

54. (a.) By law Postmasters are required to witness claims for absent voters' permits in connection with parliamentary elections.

(b.) If the title "Postmaster" is printed at the foot of a form as that of a witness, a Postmaster may act as a witness without demur.

CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF DUTIES.

55. (a.) No information regarding any matter which may come to the knowledge of any officer through his employment in the Department, including the internal arrangements for the carrying-out of the Department's business, shall, without express authority of the Secretary, be furnished to the Press or be given privately or made public by him under pain of dismissal. Every sort of information which comes to the knowledge of officers, permanent, railway, and non-permanent alike, through their work in the Department is to be regarded as absolutely sacred. This instruction applies not only to Post Office and Telegraph matters generally, but to all matters relating to Pensions, State Advances, Public Trust Office, Government Insurance, Customs, Land and Income Tax, and Valuation transactions, and to all other matters respecting transactions on behalf of any branch of the Public Service. Information may, however, be given the Press regarding delays and breakdowns in the telegraph service due to atmospheric causes. No information may be given respecting letters or other postal matter, except to the addressees or to persons whom they nominate in writing. No officer may make public any official communication which he may receive, unless he shall be officially directed to do so. Members of Parliament have no privilege in these respects.

(b.) The address of a person cannot be given by the Department without the permission of the person inquired for; and counter officers are required to point this out to any person presenting a telegram asking for such information. But Postal officers may give to Police officers, on their producing an inquiry form issued by the Repatriation Department, the addresses, if known, of returned soldiers. Inquiries for persons are not to be undertaken on behalf of persons resident within New Zealand; but if an address is known it may be given, provided the person inquired for agrees.

(c.) All telegrams must be regarded as strictly confidential, and treated with the same care and secrecy as sealed letters. Any officer divulging, in whole or in part, the contents of a telegram, except to the sender or addressee thereof, or making improper use of any telegram passing through his hands, will render himself liable to dismissal, and to the penalties provided under section 146 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908. *No officer shall communicate to any other officer the contents of any telegram coming to his knowledge, save and except for the transaction or furtherance of the business of the Department, and items of news or official information may on no account be made public.*

(d.) Requests by telegram from the public to officers in their official capacity for information as to the results of athletic contests, horse-racing, and other such matters of public interest, must not be complied with. Should any telegram of the kind be handed to them for transmission they are to suitably inform the sender of the rule. Any officer so addressed, on being sent the telegram in spite of such warning, will hand it without further dealing with it to the Postmaster or the officer in charge for his action. Information which may come to the knowledge of officers by telegraph prior to results being published in the ordinary way, is not to be made known. This also applies to information received on railway wires. Requests by telegram from one of the public for the name