

STAFF

A summary of the staff position and a comparison with the previous year's figures are given in the following table (the figures do not include employees serving in the Armed Forces): -

	1949.	1948.	Variation, 1949 with 1948.
Total staff as at 31st March—			
Permanent	17,509	16,526	+983
Temporary	8,975	9,433	—458
Totals	26,484	25,959	+525
Average staff throughout the year	26,324	25,950	+374

The increase in the total staff of the Department as at 31st March, 1949, in comparison with the previous year's figures has occurred principally in the Maintenance and Road Services Branches. Although a slight improvement in the Department's turnover of labour has taken place, in general the shortage of staff has remained acute throughout the year.

In the Traffic and Locomotive Operating Branches it has not been possible to strengthen the staff to the extent desired, and consequently regulating the hours of duty of these employees has presented much difficulty. The deficiency of skilled and unskilled labour in the North Island workshops again impeded the work of overhauling and repairing locomotives.

A comprehensive staff-recruitment policy is still being energetically pursued, but despite this it is estimated that an additional 1,218 employees are still required to bring up to full strength for present requirements the staff engaged directly in the running of trains and the handling of traffic. Staff vacancies in the workshops number 767.

During the year new appointments to the permanent staff totalled 954, while 258 members of the permanent staff retired, 1,061 resigned, 58 died, and 59 were paid off or dismissed. In addition, a large number of temporary employees were appointed to the permanent staff, and 116 members of the Second Division were promoted to the First Division.

A total of £96,955 was paid under the Workers' Compensation Act during the year in respect of employees suffering injury in the course of their employment.

A number of claims relating to rates of pay and conditions of employment were presented to the Government Railways Industrial Tribunal last year by the railways service organizations. Arising out of these claims, twenty-four orders were made by the Tribunal, all of which have benefited materially those employees coming within the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

There have been frequent contacts throughout the year with the national executives and officials of the various service organizations. An atmosphere of understanding and co-operation has characterized all discussions, and the results achieved have contributed in a large measure towards the harmonious relationships which prevail within the Department.