

STAFF.

Mainly on account of the beneficial changes made by Government, the year was an important one from the staff point of view. Salaries were restored to the 1931 level; a minimum wage was provided for male officers on reaching twenty-one years of age, resulting in considerably increased payment to many officers, including those whose advancement had been retarded during the depression period; authority was given for the regrading of the Service, which was three years overdue, to be proceeded with; the forty-hour week was introduced, Saturday work being dispensed with wherever possible; provision was made for officers to be represented on any tribunal appointed to inquire into and report on matters covered by the Staff Regulations; full political rights were granted to officers; annual leave was provided for the first time for temporary workmen after one year's continuous service; and the deductions from the annual leave of all officers on account of sick-leave taken in the preceding year were reduced.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add that, for their part, officers generally have continued to render consistently good service to the Department and the public.

EMPIRE CABLE COMMITTEE: VISIT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO LONDON.

A Committee representative of Governments of the British Commonwealth was recently convened by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to consider cable-rates within the Empire.

In view of the importance to New Zealand of the questions to be dealt with by the Committee, Government arranged, at the request of the British Government, for the Dominion to be represented by the Director-General of the Department, Mr. G. McNamara, C.B.E.

VISIT OF ENGINEERING OFFICERS TO AUSTRALIA.

Messrs. F. C. Gentry, B.Sc., Telegraph Engineer, and R. G. A. Bourne, B.Sc., Assistant Engineer, proceeded to Australia in February last for the purpose of studying telecommunication systems in use throughout the Commonwealth, particularly the installation and operation of multi-channel voice-frequency carrier telegraph systems and the application and operation of communication circuits over coaxial submarine cables. The two officers spent some five weeks in Australia, and the information gained as a result of their observations and investigations will be of material assistance to the Department in carrying out the large programme of developmental works that has been authorized in connection with the long-distance toll network and the telegraph system throughout the Dominion.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH.

A further appreciable increase in the amount of business handled by the Commercial Branch has been recorded, the revenue value of the transactions last year reaching the record figure of £66,634. Assistance in the planning of telephonic arrangements and guidance in respect of other phases of the Department's activities are given to the public by commercial officers; and in the telephone field there is noticeable an increasing desire on the part of business houses to extend or improve their equipment so as to ensure both to themselves and to their customers the maximum degree of telephonic efficiency.

BUILDINGS AND LAND.

Since my previous report was presented in August, 1936, the erection of new post-office buildings has been completed at Dunedin (chief post-office), Charleston, Rangiora, and Thornbury, a substantial addition has been made to the Cambridge post-office building, and extensive alterations have been made to the Moray Place (Dunedin) building. Official opening ceremonies were held at Cambridge, Dunedin, and Pahiatua (performed by myself on the 6th November, 1936, the 14th April, 1937, and the 14th May, 1937, respectively); at Rangiora and Waikari (by the