



An Introduction

TO THE

POST OFFICE

A TRAINING BOOKLET DECEMBER 1959



A N I N T R O D U C T I O N T O

T H E P O S T O F F I C E

1

This handbook is to welcome you into the Post Office, to give you a general idea of its varied and widespread activities, and to show you briefly how best you can contribute your share in its service to the public. You will know from your own experience how much better such service is if it is smartly and cheerfully given. You will now have many opportunities to play your part in this way both as an individual and as a member of a team. Some pictures showing the Post Office in action are given on pages 2-4.

You are now on the staff of the Post Office and that means you are also a Civil Servant. The conditions of the Civil Service will therefore apply to you; for instance on such matters as age, health, character, knowledge and ability, impartiality and promotion by merit. We have a tradition and a standard of behaviour in the Civil Service generally and you will be expected to play your part in upholding them.

Besides the general standards of the Civil Service there are Post Office rules and requirements which you will be expected to observe. The purpose of them is to help the Post Office and its employees to give reliable, honest and courteous service to the public, and also to make the Post Office a desirable and satisfying place to work in. It is our aim to give that kind of service to the public and we ask you to do your part. By doing so, you will get greater personal satisfaction from your work and you will help to keep the Post Office a worthwhile place to work in.



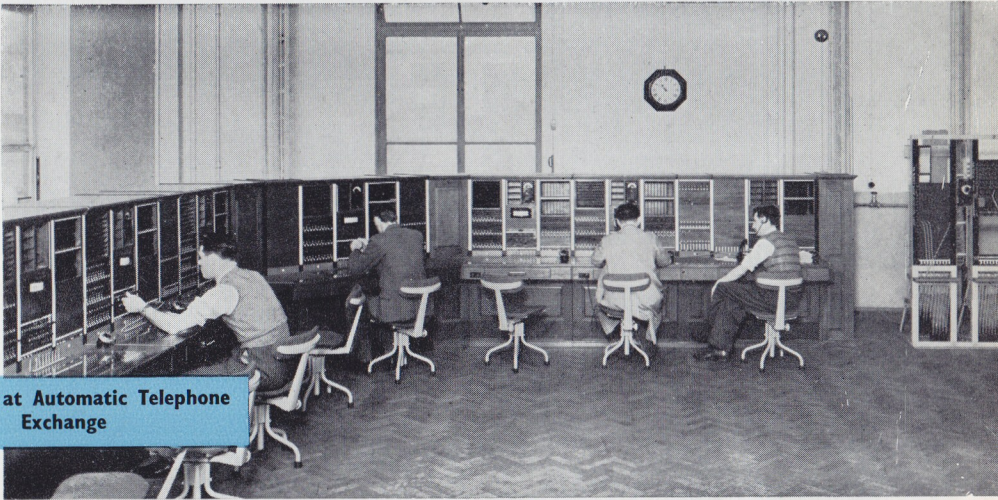
Accepting parcels at a busy office



Preparing mail for overseas



Switchboard at International Telephone Exchange



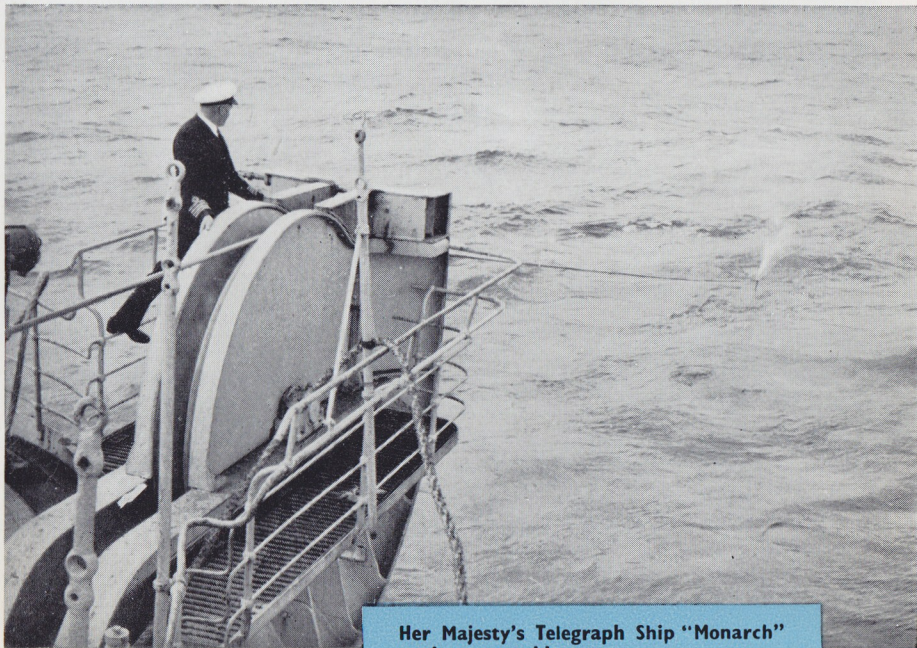
Test desk at Automatic Telephone Exchange



Telephone Exchange switch room



Rugby Radio Station



Her Majesty's Telegraph Ship "Monarch"
paying out cable astern

2

THE POST OFFICE & THE COMMUNITY

Post Office services have reached their present importance over centuries of progress. In the earliest days when the horse was the quickest means of transport, letters were carried by mounted "Post boys" along the "post" roads of Britain. From these early days the science of communication has advanced with the development of railway, telegraph, telephone, aviation and radio, a long history of inventive genius practically applied. There are many books in the Post Office library through which you can follow the Post Office growth to its present place as the largest of the Departments.

No other Department has so close and yet so widespread a touch with people outside. The reputation and success of the Post Office and its staff depend directly upon prompt and courteous service.

