

1913.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

FIRST REPORT OF THE

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs.

SIR,—

Wellington, 27th August, 1913.

I have the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, that the Commissioners appointed under the Public Service Act, 1912, commenced duty at the beginning of this year, and immediately proceeded to investigate the condition of the Public Service and to classify the officers therein.

Under section 15 of the Act I am required to furnish to the Governor for presentation to Parliament a report on the efficiency and condition of the Public Service and its proceedings, and to indicate the changes necessary, in my opinion, for the improved working thereof, or any Department or subdivision thereof. Although a report is not actually due until after the end of the current financial year, I am, in view of the great interest taken in the matter, forwarding this first report. I desire, however, to make it clear that the time has been too limited to enable the Commissioners to go as fully into the condition of the Public Service as might be desired.

In this report the Post and Telegraph Department has been excluded from consideration. It will be referred to at a later date.

One of the first duties required under the Act was the classification of officers of the Public Service. This has progressed simultaneously with the inspection of Departments; but before any satisfactory work could be done it was necessary to issue regulations governing the conduct and defining the responsibilities of officers, and providing machinery for the working of the Appeal Board. These matters are referred to later on. In addition to the special work of inspection and classification, the current work, which began on the 1st April, when the main provisions of the Act came into force, has been heavy.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT, 1912.

The Public Service Act was introduced in Parliament and became law last year. The effect of the measure was, broadly, to combine under the control of a Commissioner and two Assistant Commissioners the Departments of the Public Service. The only Departments exempt from the control of the Commissioner are the Railways, Legislative Department, the Police, and the military staff of the Defence Department.

The classification of the officers of the Public Service thus constituted was to be amongst the first duties of the Commissioner. Appended to the Act are schedules containing scales of salaries for the Professional and Clerical Divisions. The decision as to the divisions into which officers were to be placed and as to their grades of salaries within such division was left to the discretion of the Commissioner, subject to the condition that in determining the grading the Commissioner was required to take into consideration any examinations passed by officers. In connection with the efficiency bars which the Act places at certain points in the scales of salaries, it is for the Commissioner to determine what are to be the tests required.