

Gazette of the 1st April, 1927, indicates that the value of the work is fully appreciated :—

The growing importance of railway publicity work, both here and in the United States, South America, Australia, and other countries, has impelled the formation of separate departments working directly under the general manager, vice-president, or chief executive, as the case may be, and their worth has been testified—at least, so far as Great Britain is concerned—by the remarkable series of posters and announcements to which we have paid tribute in these columns. Railway publicity departments, of course, do far more than publish particulars of the facilities provided by their companies; they help the would-be passenger and give advice to the prospective freighter. Undoubtedly they serve a most useful purpose in the railway organization, and when, as in most cases, they are allied directly with the section immediately controlled by the chief of the executive, they are enabled to do many things that are not possible when, as in some cases, they form part of a lesser organization. We are pleased, therefore, to see that in most countries the tendency of to-day is to develop publicity work as a separate department, most especially because in our tours over the railways of the world we are convinced that this is essential if the best results are to be secured.

The proposals being adopted here include a more intensive publicity campaign, very similar to that carried out in England, covering art poster work, booklets, pamphlets, night signs, press articles and advertising, and so on, as well as full use of the publicity medium provided by the *Railway Magazine*.

To enable this work to be carried out in the most efficient manner, a Publicity Branch is being established, assisted, as occasion requires, by trained publicity experts and journalists, and good use will be made of the art talent of the present Railways Advertising Branch.

The Publicity Branch will co-operate closely with the Commercial and Operations Branches, so that there may be a thorough-going correlation of ideas and their execution.

With competition playing so large a part in transportation affairs, the Railway management must recognize that the provision of the establishment of personal contact with freighters and travellers, the creation of a demand for transport, and the means of transport, are interdependent parts of one process.

These branches can be mutually helpful in the supply of information that will assist each in the work of attracting, helping, and pleasing all those who have need of the facilities the railways can offer.

Advertising Branch.

This branch has been a very remunerative one to the Department, and its machinery could, I believe, be advantageously extended to cope with all Government advertising, as well as in other directions. I propose, therefore, to have all possible avenues of business fully explored.

A good deal of opposition has arisen in certain parts of the Dominion to the erection of hoardings that are said to spoil many of the natural beauties of the countryside. Fully appreciating as I do the point of view which prompts these expressions of opinion I desire to make it clear that the Department has laid it down as a policy that objectionable advertising is not to be sold, and that by co-operating with public bodies the Department will endeavour to avoid criticism which may have a detrimental effect on the Department's advertising activities and other more important functions. There is still ample scope for very extensive advertising business, the profits from which materially assist the Department in meeting its interest charges.

Exchange of Staff.

It has been the policy of the Government for some time past to send its officers abroad periodically for what might be termed "refresher" courses in railway methods. Already many Railway officers have visited the most important railway systems of the world, and I am sure that such trips have been a very valuable education, which soon reflects itself throughout the whole Service. Whilst in England and Canada, recently, I considered the possibility of going a step further with the matter, and discussed with general managers and presidents of railways in those countries the possibility of arranging an exchange system as opportunity might offer whereby our men would be placed on the active staff of railway systems abroad in exchange for similar officers who would come to our railways in New Zealand.