This is clear if you stop to think about the kind and amount of work the Post Office does. The Post Office is responsible for all the communications of the country by post, telephone and telegraph. Without these, the speed, efficiency and many of the amenities of modern life would be impossible. At the counters of 25,000 post offices, the general shop of the Government, you may buy savings certificates, licences and insurance stamps as well as postage stamps and postal orders. These are only a few of many services rendered. You would be bewildered if we gave you a complete list of those services but you will see from page 11 that the annual value of the total transactions is over £5,000 millions. Each one of these sales or services is a matter of importance to the customer who entrusts the Post Office with his business. Clearly then, the Post Office has a particular responsibility in making life smoother and fuller for everyone.

3

HOW THE POST OFFICE IS ORGANISED

You are now one of a total staff of over 358,000 people, with a payroll of just over £210 millions a year. To play your part in this very large organisation you need to know what kind of organisation it is. At the head

is the Postmaster General, who is responsible to Parliament for the conduct of the affairs of his Department; his chief adviser is the Director General, who is the permanent head of the Department.

The Postmaster General, the Assistant Postmaster General, the Director General and about a dozen of the higher officers of the Department form the Post Office Board. There is also the Post Office Advisory Council, a body of prominent men and women from outside the Post Office, appointed by the Postmaster General to advise him on matters of policy, particularly as they affect the public. Below the directorate, where it is decided what the Post Office should do, there are administrative and controlling staffs. Then comes the main body of operational staffs of postmen, telephonists, telegraphists, counter officers and engineering technicians. When the broad lines of policy have been decided by the directorate, the planning and administrative staff have to devise the most appropriate means of carrying them out and the best methods by which the operational staff can do the work.

Under the Director General there are :

1 The Administrative and Public Relations Departments, which are at GPO Headquarters :

- (a) The Establishments and Organisation Department, dealing with pay, grading, staff numbers and organisation.
- (b) The Personnel Department, dealing with staff matters.
- (c) The Postal Services Department which plans and controls the home and overseas mail services.
- (d) The Inland Telecommunications Department which plans and controls the inland telegraph and telephone services.
- (e) The External Telecommunications Executive, responsible for the overseas telegraph and telephone services.
- (f) The Radio Services Department, responsible for international radio agreements and regulations and the licensing of national radio services including broadcasting and television.
- (g) The Mechanisation and Buildings Department, responsible for the mechanised processes in clerical and postal work; also for Post Office land and buildings.
- (h) The Public Relations Department, which provides publicity for Post Office services.

These Departments are staffed mainly by what are known as the Treasury classes—the general Civil Service clerical, executive and administrative grades—but there are, in addition, many specialist Post Office grades.

2 The Other Headquarter Departments also in London, but with separate headquarters, control the working of the services within their respective spheres. These are the Accountant General's Department, the Engineering Department, the Post Office Savings Department, and the Supplies, Contracts, Factories and Solicitor's Departments. The names are sufficiently explanatory at this stage; a new entrant to most of these Departments will get a handbook about it, and for others there are descriptions of their work in books and pamphlets in the Post Office library.

3 The Regions and Directorates

In London, control is divided between two Regions, one for postal services and the other for telecommunications (telephone and telegraph services). In the Inner London area of the London Postal Region, there are nine District Offices, each in the control of a District Postmaster, and 104 Sub-District Offices. The Outer London Area is divided into 25 Head Post Office Areas, each with its Head Postmaster. The London Telecommunications Region comprises nine Telephone Areas, controlled by Telephone Managers, and the Central Telegraph Office with its four Ring Offices.

The international telegraph service between this country and most overseas countries is operated under the control of the Telegraph Manager, Post Office Cable and Wireless Services, whose Headquarters are in Electra House (which overlooks the Thames from the Victoria Embankment).

Outside London, the country is divided into three Directorates (Scotland, Wales and Border Counties, and Northern Ireland), and five Regions. These are sub-divided into 48 Telephone Areas and 436 Head Post Office Areas. (See page 9).

The principal officers under Directors and Regional Directors are generally as shown on page 10.

