

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

(THIRTIETH REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency Sir Cyril Louis Norton Newall, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Member of the Order of Merit, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

As Commissioner under the Public Service Act, 1912, I have the honour to submit the following report as required by section 15 of the Public Service Act, 1912.

REPORT.

Although the Public Service Act, 1912, requires only that the Commissioner shall report on the efficiency of the Public Service and of its proceedings, it has been customary in this annual report to review any aspects of personal administration that seem to merit mention. This year, however, considerations of economy and the need to conserve paper induce the Commissioner to reduce his report to the very briefest compass.

The Service is on a war footing. The staffing problems could not very well be more acute. At the moment, 6,054 officers and employees are away on duty in one or other of the armed forces. Over and above that figure, 623 officers have already returned from military duty, so that altogether 6,677 are, or have been, in the uniformed Services. When it is realized that at the outbreak of war there were not more than 14,000 males in the Public Service (whether temporary or permanent staff), it will be readily understood not only that extreme endeavours have been made to release men for the fighting forces, but also that there has been an unprecedented difficulty in maintaining old and providing for new or developing services. The Commissioner has followed the policy that no officer is to be withheld from military service whose place can be filled or whose duties can be postponed or covered by some expedient. To this end, the strictest investigation has been instituted, and continues, for the purpose of eliminating any work that in the light of the country's danger cannot be classed as positively essential.

Many forms of work that had been hitherto regarded as indispensable to safe and prudent administration have been placed under a pitiless scrutiny and either discarded altogether or postponed for the time being. It is plain, however, that the Public Service has reached the point where proposals for further personnel must be most anxiously scrutinized. War conditions have in some aspects of State services reduced what would have been essential work in normal times, but other aspects of work have increased the need for staff. In the result, there is not much reduction in volume of work.

Public administration is an integral part of a nation's total war effort. We have come to the stage in the New Zealand Public Service when the efficient administration of the State's civil business is threatened. Therefore, the Commissioner will more frequently have to take the responsibility of asking Tribunals charged with the direction of man-power to retain public servants in their civil office.

The release of the very heavy proportion of the male officers of the Public Service that has been indicated above has been made possible because of the impressive part played by women in carrying on the State Service. Altogether, 3,200 women have been employed for wartime duty. Very many of these women had never been in any regular form of employment or been occupied previously in any similar kind of work that they are now performing; yet, generally speaking, they have displayed remarkable adaptability, and certainly an anxiety to acquit themselves well and to fill as well as may be the places of the men who have gone to service elsewhere.

Our Men on War Service.—On every field in which the New Zealand Army fights, in whatever sea the Navy sails, or wheresoever the Air Force operates, officers of the New Zealand Public Service have a place. It is not only exceedingly gratifying, but a matter of decent pride to learn of the distinction they have earned. Many awards for courageous exploits have been granted to public servants. Indeed, to two of them has been awarded the highest of all, that which is inscribed simply "For Valour." Many languish in enemy prison camps. We look forward anxiously to that day when they shall return to us. Some, alas, will not return. One hundred and twenty-four men who were our colleagues in the country's service in its peaceful days have rendered her their uttermost service. May we be worthy of them whose memory will ay endure.

Public Administration Scholarships.—The first group to be awarded scholarships in 1939 finished the arduous two years' course at the end of the 1941 University sessions. All were successful in qualifying for the Diploma in Public Administration. The University and external examiners report highly on the work of the students. The men have all returned to very useful and needful tasks in the Public Service. Although four scholarships were awarded this year, it was found necessary at the end of the first term to withdraw the students from college. The scholarships of the first-year students were cancelled and those of the second year were postponed until the course is resumed.

Recruitment.—A satisfactory number (771) of cadets were entered last year, as compared with 845 in the previous year (which, incidentally, was a record by a considerable margin). The urgent requirements of nearly all occupational groups and the lowering of the military age to eighteen has made it increasingly difficult to enlist the number of cadets required. A still closer liaison was established with secondary schools to the advantage not only of the Service, but of the boys. A better and happier placement can always be made if there is consultation and understanding between teacher and employer. The Commissioner acknowledges much assistance from many schools and Vocational Guidance Officers.

Staff Training.—This, as a working plan, has been rendered inoperative by the lowering of the military age and by the exit upon war service of every man that can be spared. The vast majority of boys now spend on an average rather less than a year in the Service prior to leaving for one of the uniformed Services. Virtually, the whole of the staff affected by any training scheme are on leave, and for obvious reasons it is not practicable to operate any scheme for the remnant. All that has been attempted this year is training classes for women in accounts and records work. These classes have been useful not only in providing practical training, but in enabling the quick selection of promising women whose merit might otherwise have been difficult to ascertain relatively for some time.

Economy.—Economy has been enforced throughout the Public Service with the utmost stringency, particularly in the use of petrol and paper and office equipment. Although it is true that the Public Service has been enjoined in the strongest terms to exercise economy, I am bound to say that there has been a most ready and commendable response that cannot be otherwise than ascribed to a genuine desire to assist the country toward victory.

