

it is the education, experience, technical knowledge, special aptitude, native ability, physical and personal attributes of the individual officer that go to make up the all-embracing term "fitness."

For the satisfactory determination of all the factors that require consideration in the classifying of positions, it is essential that the Commissioner should have a complete knowledge of the organization of the Service, and the qualifications of the officials. In order to ascertain these facts, the following procedure was adopted in connection with the recent regrading of the Service. It was assumed that the persons who should know most about a given position would be—(a) The officer filling the position; (b) the immediate controlling officer; (c) the departmental head. Consequently a questionnaire was sent out to each officer, calling for a statement of his duties and particulars of service and qualifications. This was required to be endorsed and commented on by the controlling officer, who was also required to mark down the various personal qualities of the officer concerned. The report was further supplemented by the remarks of the Permanent Head of the Department.

In order to gain a more intimate knowledge of the duties and responsibilities involved, and also to afford officers an opportunity of making any representations they might wish, the Commissioner made a personal visit to nearly every office in New Zealand. Although the inspection occasioned a certain amount of delay, and was undertaken at great personal inconvenience, there is no doubt that the closer insight into the workings of the Departments and the better appreciation gained of the difficulties and conditions of district officers amply justified the extra time taken.

The ascertainment of all possible facts and data relating to positions was only one phase of the procedure incidental to the regrading of the Service. Before proceeding to classify the Service it was necessary to determine the appropriate scales of salaries. This matter is dealt with under a separate heading.

It may be said that, as the regrading is a quinquennial event, it is not practicable to take full cognisance of cost-of-living variations—to do so would be to found a salary revision on what may be temporary conditions. However, it is not possible to disregard this factor, and, in so far as the salaries have been adjusted to bring them into relation with payments made by private employers, particularly where those payments are subject to Arbitration Court awards, it is patent that current economic conditions have had full consideration in the revised gradings of positions.

NEW SCHEDULE OF SALARIES.

Special provision was made by legislation in 1918 for all scales of salaries and increments to be approved by the Governor-General in Council.

Concurrent with the regrading of the Service, opportunity was taken to revise the scales of salaries operating as from the 1st April, 1924. An endeavour has been made to provide scales of salaries that would provide an equitable basis of compensation both from the view-point of the taxpayer and also of the individual member of the Service. On the one hand, it was necessary to fix rates of remuneration sufficiently attractive to obtain entrants, and also to retain the services of efficient members; on the other hand, it would be unreasonable for employees of the State to be in a favoured position as compared with the rest of the community in the matter of remuneration.

The State, as such, is presumed to be a model employer. The State, however, should not set a standard in the way of liberality, although, where comparable, rates of pay should conform closely to those paid by outside employers for similar service.

In the lower grades it is considered the salaries bear close relation to the value of service. It is frequently asserted by ill-informed critics that in the Public Service the tendency is to pay relatively high salaries for the performance of routine duties. This is not so.

The fixing of a minimum wage for a married man is a matter of difficulty: the difficulty arising not so much from value of service rendered, but from the fact that social conventions must be considered, such as the maintenance of a family or the preserving of a certain standard of living.

A comparison of salaries for executive and professional work would in most cases be in favour of outside avocations.