

OFFICERS ON WAR SERVICE.

At the end of the year the number of departmental employees released for service with the armed forces overseas and within New Zealand totalled 3,929, comprising 3,745 permanent officers and 184 temporary employees.

It has been necessary in the national interest to apply for the exemption from overseas service of 132 officers, all of whom are radio operators or technical officers. Appeals for the postponement of mobilization of 322 men called for home service were current at the end of March.

It is with regret that the following particulars of casualties among officers of the Department serving with the Forces are recorded: Killed in action, 22; died of wounds, 5; accidentally killed, 11; died of sickness, 2; died while prisoner of war, 2; missing, 30; wounded, 36; prisoner of war, 103: Total, 211.

Ten officers have received decorations for meritorious service and fifteen others have gained special mention in despatches.

STAFFING UNDER WAR CONDITIONS.

To meet the shortage of trained personnel occasioned by the release of large numbers of officers for military service, unprecedented measures had to be adopted. The policy of recruiting women wherever practicable was continued throughout the year, at the end of which approximately 2,500 had been engaged for the duration of the war. Women are now functioning successfully as office assistants, chauffeurs, postwomen, and lift attendants. A number are also employed in departmental workshops and in automatic-telephone exchanges.

Every effort has been made to conserve man-power by the adoption of simplified systems of work and by the elimination of all but essential records.

The filling of positions by more or less inexperienced employees called for the introduction of a fairly comprehensive training scheme for junior officers. Schools have been established at Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington, where the younger male and female employees are given sound theoretical and practical training.

These schools will also play an important part in the Department's scheme for the rehabilitation of departmental officers returning from overseas, as it is intended to provide refresher courses for our soldier-employees before they recommence their departmental duties.

APPEAL BOARD.

Appeals totalling 573, received from 147 officers, were adjudicated upon during the year by the Post and Telegraph Appeal Board, with the following results: Allowed, 5; conceded by Department, 4; withdrawn, 154; did not lie, 10; disallowed, 398.

In two other cases the Appeal Board recommended that the appellants be allotted the same grading and salary as the appointee.

NATIONAL SAVINGS.

The work undertaken by the Post Office in connection with the National Savings Movement has resulted to date in a total of 261,875 National Savings Accounts being opened, exclusive of those accounts opened with the trustee savings-banks at Auckland, Dunedin, Invercargill, and New Plymouth.

For the year ended the 31st March, 1942, the Post Office received contributions amounting to £4,947,654. Since the inception of the movement the total investments in National Savings effected through the Post Office amount to £6,197,028.

PATRIOTIC FUND: CONTRIBUTIONS BY POST OFFICE STAFFS.

Since the Post Office Patriotic Fund was established in March, 1940, the sum of £7,400 has been contributed to the National Fund and £3,700 to the Provincial Funds, a total of £11,100.

DEPARTMENTAL MOTOR-VEHICLES.

Under the abnormal conditions obtaining during the year no new vehicles were purchased. A considerable saving in mileage was effected by the restricted use of the existing units.

WORKSHOPS.

The total value of the work performed in the various workshops during the year amounted to £306,799, of which £119,056 represents the value of services rendered to other Government Departments.

BUILDINGS.

During the year the erection of the following departmental buildings was completed: Chief post-office buildings at Christchurch and Invercargill; post-office buildings at Katikati and Mount Maunganui; post-office and residence at Mosgiel; automatic-telephone-exchange building at Mount Albert; line store and garage buildings at Dunedin, Stratford, and Wanganui; garage buildings at Hamilton, Linwood, New Brighton, Rakaia, Roxburgh, and Waitara.

Additions were made to the chief post-office building at Auckland; to the post-office buildings at Helensville, Kaeo, Kawakawa, New Lynn, Papanui, Waitoa, and Waitotara; to the workshops building at Invercargill, and to the garage building at Hawera.

Improved accommodation was provided at Nelson, Port Nelson, and Timaru.

At the end of the year new post-office buildings were in process of erection at Brighton, Clydevale, Lower Hutt, Motueka, and Te Kuiti, staff quarters at Awarua Radio, post-office and quarters at Owaka, and an automatic exchange at St. Heliers.

Major additions to the departmental building at Herd Street, Wellington, and the Ponsonby automatic exchange and extensive alterations to the Auckland chief post-office, Awarua Radio staff quarters, Auckland (Newmarket) store and workshops buildings, Dargaville post-office building, Waihi post-office building, and the old chief post-office building at Wanganui also were in progress at the end of the year.

The Putorino post-office building was destroyed by fire on the 10th August, 1941.

Residences for the Postmasters at Feilding and Kaikohe and the Chief Postmaster at Oamaru were purchased during the year.