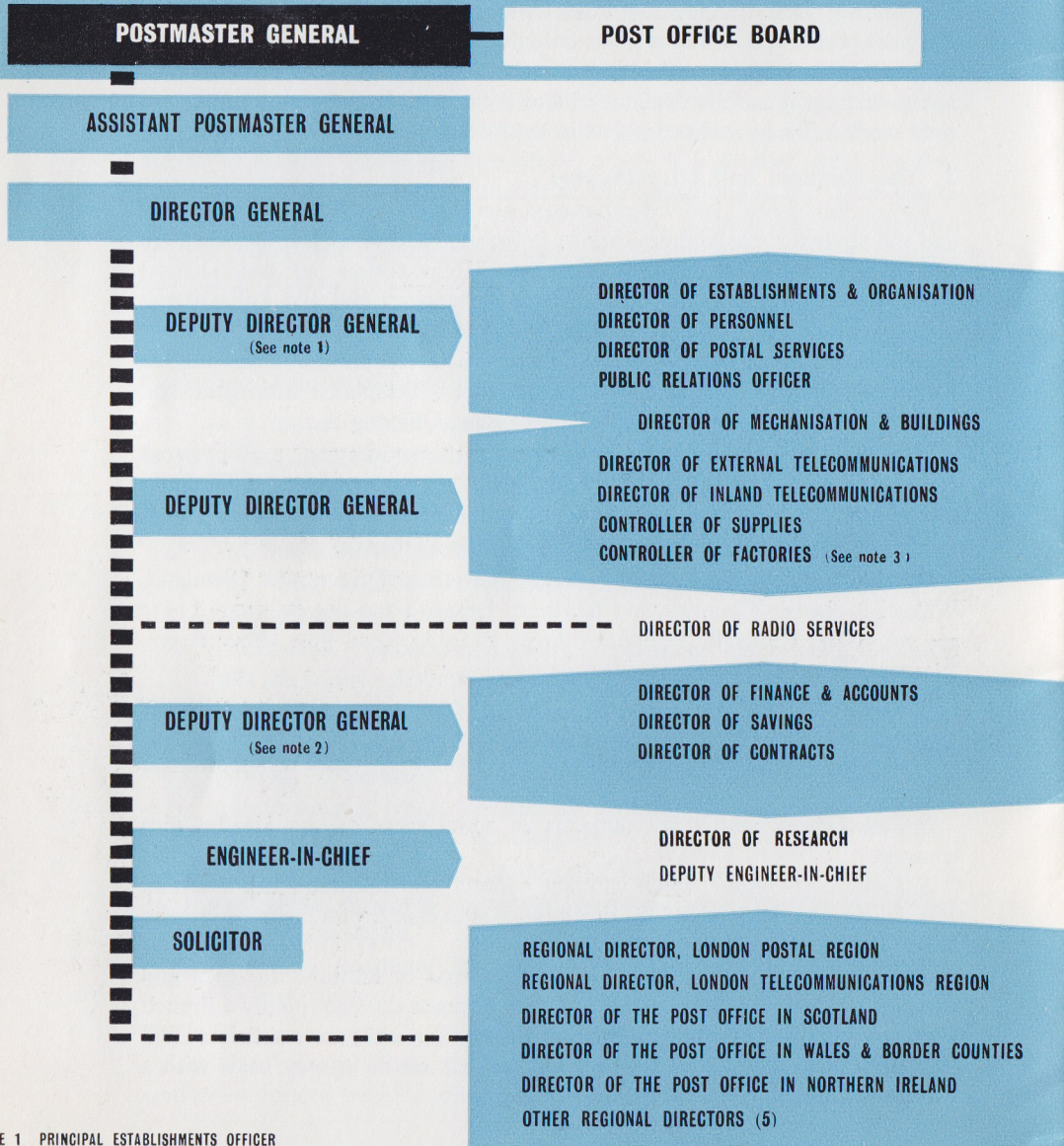
Under the Head Postmasters there are the following types of subordinate offices :

Branch Offices, which are outposts in town areas of the Head Office counter.

Salaried Sub-Offices, which conduct counter and telegraph business and also deliver and despatch mails. Each office is in charge of a Postmaster, who is an established Civil Servant.

Scale Payment Sub-Offices, which are situated in localities in town and rural areas where the volume of Post Office business does not justify a Branch Office or Salaried Sub-Office. The Sub-Postmaster is not an established Civil Servant and usually combines Post Office work on an agency basis with a private retail business.

