

TOURIST PASSENGER BOOKING.

It was evident to the Commissioners that the methods of accounting for the receipts from the passenger-booking business conducted by the Tourist Department required an important alteration. A qualified accountant (an officer of the Public Service) was directed to look into the matter, and the accounts have been remodelled with a consequent saving in clerical work at the agencies and increase in efficiency and convenience at the Head Office.

It was found that far too much importance was attached to the checking of tickets and coupons issued at the various agencies rather than accounting on systematic lines for the receipts, while duplication of returns took place to a surprising degree. An altogether unnecessary amount of work was thrown upon the agents owing to the quantity of detail recorded in connection with the bookings, and although a manuscript copy of the weekly postings showing the tickets sold on behalf of the respective services was forwarded to the Head Office, accounts were not raised in the books there to show the amount or balance due on each personal account. This was a serious weakness, and, as the total bookings for 1912-13 exceeded £37,000, it will be seen that there was an urgent need for a change.

A double-entry system of book-keeping has been installed, designed to show at any time the allocation of the cash-balance as between the proprietors of the various services on whose account bookings have been made, and the office routine otherwise arranged. As regards the agencies, no accounts in books are kept, the receipts being accounted for by ticket-returns and a cash statement. The consensus of opinion amongst the district officers where the scheme has been applied is that it has proved simple and expeditious, and has also considerably decreased the clerical work.

A periodical audit of the agencies will require to be made by a responsible officer.

MESSENGER SERVICE, WELLINGTON.

Considerable economies have been effected during the past year. The outstanding feature has been the reorganization of the general-messenger and charing services of Departments in order to provide, under the control of one Permanent Head, a service which would meet the requirements of all Departments, instead of the system of each Department providing its own staff.

In buildings where several Departments were located, each Department in a number of cases had its own messenger, with the result that two men were performing work which one man could easily undertake. Such a system could not be allowed to continue. It was therefore decided to reorganize these services, and place them under the control of the Permanent Head of the Department of Internal Affairs. The result has been very satisfactory, the centralizing of control producing a more efficient service at a greatly reduced expenditure.

In the Classification List (Internal Affairs) last year, in a reference to the retirement of thirteen aged messengers, it was stated that the places of six messengers would not require to be filled. The saving in this direction alone was £980 per annum. Subsequently, however, by reorganization it was only found necessary to appoint five men as lift-attendants, and for a motor-bicycle service to replace the whole of the aged messengers retired, the further saving effected thereby amounting to an additional sum of £1,600 per annum, making a total saving of £2,580 per annum in the general-messenger services alone.

In Wellington a system of hourly clearance and delivery of departmental correspondence by a motor-bicycle service was inaugurated, and has proved so successful that it has been extended to Auckland and Christchurch. An extension to other centres is under consideration.

A result of the services being vested in one Department, and one which is appreciated by the officers concerned, is the opportunity it offers each man to know his relative position under classification to his comrades, and the knowledge that in due course, provided he has the necessary qualifications, the avenues of promotion to members of the General Division throughout the Dominion are all open to him.