

3. That a very large portion of the time of the shorthand-writers is devoted unnecessarily to deciphering difficult or bad writing when they could very easily overtake considerably more work if they were typing from their own shorthand notes. The statement which has frequently been made that drafted matter does not require the same amount of revision or "editing" as shorthand notes is hardly borne out by experience.

4. That in many Departments the supervision of the work of the shorthand-writers and typists is of a nature which is not calculated to develop their general ability and intelligence.

5. That the work done by shorthand-writers and typists (whether male or female) throughout the Service is, with few exceptions, of only fair average quality, and is lacking in that excellence which should be the hall-mark of Government work.

6. That, further, in many offices certain practices are still observed which are regarded as altogether obsolete in up-to-date commercial houses: such, for instance, as the typing of envelopes, or the writing of them, in place of using window envelopes; the retention of the press-copy book or of a second carbon copy when a file copy of correspondence is already made; and so on. It is believed that if such practices were once done away with a great saving of time would be effected, while the amount of supposed inconvenience suffered would be altogether negligible, and would eventually disappear.

While it is not to be expected that every shorthand-writer and typist will prove to be a brilliant officer, it is possible, if the right means are used, to establish a highly competent and intelligent staff of shorthand-writers and typists, capable of at once undertaking the work of any Department to which they may be transferred at any time.

As a result of the inspection it is hoped that a better knowledge of each Department's requirements will be gained, and that in future it will be found possible to appoint shorthand-writers to the Department where their particular qualifications will be made the best use of.

It has to be noted that the examination of the shorthand and typing methods so far has been confined to the Wellington offices. It is intended during the year to extend the inspection to other portions of the Dominion.

#### TRANSFER OF OFFICERS.

On assuming their duties last year the Commissioners decided to allow Departments to deal with the removal and transfer of officers from one place to another. This, it was supposed, would be an easy matter to arrange without interfering with the classification of officers. As, however, more than one Department made changes which were considered by the officers removed to be in the direction of promotion, and which, if there had been a vacancy in a higher class, would have necessitated others being considered, it was found necessary to require that all transfers of officers drawing over £150 per annum should be carried out only on authority having first been obtained.

#### RETIREMENTS OF PRINCIPAL OFFICERS.

After twenty-two years' service with the Labour Department, Mr. John Lomas, Secretary of Labour, retired on the 31st December last. He was associated with the Department practically from its inception in 1891. After serving for many years as Inspector of Factories at Christchurch and Dunedin, Mr. Lomas was promoted to the Head Office in 1907, and on the retirement of Mr. Edward Tregear, I.S.O., early in 1911 he succeeded to the office of Secretary of Labour. Mr. F. W. Rowley, who was formerly Chief Clerk in the Department of Labour and Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, has been appointed Secretary in place of Mr. Lomas.

Mr. A. M. Smith, who retired on the 31st March, 1914, from the position of Secretary to the Public Service Superannuation Board, joined the staff of Governor Sir George Grey in June, 1866, after previously serving in the British Army. Mr. Smith served with Sir George Grey until his retirement, and was afterwards on the staffs of successive Governors until 1870, when he was appointed to the Colonial Secretary's Department. In 1879 he became Private Secretary to Sir John Hall, the Prime Minister, and on the retirement of the latter was appointed Chief Clerk of the Wellington District Lands Office. In 1882 he resigned from the Public Service