HOW THE POST OFFICE IS ORGANISED

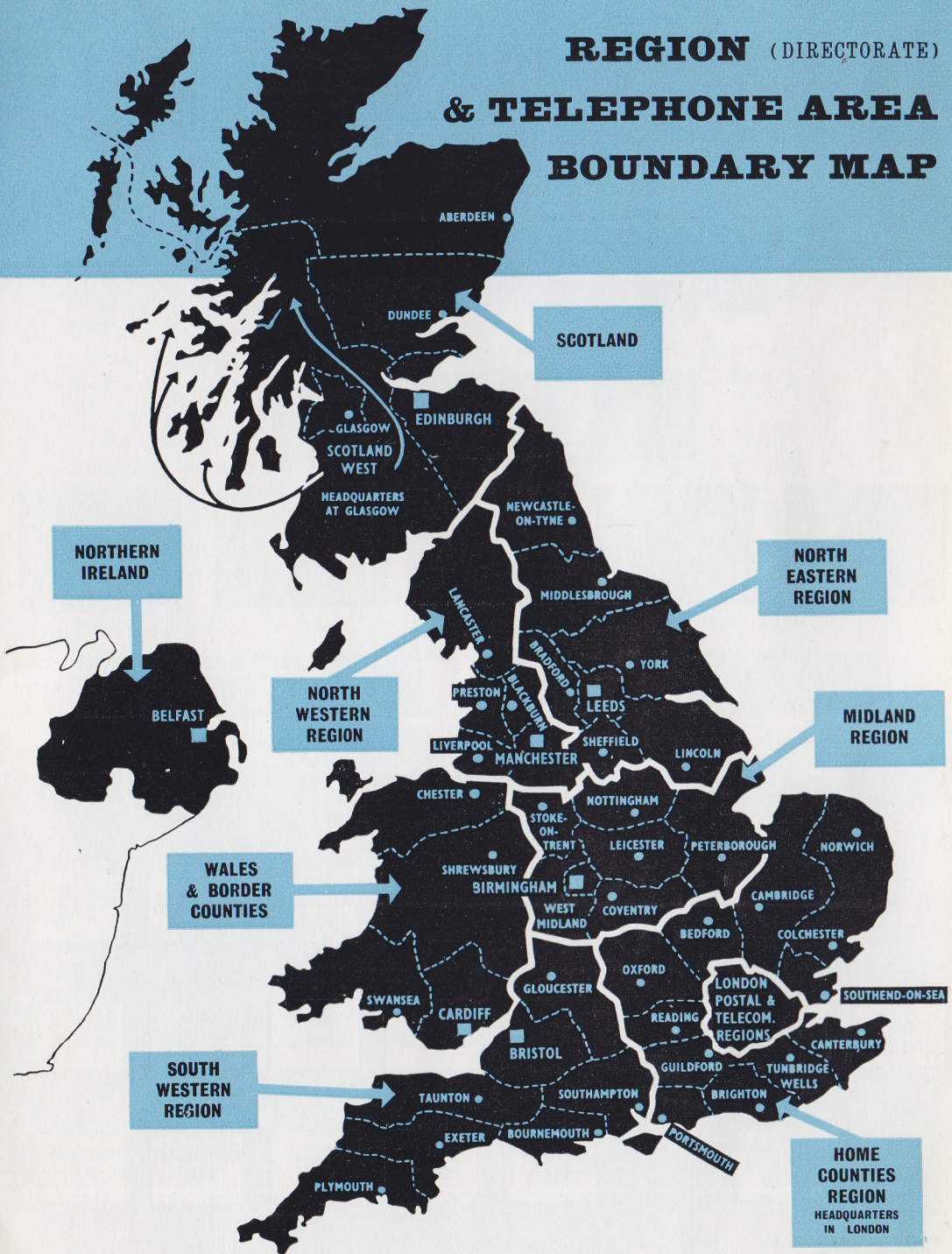


NOTE 1 PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICER

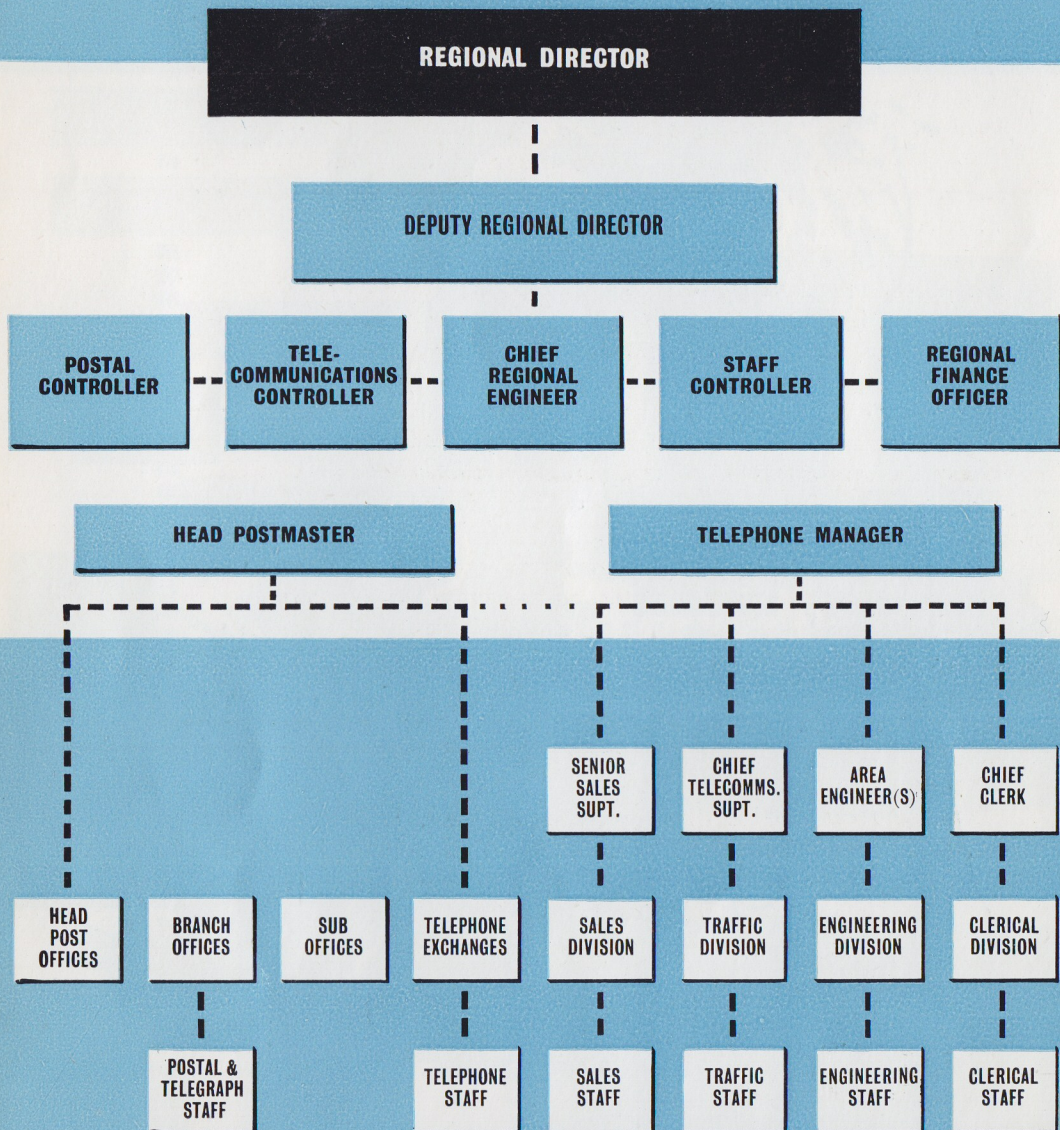
NOTE 2 PRINCIPAL FINANCE OFFICER AND COMPTROLLER & ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

NOTE 3 REPORTS TO ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF FOR TECHNICAL MATTERS

REGION (DIRECTORATE) & TELEPHONE AREA BOUNDARY MAP



PROVINCIAL REGIONAL ORGANISATION



4

POST OFFICE FINANCE

You will be interested to know how much the Post Office earns and spends in a year. The diagram on pages 12 and 13 will give you some idea of the position for the financial year 1957-58.

Some examples of the agency services for other government departments are the sale of National Insurance stamps, the payment of Service and Family allowances, old age pensions and so on.