Overtime.—It will not escape notice that the influx of women far from balances even numerically the outflow of men to the armed forces. An unparalleled burden of work has been thrown upon the remainder. The dispersal of staff in many centres and over forty-seven Departments makes it impossible to distribute the work with entire equity, but much has been done to achieve that. An inevitable consequence is that large sections of the Public Service have a very long hour week. Protracted periods of overtime have been worked in many Departments. In the other Departments where the volume of business does not call for overtime, the staff have been employed at nights and during the week-ends in war Departments. Very effective co-ordination has been brought about whereby the staff of one Department or a group of Departments cares for some phases of work in a war Department by working overtime. What has to be guarded against is that overtime is not performed to an excessive degree. The incidence of strain has to be watched with the greatest care, because too heavy pressure to serve immediate ends may in the long-run prove exceedingly expensive and detrimental to efficiency.

Rehabilitation.—Rehabilitation is the biggest personnel problem that confronts the Public Service in the near future. During nearly three years of war, over 6,000 men have already left their positions and many others have been seconded to civilian duties associated directly with the conduct of the war. Of these, some 3,000 have left with five years' service and some hundreds merely a few weeks or months in the Public Service. With the exception of the lamented number who will never return, the rest must be presumed to desire to return to their former civilian occupation, and preparation has accordingly to be made for their placement. Not only do heavy staff adjustments have to be made to accommodate them again, but also means of bridging the gap in their official career have to be planned.

An outline scheme to be administered from the Commissioner's Office has already been drawn up. It envisages—

- (a) The training or the completion of training of such public servants as have been away on war service :
- (b) Bringing each soldier as nearly as may be to the point of usefulness which he would have reached if he had not gone away, and that without the extra strain of having to do the ordinary day's work; at the same time, enabling him to bring himself up to date in both his general education and his departmental knowledge.

Besides our own men, thought has to be given to the men who were not public servants before entering the forces but who will wish to find a career in the Public Service after demobilization, and the services of whom will be required to meet the staff needs of developing State services.

These questions are now receiving attention, and it is intended that plans, having as their purpose the assistance of ex-servicemen resuming or commencing a Public Service career, shall be well settled and ready for operation when the time comes.

Administrative Changes.—Public Service Commissioner's Office : Mr. J. H. Boyes appointed Public Service Commissioner on 14th October, 1941, *vice* Mr. T. Mark, deceased.

Social Security Department : Mr. H. D. Smith appointed Chairman, Social Security Commission, and Secretary for War Pensions, on 7th November, 1941, *vice* Mr. J. H. Boyes. Mr. B. F. Waters appointed Director and Assistant Secretary for War Pensions, *vice* Mr. H. D. Smith, on 7th November, 1941.

Mines Department : Mr. C. H. Benney, Acting Under-Secretary of Mines, was confirmed in his office of Under-Secretary of Mines on 1st April, 1941.

Board of Appeal.—The Board sat in Wellington on three occasions during the year. Twenty-seven appeals were heard, and, of these, one succeeded.

Statistics.—It has been usual to publish several pages of informative statistics. It has been decided to save the paper that would be used in publishing these figures, and they are omitted from this report.

Disciplinary Action.—Altogether eighty-five officers of the classified staff had to be punished for offences, of which seven cases were of dishonesty. Of these, four were dismissed from office and the others were penalized to a less degree. The other offences fall under the general headings of unsatisfactory work or conduct, and for these causes forty-nine have ceased to be officers of the Public Service, and the balance were penalized otherwise.

Regrating of the Public Service.—The regrating of the Public Service last took place in 1937 and was therefore due to be undertaken this year in the normal course. There is no gainsaying the wisdom of the decision of Government to postpone the due time for a period not exceeding two years after the termination of the state of war now existing.

Cost-of-living Allowance.—The cost-of-living allowance has been increased as from the 7th April, 1942, from the basic sum of £13 per annum announced in the last report, by a like amount. This latest allowance has been granted to all officers receiving up to £765 per annum, thus advancing considerably the salary limitation set upon the first allowance.

Internal Examinations.—The usual programme of departmental, efficiency, and qualifying examinations was held. In all classes, 596 candidates presented themselves. Of these, 279 passed, 15 completed a pass, 3 gained a partial pass, and 299 failed. The efficiency tests will not be held again until the war is ended.

Shorthand-typists' Examinations :—

Grade.				Candidates.	Passed.	Failed.
Junior	..	..	..	1,304	648	656
Senior	..	..	..	678	265	413
Intermediate	..	..	..	122	58	64
Special	..	..	..	31	3	28

Efficiency.—I am required by section 15 of the Public Service Act, 1912, to furnish Your Excellency with a report on "the condition and efficiency of the Public Service and of its proceedings." I am able to give you these assurances without reserve. My own observations and the reports of my Inspectors and departmental inspecting officers lead me to the conclusion that the Public Service has maintained its high degree of efficiency. In some respects work may not be as well done as it should be. That consequence is to be expected of a hastily recruited reserve staff and from the absence of thousands of trained personnel. However, all factors considered, I believe better service has never been rendered.

