

was struck with the marked improvement noticeable in all Departments visited. This came as a complete and pleasant surprise. I expected to find stagnation, but, despite the stress and strain of war, distinct progress has been made, and, although possible reforms have in some cases been deferred, much duplication has been eliminated and modern methods introduced where old-fashioned and expensive systems previously obtained.

The New Zealand Public Service has stood the most severe test that could be applied, and notwithstanding a depleted staff the general efficiency has been more than maintained. Whilst recognizing the great value of the services rendered by the available staff, which has been well supported by the juniors and the temporary clerks, it seems clear that if the old methods had been adhered to some of the leading Departments would have crumpled up under the strain.

I was much impressed with the fine type of junior officer now to be found in most Departments. They are well-educated, keen, intelligent young men, much interested in their work, and a desire to excel obtains generally. Nearly every junior officer I questioned was continuing his studies, often under difficulties, in the hope of qualifying in law, accountancy, engineering, science, or some other branch of knowledge applicable to his particular employment.

Whilst abroad I had special opportunities of comparing the New Zealand public servant with the State employees of Great Britain and other countries, and found that for initiative, intelligence, and general efficiency the public servant of this country was superior to most and inferior to none.

In the Administrative Branches and Departments of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, both in the field and on the line of communications, the New Zealand public servant proved most reliable, resourceful, and successful.

6. The possible result of the employment of temporary officers during the war has given the Commissioners much anxiety. It would be unfair to treat cavalierly the claims of men who have been employed in one or two Departments for considerable periods during the war in special work of which knowledge is not usually acquired in the Public Service; but it can safely be said that no permanent officer is likely to suffer.

7. So strict a watch has been kept during the war that on the 1st April, 1919, there were—excluding the War Departments, which in the course of a few months should automatically go out of existence—only 287 male and 250 female temporary clerks in the Public Service. Even of these, it is reported by Departments that 85 male and 147 female clerks are employed on work arising out of the war—e.g., the carrying-out of the Passport Regulations, dealing with military pensions, deceased soldiers' estates, &c. The dealing with military pensions will, no doubt, result in a considerable increase of civilian employees. Many of the male temporary employees are returned soldiers, for whom special facilities for entry into the permanent Service are being arranged.

8. The shortage of boys offering as cadets has been responsible for the employment of many temporary officers, but the return of the Army from abroad should materially improve the situation. At the same time it has to be considered that any proposal to automatically take temporary officers into the established Service will not be conducive to keeping up a supply of cadets. The authorities responsible for educating boys cannot be expected to spend time in training their students for the Public Service unless reasonable hope of promotion is assured. The alteration in the scale of salaries, referred to elsewhere, should tend to make the Service more popular.

9. The shortage of boys has been eked out by the appointment of girls as cadettes, but, no matter how well this may answer in theory, it is found in practice that the employment of women as clerks is satisfactory only to a limited extent. In old-established institutions like the Public Service, where many officers retire annually owing to age, it is necessary that the wastage should be provided for from the bottom in such a way that a reasonably attractive career may be opened for young men, who have to assume the responsibilities of matrimony at a proper age. To block their promotion by the employment of girls, who rarely expect to remain in the Service after about the age of twenty-five, is likely to have far-reaching results. The Commissioners have found that Departments prefer boys to girls for general clerical work. It cannot, however, be questioned that, for certain classes of office-work, girls are equally efficient as boys in the earlier stages of their career.

10. Difficulties arise when it is necessary to promote women to positions in which they are required to train or control boys or men, to say nothing of the dislocation which arises through the very large wastage owing to the retirement of women to be married. On the other hand, in such a well-defined sphere as that of shorthand and typewriting, which women have practically made their own, they