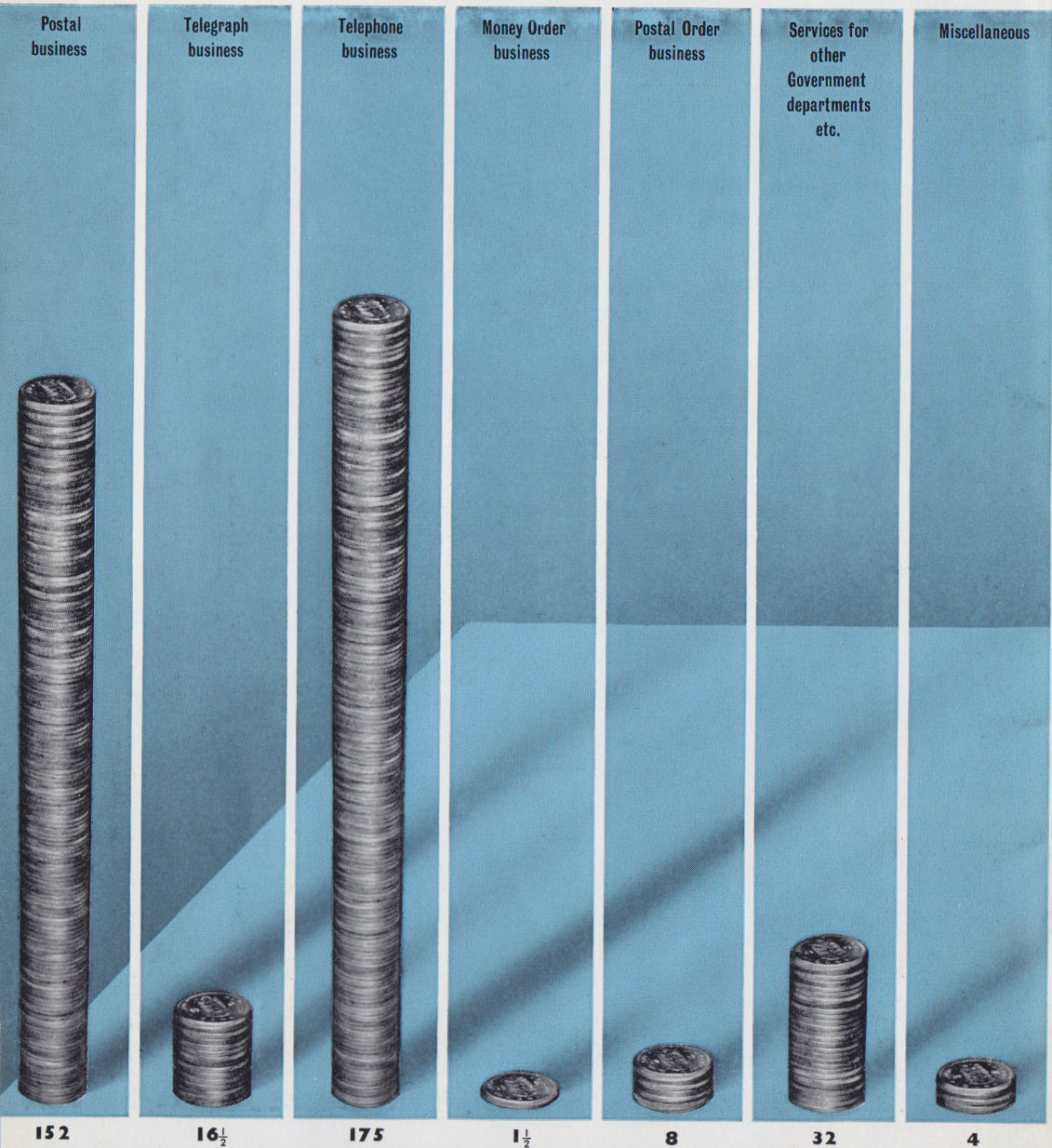
The income and expenditure figures shown on pages 12 and 13 do not, of course, represent anything like the total receipts and payments handled by the Post Office. Just under £2,500 millions a year are received from the public in various forms—Savings Bank deposits, sales of National Savings Certificates, National Insurance and other stamps, postal orders, money orders, etc., and over £2,500 millions are paid out again in withdrawals of savings, payments of pensions and allowances, encashment of postal and money orders and a variety of other transactions. The total cash turnover is therefore over £5,000 millions a year. Some examples of Post Office business transactions with the public are shown on pages 14 and 15.

You may like to know something about the Post Office Savings Department, which takes care of over £5,000 millions of the people's savings. The Department consists of two main divisions—Savings Bank Division and Savings Certificate Division.

The bulk of the deposits in the Savings Bank are invested by the National Debt Commissioners in securities: the interest from these securities is generally sufficient to pay for the interest earned by depositors in the Bank and for the expenses in running it.

