

HEALTH OF STAFF

The following table shows the average number of days on which employees were absent on sick-leave during the years ended the 31st March, 1947 and 1948. The figures are not fully comparative on this occasion, as particulars in respect of temporary employees are included for the first time in the 1947-48 figures:—

	Number on Staff.	Average Absence for each Sick Employee.	Average Absence for each Person employed.
Year ended 31st March, 1947—			
Men	9,802	13·69	7·85
Women	1,485	13·90	9·85
Year ended 31st March, 1948—			
Men	11,768	12·30	6·15
Women	3,238	13·23	7·85

It is recorded with regret that 39 employees died during the year.

OFFICERS SERVING WITH THE ARMED FORCES

As at the 31st March, the number of employees serving with the Armed Forces had been reduced to 93. Of this number, 2 were serving with Navy, 41 with Army in Japan, 13 with Army in New Zealand, and 37 with the Royal New Zealand Air Force on an interim basis.

It is expected that by the end of 1948 practically all these employees will either have returned to the Department or have decided to remain permanently with the Forces.

STAFFING POSITION

Owing to the existing general shortage of labour and the keen competition for staff, the Department has again found recruitment difficult, with the result that it has not been practicable to maintain staff allocations at full strength. There is at present a shortage of approximately 800 units, of which 500 are required to fill immediate vacancies in the various departmental branches which provide service to the public. The remaining 300 are needed on the engineering side in order that the every-day maintenance and construction work in connection with the Department's telecommunications network may be given the necessary attention. When additional supplies of telephone switching-equipment come to hand and the building position improves, several hundred more men will be required in order that major developmental work may proceed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is pleasing to record that the efforts made to recruit staff have not been unfruitful, in that at the end of the year the effective working strength of the staff was greater than it was twelve months earlier. With the continuing expansion of the Department's business, it is essential that the various staffing allocations be kept up to reasonable strength if service to the public is to be satisfactorily maintained, and every effort continues to be made to achieve this end.

EX-SERVICEMAN OFFICERS ON SPECIAL LEAVE

Fifty-eight officers who accepted the privilege extended to returned servicemen of taking up to twelve months' special leave without pay to try other employment are still absent from duty.

TRAINING-SCHOOLS

The Department's training-schools continue to play a valuable part in the promotion of efficiency. Many ex-servicemen have availed themselves of the opportunity of attending refresher courses in various types of work. Schools for mechanics and mechanicians are conducted at Wellington, and for line staff at Auckland, Wellington, and