

- (12.) The procedure to be followed in dealing with all routine matters, such as—(a) Land Board work, preparation of papers, minutes, &c. ; (b) applications and inquiries for land, &c. ; (c) staff matters, &c.

DEPUTATIONS.

Many questions affecting officers of the Public Service were brought under notice of the Commissioners by deputations during the year of delegates from the Public Service Association and the Post and Telegraph Officers' Association.

The principal matters discussed were : Overtime, annual leave, Territorials' pay, rights of officers, travelling-allowances, officers performing higher duties, civic rights, minimum salary for married officers, service for superannuation purposes, Appeal Board representation, permanent appointment of temporary employees, tellers' allowances, seniority list, expert division, salary and allowances, creation of more positions, examinations, appointment to engineering branch, transfers, objections to Civil Service Guarantee Act.

In addition to the many officers who were individually given opportunities of seeing one or other of the Commissioners and making any representations they wished, a number did so by means of deputations representing them and consisting of members chosen from amongst themselves.

INSPECTION.

In addition to the inspection of offices in and outside Wellington by the Commissioners, special inspections have been made by the Sub-Inspector when such appeared to be required. These inspections have generally been the outcome of requisitions for additional staff. It has several times been found possible, as the result of inspection, to obviate the necessity for additional staff by combining the duties of officers or by an improvement in the method of working. At the same time, inspections of the kind have been fruitful in discovering where alterations in practice could be carried out with advantage. On the whole, the saving effected has been considerable.

There has been occasion to refer in other parts of this report to the need for inspection by departmental officers. As stated in my first report, probably the greatest need at the time was the inauguration of a proper system of inspection of all offices. As little movement has been made by Departments, I repeat here that the Commissioners consider that an inspection of every office should be made each year by qualified officers, who would not only point out irregularities in methods, &c., but would at the same time take a share in the responsibility of educating officers in the various duties which they are expected to perform.

INSPECTION OF SHORTHAND AND TYPING METHODS.

During the past year an inspection has been made of the shorthand-writing and typing work of the various Government Departments in Wellington. Up to the present time twenty-nine Departments and sub-departments have been visited. As a result of the inspection, it has been found,—

1. That in many instances the title of "Shorthand-writer" is a misnomer, as far, at least, as actual practice goes. In such instances the services of competent shorthand-writers are being paid for, although, as a matter of fact, they are only employed as mere copyists. At the same time these officers are losing their chief qualification for want of practice.

2. That a very large portion of the time of the most highly paid officers is spent in drafting in ink or pencil more or less lengthy reports and replies to correspondence which could be far more expeditiously dictated to a shorthand-writer. This does not, of course, refer to those officers whose duties necessitate their constantly travelling from place to place, and who are able to utilize the time spent in trains and steamers in writing up their reports.

It is believed that if a careful analysis were made of the objections to giving dictation it would be found that in almost every instance the difficulties were the outcome of the natural diffidence of young men in acquiring the habit of dictating in the presence of their fellow-officers. Where the objection has been raised inquiry has elicited the admission that dictation has never been given.