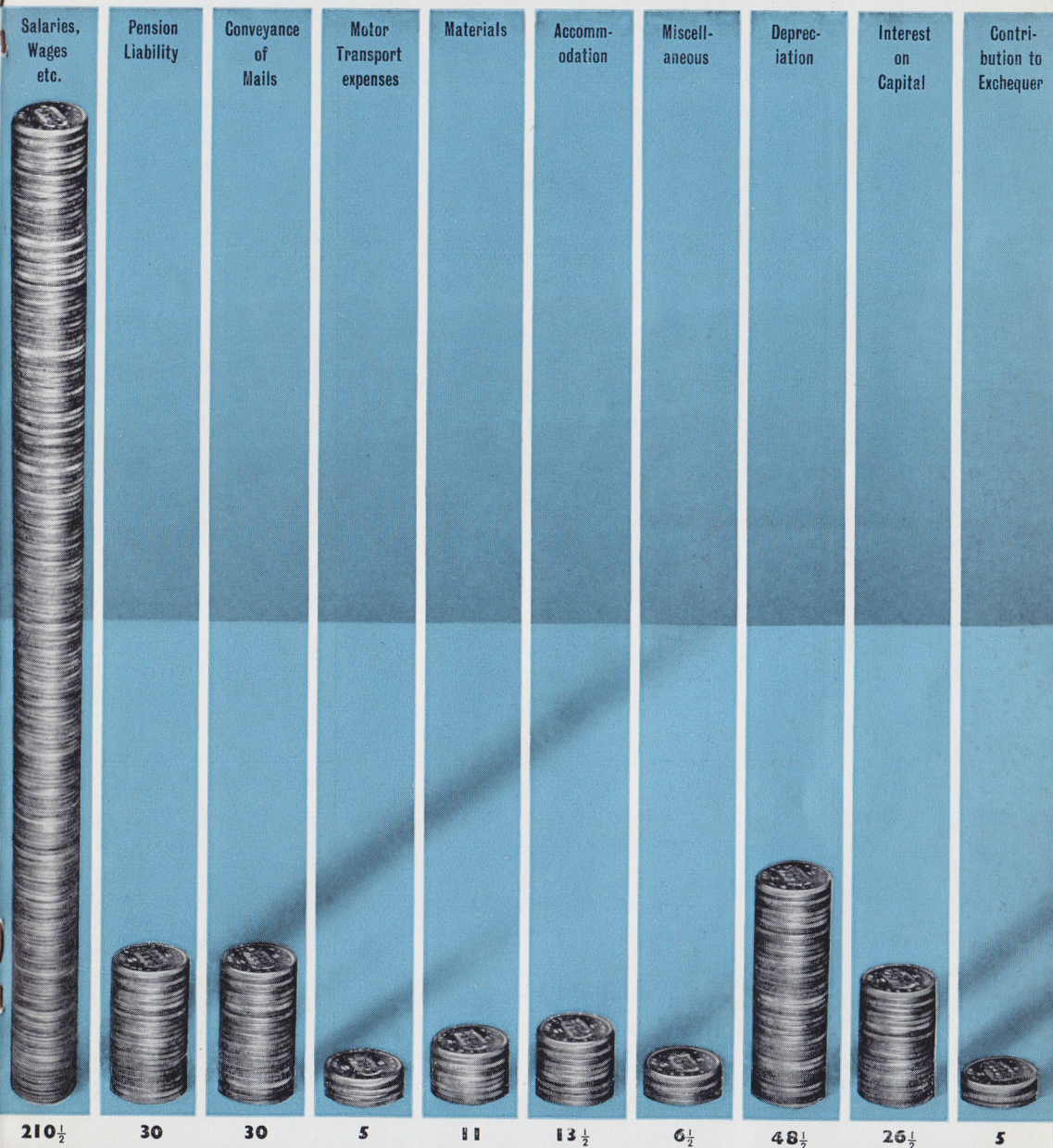
The Savings Certificate Division is responsible for the huge volume of work connected with the issue and repayment of National Savings Certificates. It collaborates closely with the National Savings Committee, and plays a great part in the National Savings Movement.

INCOME £ MILLIONS



TOTAL £389 MILLIONS

EXPENDITURE £ MILLIONS



TOTAL £386 $\frac{1}{2}$ MILLIONS — SURPLUS £2 $\frac{1}{2}$ MILLIONS

MAILS	CORRESPONDENCE	9,600,000,000
	PARCELS HANDLED	247,421,000
TELEGRAMS	INLAND TELEGRAMS SENT	15,233,000
TELEPHONES	LOCAL CALLS	3,671,000,000
	INLAND TRUNK CALLS	326,828,000
AGENCY SERVICES ETC.	BROADCAST RECEIVING LICENCES ISSUED — SOUND & TELEVISION	14,666,000

DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR

1957-58

SAVINGS

SAVINGS BANK DEPOSITS

£453,476,000

SAVINGS BANK WITHDRAWALS

£518,226,000

SAVINGS CERTIFICATES ISSUED

£138,293,000

SAVINGS CERTIFICATES REPAID

£128,439,000

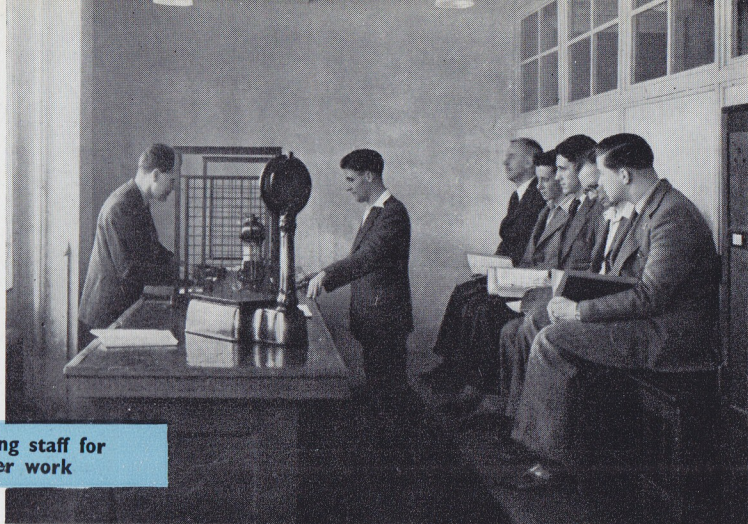
AGENCY
SERVICES
ETC.

