

REGRADING

Agreement of Government was obtained to the regrading of the Public Service being undertaken as at 1st April, 1946. Much preliminary work was necessary, and the report of the Consultative Committee will serve as a useful basis for the grading of particular groups of employees. The task of grading the individual is one that involves examination of duties and responsibilities, survey of establishments, and consultation with Controlling Officers and Permanent Heads. The inspection staff of the Office has completed its itinerary of regrading investigations for districts outside Wellington. Opportunities for interviews with the Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner were also given at most centres. Completion of the work is now in sight, and it is expected that the regrading-list will be published very much earlier this year than has been the case in the past.

BOARD OF APPEAL

Three sessions of the Board of Appeal were held during the year. Nine hundred and eighteen appeals against non-promotion were considered with the following results:—

Allowed	21
Not allowed	702
Withdrawn	152
Dismissed for lack of prosecution	2
"Do not lie"	41

It is interesting to recollect that the Hunt Commission, after whose report the present system of control of the Public Service was introduced, did not recommend the creation of a Board of Appeal. The Commission's report deals with the subject in the following terms:—

We are very strongly of opinion that an outside Appeal Board that can override the management is a decided mistake. Positions like the following often arise: A vacancy may occur in the Service, and the management may have the right of promotion by merit. The management may look down the list of officers next in the order of seniority and think that No. 15, say, is far and away the best man available for the position, and that he should get it. But they know that if they give him the position, Nos. 1 to 14 can all appeal against it; and if they do, the management has to appear before the Board in the position of defendant and prove its case. Most men do not care to put up with this annoyance and trouble, and, unless No. 1 is a "rank duffer," will give him the position regardless of results to the Service. The result in most cases where Appeal Boards exist is that, although in theory the system is promotion by merit, in practice it is promotion by seniority, and the introduction of promotion by seniority instead of promotion by merit is the introduction into the Service of a dry rot that will ultimately destroy its working efficiency. If there is no Appeal Board it is possible that an occasional injustice may be done; but it is far better to risk this than to do a permanent injustice to the Service as a whole and all the men of energy and ability in it.

In 1919 the first Commissioners appointed under the Public Service Act, 1912, reported "After an experience of over six years, the Commissioners are convinced that the system of review by a Board of Appeal of the decision of the Commissioner is not in the best interests of the Service and renders difficult the proper carrying-out of the work of the Commissioners."

After considerably longer experience of the working of the Public Service Act we are of the opinion that the existence of a Board of Appeal is justified. From the number of appeals coming before the Board it is quite apparent that the Service generally has confidence in the Board.

It would appear from the above figures that a small percentage only of appeals is allowed. This is understandable, as very careful consideration is given to claims of all officers prior to approval being given to any advancement of a particular officer. The percentage, however, is not as small as