

SHORTHAND-TYPISTS, TYPISTS, AND MACHINISTS

While staffing is reasonably satisfactory in other centres, it is still difficult to attract sufficient applicants for these positions in Wellington, where, notwithstanding immigration from the United Kingdom, approximately 20 per cent. of established positions remain unfilled. Insufficient girls take up this form of employment in Wellington, where the demand is much greater than elsewhere. Business organizations also have difficulty in securing shorthand-typists.

To meet the acute shortage of typing staff the Commission re-opened in Wellington at the beginning of March, 1948, the school for training copy typists. Up to the end of August, 1948, it had trained forty-six pupils, the majority of whom passed the final test at thirty words per minute. In February of this year the school was reorganized to provide tuition on a wider basis. The subjects of shorthand, type-writing, and English are now taught to the standard of the Junior Shorthand and Typewriting Examination.

In a further effort to overcome the difficulty in Wellington, the Commission has encouraged girls to transfer from other centres, hostel accommodation being provided for them.

MARGINS AND ANOMALIES COMMITTEE

Our report for 1948 mentioned the setting-up of the Margins and Anomalies Committee and the decision in the case of the Printing Office tradesmen. The investigations and sittings of the Committee were spread over a long period. The final reports were submitted to the Minister nearly a year after the Committee was first set up.

After examining the wage data obtained from private firms, after hearing witnesses, examining recent local authorities' and other awards and agreements, considering the question of indirect or unseen payments and further relevant data, the Committee unanimously agreed on the following key recommendations, with effect from 1st October, 1947 :—

	Proposed Rates.		Existing Rates.	
	Hourly.	Yearly.	Hourly.	Yearly.
Labourer	s. d. 3 4	£ 345	s. d. 3 2½	£ 331
Skilled labourer	3 6	365	3 3½	345
Tradesman	4 0	415	3 9	390
With advancement to	4 1*	425*	(Various)	

*Where he is regarded as being a first-class tradesman in all phases of the particular trade as practised in the branch of the Department concerned and has served at least ten years at his trade, including three years continuously (or five years intermittently) as a tradesman in the State Services.

A unanimous recommendation could not be made on the clerks' case, the employee members proposing that the maximum salary for the basic-grade clerk be £460 a year (instead of £425), with a reduction in the number of intermediate steps, and these set at higher amounts. The official side thought the maximum of £425 should remain, but favoured a reduction in the time taken to reach this amount. This would have provided the same maximum as that unanimously recommended for tradesmen. Moreover, the clerk would have reached his maximum in a period of time more comparable with a tradesman's apprenticeship term.