

It is sometimes asked, as indeed it should be, how can the value of training be measured? Precise measurement of results is, of course, difficult—that is true of all education. Staff training, however, is a necessary part of good staff administration. It is aimed at greater efficiency—at both technical competence and a human understanding of the purpose and effects of administrative action. Effective training should manifest itself in an understanding by senior officers of the problems that beset the Administration, in the absence of deadwood in systems and organization, and, throughout the Service, in a thorough knowledge of procedure and of the reasons behind policy. Improvements in the methods used to gain these results must constantly be sought.

EDUCATION

In the Public Service there are many jobs which require specific educational qualifications, and officers who aspire to these are encouraged by the Commission to equip themselves properly. Bursaries have been made available, on a competitive basis, to officers wishing to take an Honours course, or a degree in science or engineering. Ten bursaries have also been awarded to enable officers to take the course for the Diploma of Public Administration at Victoria University College.

On the grounds that the basis for promotion is, and should be, efficiency on the job, the Commission has recently decided to eliminate the examination barrier at the top of Class V, the lowest supervisory grade. Nevertheless, examinations are still desirable, and we shall continue to encourage all officers to further their formal studies. Educational qualifications will remain a factor in promotion policy.

WELFARE

Staff welfare is the concern of the departmental personnel officer, but it is impossible for him to assume direct responsibility for all phases of welfare. His prime duty is to see that controlling officers are aware of the principles involved and to encourage them to take an active personal interest in their staff. Effective staff training will itself tend to remove some causes of discontent.

Employment of increasing numbers of women in the Public Service raises welfare problems of a special nature. In July, 1948, the Commission appointed to its staff a Welfare Officer (Female Staff) with responsibility for the investigation of individual and group problems, complaints, working-conditions, health, requests for assistance in obtaining board, and the provision of amenities such as rest-rooms, recreation-rooms, and canteens. Results have amply justified the appointment.

O AND M

If the Public Service is to continue to function efficiently, its work, methods, and procedures must be kept continually under review. We must be alert to see that—

- (a) Unnecessary tasks are cut out.
- (b) Ways are found of doing jobs with less staff.

To the extent that many tasks are matters of Government policy, the first of these remedies is beyond reach of the Commission, but the second lies in the Commission's own hands, and has been applied extensively during the past year.

Departmental heads and controlling officers are responsible for efficiency; the Commission itself also has an express responsibility under the Public Service Act. Amongst its statutory functions are :—

1912, section 12 (1)—

As often as necessary to carry out the directions and provisions of this Act, and ensure the establishment and continuance of a proper standard of efficiency and economy in the Public Service, the Commission shall cause any Department to be inspected . . .

1946 Amendment—

(1A) The Commission may from time to time take such further action as it thinks fit to ensure efficiency and economy in the Departments under its control.