

Through the courtesy of the Secretary of the General Post Office a thorough investigation of the record work was undertaken by an experienced Record Clerk, and a report was furnished in which alternative schemes were submitted for (1), the improvement of the divisional system of records as it then existed: (2) the institution of a complete centralized system.

It was found that the scheme of centralization in its entirety could not be at once adopted through lack of adequate space to accommodate the consolidated staff. Some measure of centralization was effected by the appointment of a Supervisor of Records, to whom the Record Staff in the various divisions has been made directly responsible. The effect of the change has been beneficial to a marked degree. The full effect of the consolidation will become apparent when the segregation of the records on one floor of the building is complete.

It is proposed to amalgamate the various card indexes in one complete departmental alphabetical index.

By the adoption of the visible-card system it is anticipated there will be a considerable saving in salaries, greater convenience in handling, and increased efficiency.

REVIEW OF UNANSWERED CORRESPONDENCE.

Information which reached the Board left no doubt that unfortunate delays prevailed in connection with the correspondence between Head Office, Branch Offices, and members of the public. The Board gave early consideration to the matter, and decided that it was desirable to institute a review of unanswered correspondence, in order to locate and remove the causes of delay. The scheme which was introduced may briefly be described as follows:—

- (a.) All correspondence received in the Office is sorted into alphabetical sections corresponding with the administration sections on the various Divisions. The correspondence relating to each section is scheduled separately, one copy of the schedule being despatched to the Correspondence Clerk concerned and the other to the Controller of the Division.
- (b.) As each letter is replied to the relative entry on the schedule is marked off by the Correspondence Clerk.
- (c.) On the seventh day from the date of issue the schedule is returned to the Supervisor of Records who extracts particulars of all letters not disposed of and enters them on an “unanswered correspondence” schedule, copies of which are sent to the Correspondence Clerk and the Controller of the Division as before.
- (d.) At the expiration of a further period of one week the “unanswered correspondence” schedules are returned, and all letters still undisposed of are recorded on a “delayed correspondence” schedule, which receives the attention of the Board.

The introduction of the system has had a marked effect on the correspondence. The number of letters which find their way to the delayed correspondence schedule is exceedingly small in comparison with the total volume of correspondence received and dealt with. The Board has reason to believe that the improvement is much appreciated by clients and beneficiaries and by local officers.

In addition to the foregoing the Board instituted a system by which all incoming letters were reviewed as opened, and wherever there was any indication of delay in administration or correspondence having taken place an inquiry-slip was prepared in triplicate, one copy being forwarded to the Controller of the Division concerned, one copy to the Assistant Public Trustee responsible for the management of the particular Division, and one copy to the Public Trustee. The introduction of this system has enabled the management to take immediate action wherever required.

DECENTRALIZATION.

The Board's experience has demonstrated that a means of effectively checking the constant traffic in documents between the Head Office and District Offices and *vice versa* is to extend the principle of decentralization.