

of uniformity, but even with centralization there is not complete uniformity. In practice complete uniformity is probably not desirable as the circumstances differ so much in individual cases.

But delegation of authority does not mean complete lack of control by the Head Office. This is taken care of by instructions setting out policy and stating rules by which district officers are to be guided. Difficult cases are referred to Head Office, but in most instances decisions can be given locally, there being nothing useful that the Head Office can add. From the national viewpoint it is better to have public servants spread throughout the community rather than to have them concentrated in Wellington. The Commission is constantly encouraging Permanent Heads to delegate authority to their branch officers.

DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Commission has felt the benefit of delegation of authority to officers who act as its representatives in all the main towns. Following a conference of these representatives in June, 1947, their functions were more clearly defined, and their authority to appoint staff at once, within certain limits, has resulted in the Commission gaining employees who would otherwise have been lost to the Public Service. In particular, these representatives take an active part in recruiting Cadets.

The Commission's representatives have also assisted in inspecting local offices. Their reports have given a comprehensive outline of the work done in branch offices, and in particular their recommendations have confirmed the Commission's views on the advantages of decentralization and delegation of authority. The assistance of these officers is greatly appreciated.

The opening of a branch office in Auckland under the control of an Assistant Commissioner, Mr. C. G. S. Ellis, has yielded good results. To meet the same need for a full-time representative, an office was opened in Christchurch in April, 1948, with a Senior Inspector, Mr. D. A. Hunn, in charge.

Soon after its appointment the Commission delegated a number of its powers to selected Permanent Heads. So successful was the experiment in speeding up the routine work that not only was the authority extended with success to all Permanent Heads, but other powers were also delegated to them.

NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS

The Commission sees merit in the possibility of reducing the total number of State Departments. Over forty separate Departments should not be necessary in New Zealand, and increased efficiency would probably follow from judicious amalgamations. Already some progress has been made towards this end. It is felt that some form of amalgamation would be particularly beneficial in smaller towns, where there often exist branch offices consisting of only a few personnel. The Commission is examining the functions of each Department with a view to carrying out amalgamations in the most suitable way and as opportunity offers.

It is gratifying to report that in the year and a half since the Commission took office four major amalgamations have been effected—viz., Labour and National Employment; Health and Mental Hospitals; the Internal Marketing, the Milk Marketing, and the Export Marketing Divisions; the Ministry of Works and the Department of Public Works.

In two of these Departments and in one other the Commission has appointed a senior officer of proven ability, ranking next to the Permanent Head and charged with the responsibility for recasting the administrative machinery of the department. Mr. J. A. E. Engel was appointed Deputy Director-General of Health (Administrative); Mr. S. T. Barnett, Assistant Director of Education (Administrative); and Mr. S. Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer, Ministry of Works. Experience to date has fully justified these appointments.