

summarize the essential points, examine them in relation to our conditions, and make the points thus made clear available for immediate use by our Railway administration. To that end I propose to constitute an information bureau, where I am convinced much useful work can be done along these lines. Insularity always makes for narrowness of vision, represses imagination, and stops initiative. These considerations seem to me to call for definite action on the lines I have indicated, and during the coming year my policy will be to make a definite step forward in that direction.

Another line along which action has been taken with a view to overcoming the difficulties I have mentioned is that the administration has become associated with the Railway administrations of Australia in annual conference on subjects of mutual interest. During the course of the year under review I arranged for the Chairman of the Board to proceed to Australia to attend the Conference of Commissioners, and much valuable information was obtained. Steps have also been taken to send a number of younger officers to Australia to attend conferences of officers from the Railway systems in the Commonwealth, and these officers have also returned with a large amount of valuable information which must be helpful in bringing our railways to a still higher state of efficiency. It is proposed to continue our representation at the Australian Conferences as part of the policy to keep our administration right up to date.

Another aspect of the policy of keeping abreast of the times in the railway world is the sending of officers abroad. Since my last Statement a number of senior officers have been sent overseas, and have returned with a good deal of valuable information, proving the advantage of the scheme and the diligence of the officers concerned. I propose to continue this policy, which I am convinced is on sound lines. I think that the head of the Department should make a periodical first-hand acquaintance with men and methods in other parts of the world, and it is, in my opinion, beyond question that this would be a sound investment. More particularly, however, do I think that we can obtain very considerable benefit from the exchange with other Railway organizations for definite periods of promising young officers. These officers would require to make an intensive study of conditions on the systems to which they would become temporarily attached; and, as they will be actually engaged in the practical work, they will have an opportunity of seeing "behind the scenes" in a more thorough-going way than could otherwise be possible. My intention is that this arrangement should apply to every branch of the service. There can be little doubt that, for instance, a leading hand from the workshops, an engine-driver, or a shunter could obtain from such an experience a knowledge of methods tending to greater efficiency, economy, and safety, that would not only amply repay the Department for its expenditure, but would make for greater satisfaction among the staff in their daily work by the educative influence of these men.

RAILWAY MAGAZINE.

With the object of facilitating the interchange and dissemination of railway knowledge amongst the employees of the Department, and of making the rail-using public better acquainted with the aims of the management and with the services available, I have recently arranged for the issue of a monthly magazine. This is being distributed free to all employees of the Department, members of Parliament, business people, and shippers trading with the railway, and to the public libraries, &c.

Staff and "house" magazines are now quite an ordinary feature of all progressive businesses, and most of the Railways issue their own journal, so that the innovation is not really a venture into a new field, but a recognition of the necessity of providing a channel for the dissemination of information regarding railway matters and for a free exchange of ideas thereon.

The extension of the magazine's interests and distribution to include those chiefly concerned in utilizing the services of the Department will, I trust, be found agreeable and useful to those who receive the journal, and should tend to strengthen the bonds of interest between the commercial community and the Railway Department, so necessary for the general welfare of the country.