Obituary.—Mr. Donald Robertson, I.S.O., the first Public Service Commissioner in New Zealand, passed away on the 31st May, 1942. He took office on the 1st January, 1913, having formerly been Secretary of the Post and Telegraph Department, and retired on 31st December, 1919. He it was who established the Public Service Commissioner's Office and formulated the general lines of policy upon which it has since operated. The removal of the Public Service from political control and the setting-up of an independent personnel administration, viewed as it was then with not a little distrust and misgiving, was the delicate task performed by Mr. Robertson with great acumen. Under his sagacious superintendence the modern Public Service in New Zealand was set firmly upon its course.

Roll of Honour (Additions since Last Report).—It is a matter of profound regret to have to announce that the Commissioner has been notified that the following officers have lost their lives while serving as members of the armed forces. It is desired to express deep sorrow with their relatives, friends, and colleagues :—

Name.	Department.	Name.	Department.
Allan, W. C.	Social Security.	Jordan, A. S.	Land and Income Tax.
Allen, R. N.	State Advances.	Joyce, D. C.	State Advances.
Ball, B. P.	Marketing.	Keating, R. K.	Education.
Bell, G.	Public Works.	Kirkwood, A. G. P. ..	Land and Income Tax.
Bird, A. W. P.	State Advances.	Knight, M. D.	Mental Hospitals.
Black, S. C.	State Fire.	Lippitt, D. T.	Public Works.
Blackburn, H. C. ..	Social Security.	Luke, S. J.	"
Bolton, G. M.	Internal Affairs.	Lund, M. S.	Social Security.
Bredesen, H. J. ..	Public Works.	Lyons, G. F.	Customs.
Brewer, R. L.	Mental Hospitals.	McCracken, T. R. ..	Industries and Commerce.
Bright, E. W.	Native.	McKenzie, D. A. B. ..	Land and Income Tax.
Campbell, D. M. ..	State Advances.	McLeod, W. D. A. ..	Transport.
Carlyle, P. J.	Internal Affairs.	Magrath, O. B.	Government Life Insurance.
Casey, G. B.	Audit.	Marshall, N. J. G. ..	Public Works.
Chambers, G. P. ..	Public Trust.	Miller, K. C. M.	"
Clifford, N. A.	Broadcasting.	Minnis, R. J.	Justice.
Coakley, K. J.	Internal Affairs.	Mulligan, R. T.	Audit.
Creed, F. H.	Land and Income Tax.	Organ, R. F.	Agriculture.
Crossan, H. M.	Justice.	Pepperell, J. R.	Customs.
Crowhurst, S. V... ..	"	Philip, K. C.	Air.
Dawes, L. J.	Transport.	Redstone, G. P. L. ..	Justice.
Dixey, J. R. J.	Air.	Richardson, F. B. ..	Land and Income Tax.
Donnelly, H. P.	Navy.	Roberts, W. H.	External Affairs.
Douglas, C. H.	Public Works.	Robertson, E. B. ..	Agriculture.
Drake, G. E.	Lands and Survey.	Rogers, J. M.	Mental Hospitals.
Eldershaw, E.	"	Rushton, G.	State Advances.
Eustace, F. E.	Labour.	Ryalls, G.	Education.
Everist, W. T.	Audit.	Shannon, F. R.	Public Works.
Felton, W. W. G. ..	Internal Affairs.	Shaw, C. C.	State Advances.
Ferguson, T. M. ...	State Advances.	Shine, J. S.	Public Trust.
Fooks, H. G. C.	Industries and Commerce.	Sievers, J. W.	"
Gate, A. I.	Justice.	Sinclair, A. A.	Census and Statistics.
Gifford, E. A.	Public Works.	Smith, B. A.	Marketing.
Grady, J. A.	State Advances.	Thomson, J. W.	Justice.
Green, R. N.	Industries and Commerce.	Thomson, M. J. W. ..	Mental Hospitals.
Halley, J. L.	Public Works.	Todd, J. M.	Social Security.
Hayden, W. E. G. ..	"	Turcia, P.	Native.
Hewett, J. D.	"	Walker, L. B.	Industries and Commerce.
Hogg, W. M.	Public Trust.	Ware, L. B.	Public Works.
Ingle, E. S.	Air.	Watkin, D. L. C. ..	Customs.
Irvine, J. G.	Treasury.	Watkinson, S.	Public Trust.
Irwin, B. T. W.	Health.	Watts, W. A.	Agriculture.
Jenkins, A. V.	Army.	Wouldes, N. F.	Land and Income Tax.
Johnson, N. F.	Lands and Survey.		

Conclusion.—It must be said that during this most difficult year, I have had the fullest co-operation of Permanent Heads of Departments. There has been a display of mutual assistance that has been both enheartening and commendable. My own staff have given me every help, as has also the New Zealand Public Service Association, with whom most harmonious relations continue.

All of which is respectfully submitted for your Excellency's gracious consideration.
J. H. BOYES, Commissioner.

Office of the Public Service Commissioner, Wellington, 1st July, 1942.

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