NATIONAL INSURANCE STAMPS SOLD

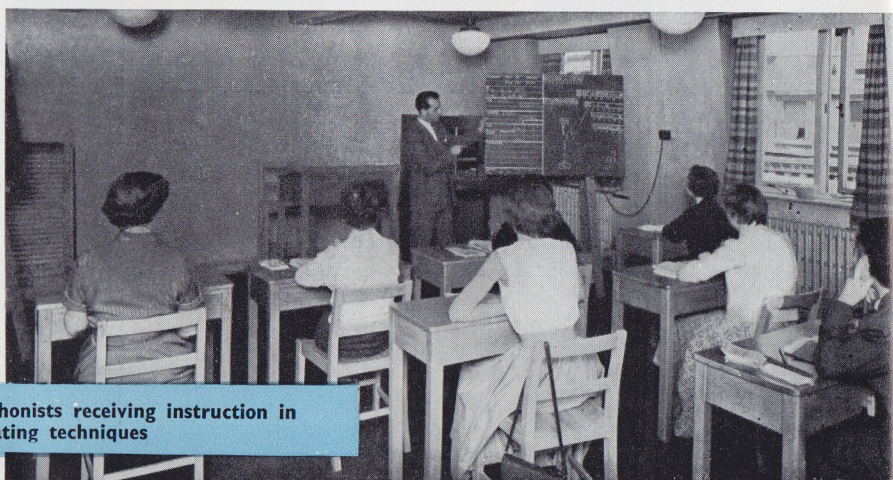
£439,563,000

NATIONAL INSURANCE
PENSIONS ETC. PAID

£694,207,000



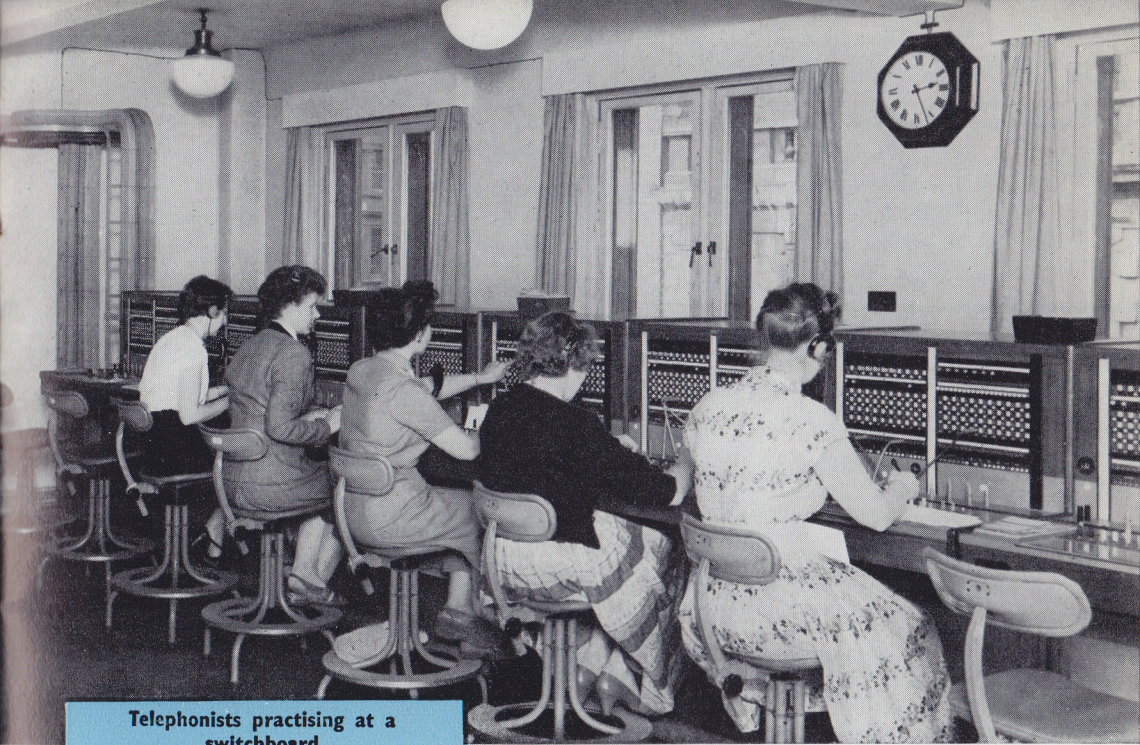
Training staff for counter work



Telephonists receiving instruction in operating techniques



**London Postal School.
Letter demonstration room**



Telephonists practising at a switchboard



Training Instructors at Headquarters Training Centre

5

MISCELLANEOUS

A guide to the rules about which you should know, called the Staff Handbook, may be given to you to keep. If you do not receive a copy of your own, there will be one in your office. You should make a point of reading the handbook as early as possible.

The following information should also be of interest to you.

LEARNING YOUR DUTIES

Earlier in this booklet something has been said of the great variety and volume of Post Office work, and the need for very high standards of personal efficiency. How then, will you learn your duties and reach this standard?

The Post Office has a training programme designed to help you to understand our rules and methods of work, and to show you where you and your job fit into the whole organisation. Very soon after you come to us you will probably take a course at one of the many training centres, where you will find all the equipment for learning your particular job. The photographs on previous pages in this booklet give some idea of the lifelike telephone exchanges, sorting offices and classrooms set up specially for training purposes. You will be in the care of instructors selected for their enthusiasm, experience of Post Office work and their understanding of your problems as a newcomer. You will find them patient, friendly and helpful.

After your training course you will go to your first office where your colleagues and supervising officers will continue the good work of the instructors to help you pick up your duties. You will now be getting down to work, and developing not only speed but self-confidence in your newly acquired abilities. If you have felt confused, the difficulties will now begin to unravel and solve themselves.

Our aims in Post Office training are simple : to equip you to tackle a new job efficiently and confidently, and to reveal the absorbing interest of work vital to the community. What may not be so obvious is the need during your training to begin to understand our customers and their requirements. It is in the daily contacts with members of the public that our great responsibility of providing service is so obvious, and so satisfying. We must not only serve, but also please the customer.

FURTHER EDUCATION

You will read, in paragraph 10 of section D of the Staff Handbook, what the Department does to encourage staff to continue their education, both general and technical, and what help is given.

