allan's position was not filled, the control of the Wellington Telegraph Office passing to the Chief Postmaster, in accordance with a decision made some time ago to amalgamate under one control the telegraph and postal control of the Department in each of the four centres. All telegraph branches are now controlled by Chief Postmasters.

REDUCTION IN SALARIES.

On the 1st April, 1931, the salaries, wages, and allowances paid to employees of the Department were reduced by 10 per cent. under the provisions of the Finance Act of 1931. The Act permitted officers to continue to contribute to the superannuation fund on the old rate of salary when they so desired, and 1,618 officers took advantage of this provision.

Under the provisions of the National Expenditure Adjustment Act, 1932, a further reduction in Public Service salaries and wages applies from the 1st April, 1932.

APPEAL BOARD.

The Post and Telegraph Appeal Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. E. C. Cutten, the Senior Stipendiary Magistrate at Auckland, sat once during the year. The claims of thirty-five appellants were adjudicated upon. Two appeals were allowed, eighty-four were disallowed, one was judged not to lie, and twenty were withdrawn.

Mr. E. R. Blewett's three-year term as the Service representative of the Postal Branch of the Department on the Board and Mr. J. D. Burns's three-year term as the Service representative of the Telegraph Branch expired during the year. To the postal vacancy Mr. W. G. F. Pinkham, of Blenheim, was elected unopposed, while at an election contested by two officers, Mr. H. V. Ward, of Wellington, was returned as the Telegraph representative for the ensuing triennium.

DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL.

The improvement of the general educational standard of junior officers continues to be provided for by the Department's Correspondence School; and during the year 606 juniors enrolled voluntarily for a course of instruction. Tuition is also provided to assist officers to pass various departmental examinations which have for their object the testing of an officer's fitness for promotion. For these courses 357 enrolments were received, making a total for the year of 963 students.

EXAMINATIONS.

Of the 2,276 officers who entered for departmental efficiency examinations held during the year, 1,120 were either wholly or partially successful.

SUGGESTIONS BOARD.

The number of suggestions made by officers for improving the working of the Department was 434. The number of awards was 15, the total sum awarded being £23 10s.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH.

The Commercial Branch has had a severe test during the two years of its existence. The first year's operations resulted in the securing of new business of an annual value of £32,148. Despite the increased difficulties of the year under review—the second year of operation of the Branch—these figures have been improved upon, the annual value of the business obtained being £36,679. Of this amount, £26,360 is made up of telephone business and £10,319 of advertising business and miscellaneous services.