

REPORT

INTRODUCTORY

SOME aspects of Public Service staffing, organization, legislation, and accommodation are far from satisfactory ; and the Service suffers from the fact that whatever is controversial has more news value than the merely factual. To keep some sense of perspective, therefore, it should be said at once that the New Zealand Public Service can well stand comparison with any Civil Service in the world for competence, integrity, honest work, and loyal co-operation regardless of political changes ; while comparison with outside standards, commercial and professional, may be even more to the advantage of the Public Service. So much can be said without complacency and without questioning the need for much improvement.

STAFF EMPLOYED

Excluding some 20,000 workmen employed under Regulation 150, mainly on public works, the total staff in Departments under Public Service Commission control at 1st April, 1949, was 31,155 (permanent, 27,739 ; temporary, 3,416), compared with 29,806 (26,784 and 3,022) a year earlier. The net increase of 1,349 in the past year is mainly in the—

State Fire Insurance Office (increase, 300) : Due to extended responsibilities in workers' compensation insurance from 1st April, 1949.

Health Department, including Mental Hygiene (increase, 250) : Recruitment from England of professional and nursing staff ; extension of activities under social security. The Department is still short of doctors, dentists, and nurses.

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (increase, 175) : Extension of activities and transfer of tradesmen to permanent staff.

There were reductions in some Departments, notably—

Rehabilitation, where staff was reduced from 950 to 847. As the work of this Department continues to decrease, there will be no difficulty in placing officers to advantage, as the lack of trained staff is still felt by other Departments, some of which are directly concerned with rehabilitation matters.

Food Control : With the elimination of all rationing except for butter, staff of the Food Control Office was very considerably reduced. The few who remain to deal with butter rationing have been absorbed into the Industries and Commerce Department.

War Assets Realization Board : During the year, the Board was wound up and many of the staff transferred to other Departments. Those who remain to deal with surplus assets still to be disposed of have been absorbed into the Stores Control Section of Treasury.

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TURNOVER

A continuing problem is recruiting and retaining staff for the Public Service in the face of outside competition that is attractive in immediate rewards. This is evidenced by the fall in recruitment figures for boy cadets, and by the high rate of staff turnover.

The Commission has given close attention to recruitment and published a new careers booklet which was widely distributed and favourably received. In spite of all efforts, however, the number of boy cadets for the Clerical Division fell 25 per cent. below last year's figures. On the other hand, the recruitment of girl cadets doubled.