

OFFICE ORGANIZATION.

The stress under which the Department had worked for a considerable time past was reflected in the organization and in the conduct of the business when the Board took office. Comparatively little progress had been made in the introduction of modern commercial methods.

The current work of administration has been so heavy that little opportunity has existed for officers to keep themselves posted in the latest developments of office practice and the wider aspects of office organization.

The absence of proper instruction-books, such as one finds in well-organized Departments, has seriously retarded the progress of new appointees. This defect has also reacted upon the senior officers, who, through the inexperience of junior officers, have been largely occupied with routine duties, leaving them no time for general supervision. Heads of Divisions and other controlling officers have now been encouraged to divest themselves of routine duties and to concentrate on the work of supervision and instruction. The Board has pleasure in recording a marked improvement in this respect.

Both in the Head Office and at District Offices a general elasticity of control has been introduced so far as the character of the business of the Office will permit. Officers have been encouraged in every way possible to develop initiative, subject in every case to the exercise of a wise discretion as to the matters which should properly become the subject of a direction.

A commencement has been made with the work of preparing instruction-books, but in view of the magnitude of the task it will prove a long and difficult process. It is proposed that the instructions relating to the different divisions of the work shall be prepared separately, and that each section shall be made available for the use of officers as it is completed.

As a result of the inquiries made I ascertained that no proper instructions were in existence governing the transfer of duties from one officer to another. Controlling officers have now been directed to see that before any position is vacated the incoming officer is made conversant with all instructions relative to the duties, that a list of files requiring attention is supplied him, and that the transfer of keys is recorded.

A form of Transfer Balance Statement has been provided for use when cash is transferred.

ELIMINATION OF UNNECESSARY WORK.

It became apparent that work of an unnecessary character was being performed and that obsolete and uneconomical methods were in force. The Board has devoted as much time and attention to this matter as circumstances will permit, and has been able to effect many important and far-reaching changes which have in most cases produced an immediate effect on the work. Unnecessary work possessing no value comparable with the time and labour bestowed upon it has been discontinued, and the introduction of improved methods, and especially the employment of machine processes wherever possible, have effected much-needed improvement, besides producing in many cases valuable economies. These are referred to more particularly under the heading "Accounts."

ECONOMIES IN TYPEWRITING.

The improvements have been specially noticeable in the typewriting work of the Department. The Board appointed a committee of three women officers, who were skilled shorthand-writers and typists, to conduct a thorough investigation with a view to the elimination of all unnecessary work. The committee, after exhaustive inquiry into the work, submitted a valuable report which contained many excellent suggestions for the more economical performance of the typewriting work.