

AMALGAMATION OF DEPARTMENTS

The Commission is very strongly of the opinion that the administration of the Public Service can be more competently conducted if the number of Departments is reduced. They are gratified that, with effect from 1st April, 1947, the Department of Labour and the National Employment Service have been merged; and that, subject to legislation, the hitherto independent Departments of Health and Mental Hospitals are to be joined under one administrative head.

UNIFORMITY IN THE STATE SERVICES

The Commission endorses the views expressed in the report last year that the setting-up of the Railway Industrial Tribunal with mandatory powers has seriously limited the usefulness of the Uniformity Committee, which for many years has advised the Government on major proposals affecting the larger State Services. In addition, there are other organizations which are virtually State Departments whose conditions of employment are not reviewed by the Committee—*e.g.*, Reserve Bank, Bank of New Zealand, Police Force, &c.

ACCOMMODATION

Considerable difficulty is experienced in obtaining suitable office accommodation for many Departments. In an endeavour to improve the position, the Accommodation Board has been reconstituted and now comprises Mr. R. M. Campbell (Chairman), Mr. A. H. O'Keefe (Deputy Chairman), Mr. B. C. Ashwin (Secretary to the Treasury), Mr. E. R. McKillop (Commissioner of Works), and Mr. N. E. Hutchings (Under-Secretary, Public Works Department). A sub-committee has been set up with Mr. A. H. O'Keefe as chairman to deal with day-to-day problems, and the advantages of the new set-up have already been revealed. Another change is that the secretarial work has been transferred to the office of the Commission.

The efficient working of the Public Service has been hampered by the unwillingness of officers to accept transfer on promotion because of the difficulty in securing housing accommodation in the various towns in New Zealand. Recently approval was given to the establishment of an Accommodation Bureau in the office of the Commission to facilitate the exchange of houses between public servants on transfer. Already good results have been achieved.

BOARD OF APPEAL

As is usual after the issue of a regrading list, the Board of Appeal has been called upon to consider a greatly increased number of appeals. This necessitates the Board travelling throughout the Dominion. Its sittings commenced in Wellington early in February, 1947, and it is unlikely that all the cases will be disposed of until the end of August. Non-promotion appeals were dealt with during the year as under:—

Allowed	..	..	..	..	16
Not allowed	..	..	..	..	356
Withdrawn	..	..	..	..	249
"Do not lie"	..	..	..	..	1
Lapsed	..	..	..	..	3
Adjourned <i>sine die</i>	..	..	..	..	2
Total	..	..	..	..	627

In the normal course a new Board of Appeal would have been elected in 1947, but it was desirable that the members of the existing Board should hear all the regrading appeals. For this reason the Public Service Amendment Act, 1946, provided that the members of the Appeal Board should continue in office until 31st December, 1947.