

ORGANIZATION AND METHODS

The increasing volume of work in all Government Departments and the need to use staff economically emphasize the importance of efficient methods and organization. Methods which were effective twenty years ago may be entirely unsuitable to-day. Returns which were obtained ten years ago may have completely lost their significance now. The volume of business transacted and the small number of errors may make a detailed check of less importance than it was previously. The amalgamation and redesigning of forms will often speed up work. Machines may sometimes be used for work that could be better done manually. More often improved methods will mean that work can be done better by machines. The need for a constant review of organization and methods in the Public Service led to the calling of a conference of departmental Inspectors in February, 1948. They were told of the achievements (some of them spectacular) of the Organization and Methods Division of the British Treasury. Following the conference, the Commission decided to publish quarterly an *O and M Review* to show what was being achieved by the examination of organization and methods within Departments. All Departments are urged to review their organization and methods so as to improve efficiency and obtain maximum output from minimum staffs. The Commission encourages officers to suggest improvements, and, where warranted, will grant monetary rewards.

PERSONAL REPORTS ON OFFICERS

Personal reports on officers and the performance of their duties as at 31st January, 1948, are being completed. The last reports were obtained as at 31st December, 1945. In view of the recent appointment of so many temporary employees to the permanent staff, and of the limited experience as at the end of 1945 of so many servicemen since returning to their Departments, up-to-date reports were necessary to assist the Commission in its policy of making promotions by merit.

The form of the report has been kept substantially the same as in 1945, so that the two reports could be compared. Although it is difficult to devise a system by which all officers will be marked on a comparable basis, certain safeguards are provided. Despite this, the reports are not so useful as the Commission could desire where officers in separate Departments are to be compared, but where officers in a Department are carrying out the same sort of duties the reports are of particular value. The Commission does not claim that the report form is perfect, and welcomes suggestions for its improvement. It feels that the reporting system in New Zealand compares favourably with that used by overseas administrations. This year the reports are to be examined by a Research Officer, who will investigate further improvements in the report form and the best method of securing uniformity.

Although these reports are valuable, they are only a link in the chain which leads the Commission to decide whether an officer should be promoted. Other factors taken into account are the Permanent Head's recommendations, the Commission's own knowledge of the officers, and the reports of the Commission's Inspectors. Frequently a committee of departmental officers, with an Inspector from the staff of the Commission, interviews applicants. For the more important positions the most suitable applicants are interviewed by the Commission. By these methods the Commission seeks to make the best choice.

REHABILITATION, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

Most ex-servicemen have settled down rapidly in their Departments, so that mainly Personnel Officers are free to concentrate on long-term training plans, but they are constantly available for ex-servicemen, especially those who find difficulty in adjusting themselves to civilian life. All ex-servicemen are encouraged to take their problems to the Personnel Officer.