

During the year the Department's staff was augmented by the release of a number of employees from the Armed Forces, and the increase in the total staff employed, as compared with the previous year, is due chiefly to this factor. The number of men who up to 31st March, 1946, had not returned to railway duty was 1,751, a reduction of 3,070 on the number serving in the Armed Forces at the commencement of the year.

It is with mingled feelings of pride and regret that I record that during the war 361 of the Department's employees made the supreme sacrifice, while 25 employees are still posted as missing.

The additions accruing from the return of employees from the Armed Forces were to some extent offset by the lifting of man-power controls and the general demand for labour, which, as in the case of other industries, has resulted in the loss of a number of employees. With a view to counteracting these effects a recruiting campaign was inaugurated, aimed particularly at building up the traffic and locomotive operating staffs, where the greater difficulty is found in regulating the hours of duty. In these circumstances the turnover of staff during the year has exceeded that normally experienced. Appointments to the permanent staff numbered 530, while 314 retired on superannuation, 642 resigned, 42 died, and 39 were dismissed or paid off.

One hundred and fourteen members of the Second Division were promoted to the First Division.

A total of £73,817 was paid under the Workers' Compensation Act during the year in respect of employees suffering injury in the course of their employment.

During the year the Government Railways Industrial Tribunal heard and adjudicated on some 70 claims presented by the railway service organizations. Arising out of these claims, 41 orders, in most cases operating from 14th October, 1945, were made by the Tribunal.

The orders affect the classification of various groups of Second Division employees, and provide for the payment of various allowances and for a number of alterations in conditions of service.

CONCLUSION

Now that the successful termination of the world-wide conflict has been achieved, I take pleasure in welcoming back to the railways those who have been serving with the Armed Forces and in paying to them, and to those who gave their lives, tribute for their great services to New Zealand.

To those also whose duty lay in continuing with their ordinary work, great credit is due for the manner in which they have successfully met every emergency and for their loyal co-operation in time of extreme need.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Sawers', with a stylized, cursive script.

General Manager.