

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

ESPECIALLY in Wellington, the staffing of Government Departments continues to be difficult. It is true that many more people are employed than formerly, and true too that criticism is directed at the increase in numbers. But in fact, having regard to the demands on Departments, many of them are demonstrably understaffed. Over a thousand vacancies have remained unfilled for the greater part of the past year, most of them in Wellington. Office accommodation is also a serious problem in many centres, some Departments being scattered amongst several different buildings. Likewise housing is a particularly acute problem for public servants as for others, a result being that many officers decline, or do not apply for, promotion that would require their moving, particularly to Wellington.

These difficulties of staffing and accommodation are, of course, not peculiar to the Public Service. It is well known that they beset the whole country. In March, 1948, the Department of Labour and Employment had on its registers 25,900 vacancies (13,684 for males, 12,216 for females), while only 26 males and 5 females were registered as unemployed. This is a remarkable contrast with the state of affairs not only in the early 1930's, but also with the period after the end of the previous war and contrary to the general expectations of a few years ago. How long the condition of "over-full employment" will continue is a question that the Commission, in common with other employers and with citizens generally, is concerned to ponder.

STAFF EMPLOYED AND RECRUITMENT

As at 1st April, 1948, the provisional figures of staff employed in Departments under Public Service Commission control were 25,297 permanent officers and 3,398 temporary employees, a total of 28,695.

The following table shows the main increases in the past ten years, with the summarized reasons as given by the Departments:—

Department.	Increase in Staff, 1938 to 1948.	Staff Employed.		Reasons for Increase.
		1st April, 1938.	1st April, 1948.	
Works, including Housing	1,633	1,789	3,422	Expansion of hydro-electric construction schemes and mechanization of Department. Establishment of Ministry of Works, Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Councils, aerodromes activities in Pacific, and appointment of apprentices to Public Service staff.
Health	1,202	695	1,897	Increase in District Health Nurse activities and development of school dental scheme. Introduction of health and pharmaceutical benefits under social security scheme.
Social Security ..	1,146	277	1,423	Government's expanding social legislation and increase in war pensions.
Rehabilitation ..	950	..	950	New Department.
State Hydro-electric ..	904	769	1,673	Opening of new hydro station and general expansion of hydro-electric scheme. (Department established 7th December, 1945, previously with Public Works Department.)
Land and Income Tax ..	722	476	1,198	Decentralization of Department, increased taxation, and collection of social security charge.