

to the matter, with a suggestion that the Superannuation Act might be amended to meet the case. I am pleased to report that Government has indicated its intention to make provision this year in the direction indicated.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

The continued expansion of business due to the natural development of the country and the increase in Government functions shows its effect not only in the matter of increased expenditure on salaries, but also in regard to the problem of arranging for suitable office accommodation. For example, in the Land Transfer Office, in consequence of the recent legislation dealing with the compulsory registration of titles, there has been a considerable increase in staff which has necessitated an increase in office accommodation, and in Auckland and Christchurch this has proved a decidedly awkward problem to meet satisfactorily. In Wellington the position is less acute, as the erection of a number of new public buildings has eased the congestion in many departmental offices, and at the same time has enabled several Departments and sub-departments that were scattered in various offices to be housed together under one roof. The transfer, for instance, of certain Departments to the State Fire building has enabled the National Provident Fund, Friendly Societies, and Public Service Superannuation Offices to be accommodated in the Government Insurance building, thus bringing together the whole of the Departments under the one administrative head. The bringing-together of Departments whose duties are interrelated should make for greater efficiency; and, indeed, it would be an advantage if Government offices generally were less scattered.

The question of suitable office accommodation is one of increasing difficulty, for it is not merely sufficient to provide adequate premises, but in so doing the convenience of the public must also be considered. An illustration of this arose recently in connection with the Tourist Department at Auckland. The Bureau had been housed in the Customs buildings, in a room not even directly connected with the street. As it was obvious that more effective service could be rendered if better accommodation could be found, a forward move was decided upon, and the Bureau was moved to a central site on Queen Street. The increase in the volume of business transacted has demonstrated the advantage of studying the convenience of the travelling public.

STANDARDIZATION OF FORMS, ETC.

There is a rule in the Service that all Departments must obtain the approval of the Commissioner before printing any new forms. The object of this is three-fold: firstly, it ensures that only necessary forms are printed—the printing of matter of no practical value has involved a large amount of unnecessary expense in the past; secondly, it provides for a careful scrutiny of all new forms by officers experienced in the adaptation of various kinds of forms, and who are in many cases able to suggest helpful alterations to extend the usefulness of certain forms; thirdly, it ensures a standardization of forms used by different Departments for similar purposes. It is satisfactory to note that a number of Departments have sets of forms that are practically standardized. This practice has been recently applied to stores forms for several Departments. As officers are readily transferred from one Department to another, it is obvious that there is less loss of efficiency on transfer if an officer is familiar with the forms and practices of the Department to which he is transferred.

STORES.

During the year the question of consolidating and co-ordinating the various regulations relating to Government stores received consideration, and in order to obviate any conflict of authority it was decided that action be taken in the direction of centralizing the authority under the Public Revenues Act. Provision was made by statute in 1887 authorizing the issue of regulations governing the purchase, accounting for, and inspection of stores, but until comparatively recent years no action had been taken in this regard. On the inception of the Public Service Act of 1912 the matter was investigated, and there were brought into