

Under this authority, a campaign was begun for better organization and methods. It is a continuing drive to prune overgrown organizations and devise simpler ways of doing things—in short, to cut out “red tape.”

It has become known in the Service as “O and M,” a name taken from the English Civil Service, where the movement originated. In the United Kingdom there is a central O and M Division in Treasury as well as specialist O and M officers in many other Departments. Of their work, it was said in the fifth report from the Select Committee on Estimates, House of Commons (7th August, 1947, p. vii):—

... the purpose of O and M in the Civil Service is to secure maximum efficiency in the operation of the Government's executive machinery; and, by the expert application of scientific methods to organization, to achieve economy in cost and labour. The operations of the O and M service, although not directed primarily to securing reductions in staff, almost invariably result in the more economical use of staff.

The idea has spread to Europe, America, and countries of the British Commonwealth. Not only in New Zealand, but also in Canada and Australia, the need for quick, cheap, simple methods has taken on a new urgency.

The main steps so far taken by the Public Service Commission have been—

- (a) The holding of a three-day conference of departmental Inspectors on organization and methods (mentioned in our last report).
- (b) The appointment of Inspectors in Departments which previously did not have them.
- (c) A suggestion to Departments to look into the possibility of establishing output standards as a yard-stick on unit production and on staffing requirements.
- (d) A request that O and M Committees be set up in all Departments to examine methods one by one and to stimulate a flow of ideas from staff of all ranks. Twenty-six Departments (two out of three) have set up these Committees, generally to their immediate advantage.
- (e) Reminder to all public servants that suggestions are invited and in suitable cases will be rewarded.
- (f) Publication of *O and M Review*, a quarterly digest of local and overseas material on O and M work. It is widely circulated throughout all Departments, and is proving an inspirational force in the promotion of “ideas from everywhere.”

Some examples of what has been accomplished in the field of O and M may be of interest:—

- (1) (a) Mechanization of pay system has eliminated salary cards, typing, repetitive work, and overtime. The work is done faster by less staff.
- (b) The addressing of circulars by hand used to take an hour and a half per 100. It is now done mechanically at the rate of 100 every five minutes.—*Agriculture*.
- (2) An amalgamation of import control forms has obviated the typing of 150,000 forms each year.—*Customs*.
- (3) Forty forms have been amalgamated or abolished. The life-assurance policy form has been redrafted to reduce typing by 50 per cent.—*Government Life*.
- (4) By converting words into numbers, the index of 1,000 awards can be kept up to date and an annotation service provided to all users.—*Labour and Employment*.
- (5) Over 11,000 man-hours were saved at Auckland alone by a new routine for issuing and revising income-tax assessments.—*Land and Income Tax*.
- (6) (a) A new system of cards instead of files to control house repairs has eliminated 108,000 handlings of files each year at Auckland and Wellington alone.
- (b) At the same two branches, the number of repair forms to be typed has been cut down from 72,000 to 36,000 per annum by redesigning the forms so that they “register” with one another at one strike of the typewriter.—*State Advances Corporation*.