If you are under 18 the following paragraphs will be of interest to you.

You should now think about the problem of setting out on a career in the Post Office. Like the rest of the Civil Service and many of the best firms in the country, we give you, whatever job you have started, the chance to leave it for one day each week to attend a college for further education. You may want to use this chance to advance your career, to widen your knowledge, and to learn more about the world and the society you live in, and so add to your enjoyment of life as a whole. It may be that you would like to learn something more about the useful arts and crafts like woodwork and needlework. This continued education will make you better citizens and even better husbands or wives when the time comes.

You will realise that your chief interest in starting work is your job itself, how you get on in it, what you feel about it and what people think about you. You will find that work you did at school, like English, arithmetic, or geography, will seem quite different when you think about them from the point of view of your job, and you will find something new and interesting in the classes on the subject. Further education supports and does not interrupt the job you are interested in. It may lead to a better job. Many of you even

before you start work have found some special interest or hobby in painting, in music, in making things, in gardening and interests of that kind. Colleges of further education are concerned with that part of life as well as with your work, and you can pursue some of these activities in your day-off for classes. Some of them you can follow up in special evening classes.

Another way of looking at these classes is in relation to the people you work with and play with. Education helps you to become a person of better judgement and more useful to the community you live in. Sometimes you need more knowledge, sometimes you need to understand other people better and make yourself understood. In talking over things like this with other students at day continuation classes and with the people who teach there, you may find out much more about the way you fit into the world and into society.

By general education is meant such subjects as English, arithmetic, foreign languages, mathematics, science, geography, citizenship and physical education. The latter may take the form of a "keep fit" class : citizenship may be taught and called "social studies". The subjects you take must form a broad course of study consisting of basic subjects such as English, arithmetic and geography on the one hand, and subjects of your choice on the other. Whether or not you can take those of your choice depends upon what can be provided at the local day or technical college, but the Post Office will do what it can for your needs to be met.

If you are a temporary Typist or Clerical Assistant your studies will help you in the examination for establishment in those grades. If you are a Postman your studies in English would be useful to you in the Open or Limited Competitions for Postal and Telegraph Officers. For anybody whose standard of education approaches the GCE O level, studies can be undertaken for the Clerical Classes Open Competition : if your standard is of GCE O level, you could work for the Executive Classes Open Competition. The point is that, if you are interested in these examinations, you should at once ask to see a copy of form P748 and consult your training officer or supervising officer.

The following paragraphs will be of interest whether you are under or over 18.

The Post Office encourages staff to pursue leisure-time activities, particularly those of evening institutes. You should watch the notice boards at your office for notices about the local evening classes in what, for want of a better name, we call cultural subjects, and in handicrafts or hobbies.

Staff employed in the London area should look out for the Post Office Circular supplements on educational classes, published in August and December of each year. If you are interested in a particular class, you should enquire of the educational organiser shown as responsible for it. Anybody who needs advice or information about a particular subject not covered by the supplements, should not hesitate to approach the local representative for further education whose name is displayed on the notice boards. A valuable source of information is the handbook "A Winter's Tale", listing the evening classes held in London and Middlesex and published each August by the Secretary, Civil Service Council for Further Education, Treasury Chambers, London, S.W.1. Copies are circulated but if you want to see one urgently you should approach your local representative.

The CSCFE publish a similar handbook "Class Conscious" giving the evening classes held in Kent, Surrey and Sussex; this is circulated in all offices in the three counties and in some parts of London.

The CSCFE publish twice yearly their journal "Venture" which contains articles aimed at stimulating interest in a wide range of educational topics, and you should not fail to read the circulating copies.

If you are interested in residential education, or short courses on various educational subjects—mostly cultural—held under residential conditions, you should make enquiry of your training officer for particulars of such courses.

THE POST OFFICE LIBRARY

The Post Office library is the information bureau of the Post Office. It not merely lends books (of which it has some thousands, dealing with all



aspects of Post Office activities and history as well as subjects of general interest), but is usually able to help you with any questions that arise from your Post Office or other interest. Your supervising officer will be able to find out for you what assistance can be given.

THE POST OFFICE MAGAZINE

The Post Office Magazine is published monthly, price 3d., and contains articles and pictures of general interest, and personal news of the staff.

Your local Sales Organiser will give you a complimentary copy and can let you have the magazine regularly if you decide to have the price deducted from your pay.

POST OFFICE TELECOMMUNICATIONS JOURNAL

The Journal is issued quarterly, price 1s. 6d., and contains non-technical and well illustrated articles on all aspects of the telegraph, telephone and other telecommunications services. You can subscribe by having the price deducted from your pay.

RECREATION

Special clubs for young people under 21 exist at some offices and more clubs are being formed.

In most sections of the Post Office some form of voluntary outdoor or indoor sport is organised. You should ask and, if necessary, help to form a regular club to cater for your particular interest. At many offices there are clubs which cover all games and hold regular field days. You will be invited to join these activities and you should watch the notice boards in your office for details. At most offices rooms are provided for rest and recreation.

LUNCHEON CLUBS

There are luncheon clubs in all large offices and in many smaller ones. All young people up to 18 years of age receive a special voucher entitling them to a meal at a reduced rate.

STAFF WELFARE SERVICES

The Department has a number of Welfare Officers who can be consulted privately about personal problems. These officers co-operate with the local representatives of the Civil Service Sanatorium Society, the Post Office Fellowship of Remembrance, the Civil Service Nursing Aid Association and comparable bodies, and will be pleased to put you in touch with them.

We hope you have found this booklet interesting, and that it has given you some idea of the Post Office in action. Good luck and happiness to you in your new career from the Training and Welfare Branch at GPO Headquarters.

