

Retirement Policy in the Public Service.—From the outbreak of war up to the year under review, retirements of public servants have been held over owing to the acute position regarding man-power. Some relaxation of this policy has been possible during the past year. Public servants prior to the outbreak of war could retire after completion of forty years' service, or at the age of sixty-five years irrespective of length of service. In practice most public servants retired at the age of sixty years provided they had completed forty years' service, or at the age of sixty-five years irrespective of length of service. This basis is now being adopted for retirements during the war period where it is possible to release officers. Much dissatisfaction had arisen through the retention of officers beyond the usual age and service for retirement owing to the hold-up which naturally results as far as promotions are concerned. During the past year the release of many officers has improved the position considerably in this connection.

Efficiency Councils.—During the year consideration was given to the desire of the New Zealand Public Service Association that Efficiency Councils be established in the various Departments of the Public Service. Following discussions it was decided to approve of the institution of a scheme on a purely permissive and not mandatory basis, although the scheme carried the recommendation of the Commissioner. The following outline of the scheme is given :—

(a) *Local Efficiency Committees*—

- (1) The personnel of a Local Committee would be three from the management side nominated by the controlling officer, and three from the staff side elected by all the staff other than those representing the management on the Efficiency Committee. As far as possible representation on the Committee should have reference to the functional set-up of the office, workshop, &c. It may, in some cases, be necessary to vary the composition of Local Committees to suit the particular departmental or other conditions.
- (2) The local controlling officer or his deputy would act as Chairman of the Committee and one of the staff members as Secretary.
- (3) The functions of a Local Efficiency Committee would include—
 - (i) Evolution of means whereby the ideas and experience of all officers may be used to the best advantage of the Department ;
 - (ii) The promotion of harmonious relations between the management and the staff ;
 - (iii) Encouragement of initiative and self-reliance among members of the staff ;
 - (iv) Economizing of staff in the broadest sense ;
 - (v) Co-operation in staff-training measures ;
 - (vi) Co-operation to ensure the best organization of procedure and its efficient implementation ;
 - (vii) Promotion of the welfare of the staff—e.g., in respect of accommodation, ventilation, sanitation, &c. ;
 - (viii) Attention to other matters referred to the Committee.
- (4) Meetings would be held as frequently as deemed necessary, but not less than once quarterly. The Chairman would convene meetings on representation from Committee members, or on his own initiative if he thinks desirable.
- (5) Committee members would hold office for one year, and vacancies caused by death, transfer, retirement, or resignation would be filled during the year by the same method as is provided in (1) above.
- (6) Local Efficiency Committees are to confine themselves to matters calculated to promote co-operation and efficiency, and to scrupulously guard against any tendency towards becoming personal disputes committees. Such matters as appointments, salaries, &c., would not come within the scope of Local Efficiency Committees.

(b) *Departmental Efficiency Committees (i.e., National Departmental Efficiency Committees at Head Offices)*

- (1) The establishment of Departmental Efficiency Committees would be on similar terms to Local Efficiency Committees.
- (2) The functions of a Departmental Committee would be
 - (i) The same as those for the Local Committees as outlined above ;
 - (ii) Any matters referred to it by Local Committees by other persons having authority to refer matters to the Committee ;
 - (iii) Staff-training measures ;
 - (iv) Hours of work and overtime ;
 - (v) Leave.
- (3) Departmental Committees would be composed of four from the departmental or controlling side and four from the staff side. Two of the four members from the staff side should be drawn from the Wellington Branch Office of the Department, the other six members being from the Head Office side.
- (4) The Permanent Head or his nominee should be Chairman of the Committee and a staff nominee should act as Secretary.
- (5) Conditions for the filling of vacancies should be along similar lines as for Local Efficiency Committees.

Many Departments have instituted Committees in terms of the above, but it is too soon to express an opinion as to whether the scheme will work satisfactorily. It is appreciated that the tendency of such a scheme to become nothing more than a complaints committee must be avoided.