

PART I.—ADMINISTRATION

SECTION I—ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

1. From 1st April, 1946, the National Employment Service, set up under the Employment Act, 1945, officially commenced its new post-war functions broadly defined in the Act as “the promotion and maintenance of full employment at all times.” New ground has had to be broken in a number of fields, particularly in the institution of the first six-monthly Returns of Employment Information, the assumption of responsibility for immigration, and the exploration of voluntary means of meeting labour needs in certain high-priority industries. The year has therefore been, at least in part, a time of settling down to new procedure and activity.

2. A major new development was the transfer to the Department during the year of immigration work previously undertaken by the Labour Department. The Employment Service, with its information on employment trends and shortages and its placement activities, thus assumed the responsibility for dealing with the large number of inquiries from many persons abroad who are interested in New Zealand as their possible future home, and for preparing for the commencement of a scheme of planned immigration. An Immigration Branch in the High Commissioner's Office, London, was established, and two senior officers were sent from New Zealand to handle inquiries in Great Britain and to act as representatives of the Department in official discussions on planned immigration with the British Government and other bodies. As the Immigration Scheme develops additional trained staff with a first-hand knowledge of New Zealand conditions will be necessary in London, and it is intended to second further officers to Great Britain as the need arises.

3. During the year the policy of pruning staff from the high wartime levels as opportunity arose was continued, and the total strength was reduced from 683 as at 1st April, 1946, to 549 at the date of this report, this latter figure being the present minimum establishment, as compared with 1,055 as at 31st March, 1945. The present figure includes 59 Home Aids and 44 members of the staffs of workers' camps and hostels.

4. In order particularly to assist junior staff and returned servicemen, a full-time Personnel and Staff Training Officer has been appointed. Staff training measures have been instituted in every district office, and a number of officers have been brought to Wellington for short refresher courses. Further co-ordinated staff training plans, linked with the training courses being undertaken by the Public Service Commission, have been drawn up for 1947.

5. The Department's separate existence as the National Employment Service has been short-lived, as it amalgamates with the Labour Department under the name “Department of Labour and Employment” from 1st April, 1947. The task of providing joint accommodation in every centre, of determining the sectional establishment, and of filling the key positions throughout, is receiving attention as this report is being compiled.