

POST OFFICE HONOURS LIST

It is recorded with pleasure that, during the course of the war, 79 employees received decorations and awards, while 96 were mentioned in despatches.

STAFFING POSITION

The general staffing position improved over the latter part of the year, due to the return to the Department's employ of many officers who have been serving with the Armed Forces. This resulted in many of the female temporary employees, who were recruited during the war years, becoming surplus to requirements in some sections, permitting of a number being diverted to permanent positions in telephone exchanges, while others have left the Service.

The inability to recruit boys for permanent appointment to junior positions is creating a problem which will affect the Department's normal staffing procedure for some time. In order to maintain a steady flow of junior officers for more advanced positions, an annual intake of approximately four hundred lads is necessary. The number of lads offering to-day is extremely limited and, in consequence, the Department's staffing foundation is seriously affected. This shortage of juvenile labour is general, and is attributable to various causes.

Although some two thousand officers returned to the Department from the Armed Forces during the year, little difficulty has been experienced in rehabilitating the men, either in their former positions or in new positions. The Department's Rehabilitation Officers are maintaining close contact with our ex-servicemen, and it can be said that the men have responded well to the sympathetic treatment accorded them. Schools for mechanics, mechanicians, linemen, and cable-jointers have been established, and ex-servicemen are being given the opportunity of attending refresher courses. Tuition in Morse and machine-printing telegraphy is also provided at the Telegraph Training School in Wellington.

Although the majority of returned servicemen have been content to resume their former occupation in the Department, some have expressed a desire to take up private employment or enter business on their own account. Altogether 272 officers have been granted extended leave without pay to enable them to test the suitability of other employment, and, so far, 46 of this number have resigned and 30 have returned to the Department.

APPEAL BOARD

There were 180 appeals lodged by 119 officers during the year. These were dealt with by the Post and Telegraph Appeal Board, with the following results: allowed, 10; withdrawn, 40; did not lie, 14; disallowed, 112; and in four cases the appellants were accorded the same grading as that of the appointees—in three of the cases on the recommendation of the Appeal Board, and in the other case by consent of the Department.

RECLASSIFICATION OF SERVICE

The quinquennial reclassification of the Service, which was to have been undertaken in 1942, was deferred owing to wartime difficulties, on the understanding that it would be carried out within two years of the cessation of hostilities. The reclassification is now to be undertaken as from the 1st April, 1946.

POST OFFICE WELFARE SCHEME

During the year the special interest shown by the Administration in the general well-being of departmental employees was evidenced by the launching of a comprehensive welfare scheme as an expansion of the original Post Office Welfare Fund established in 1944.

As a result, the "Post Office Welfare Trust Board" was incorporated on the 12th December, 1945, under the Religious, Charitable, and Educational Trusts Act, 1908.