

Public administration is an integral part of a nation's total war effort. We have come to the stage in the New Zealand Public Service when the efficient administration of the State's civil business is threatened. Therefore, the Commissioner will more frequently have to take the responsibility of asking Tribunals charged with the direction of man-power to retain public servants in their civil office.

The release of the very heavy proportion of the male officers of the Public Service that has been indicated above has been made possible because of the impressive part played by women in carrying on the State Service. Altogether, 3,200 women have been employed for wartime duty. Very many of these women had never been in any regular form of employment or been occupied previously in any similar kind of work that they are now performing; yet, generally speaking, they have displayed remarkable adaptability, and certainly an anxiety to acquit themselves well and to fill as well as may be the places of the men who have gone to service elsewhere.

*Our Men on War Service.*—On every field in which the New Zealand Army fights, in whatever sea the Navy sails, or wheresoever the Air Force operates, officers of the New Zealand Public Service have a place. It is not only exceedingly gratifying, but a matter of decent pride to learn of the distinction they have earned. Many awards for courageous exploits have been granted to public servants. Indeed, to two of them has been awarded the highest of all, that which is inscribed simply "For Valour." Many languish in enemy prison camps. We look forward anxiously to that day when they shall return to us. Some, alas, will not return. One hundred and twenty-four men who were our colleagues in the country's service in its peaceful days have rendered her their uttermost service. May we be worthy of them whose memory will aye endure.

*Public Administration Scholarships.*—The first group to be awarded scholarships in 1939 finished the arduous two years' course at the end of the 1941 University sessions. All were successful in qualifying for the Diploma in Public Administration. The University and external examiners report highly on the work of the students. The men have all returned to very useful and needful tasks in the Public Service. Although four scholarships were awarded this year, it was found necessary at the end of the first term to withdraw the students from college. The scholarships of the first-year students were cancelled and those of the second year were postponed until the course is resumed.

*Recruitment.*—A satisfactory number (771) of cadets were entered last year, as compared with 845 in the previous year (which, incidentally, was a record by a considerable margin). The urgent requirements of nearly all occupational groups and the lowering of the military age to eighteen has made it increasingly difficult to enlist the number of cadets required. A still closer liaison was established with secondary schools to the advantage not only of the Service, but of the boys. A better and happier placement can always be made if there is consultation and understanding between teacher and employer. The Commissioner acknowledges much assistance from many schools and Vocational Guidance Officers.

*Staff Training.*—This, as a working plan, has been rendered inoperative by the lowering of the military age and by the exit upon war service of every man that can be spared. The vast majority of boys now spend on an average rather less than a year in the Service prior to leaving for one of the uniformed Services. Virtually, the whole of the staff affected by any training scheme are on leave, and for obvious reasons it is not practicable to operate any scheme for the remnant. All that has been attempted this year is training classes for women in accounts and records work. These classes have been useful not only in providing practical training, but in enabling the quick selection of promising women whose merit might otherwise have been difficult to ascertain relatively for some time.

*Economy.*—Economy has been enforced throughout the Public Service with the utmost stringency, particularly in the use of petrol and paper and office equipment. Although it is true that the Public Service has been enjoined in the strongest terms to exercise economy, I am bound to say that there has been a most ready and commendable response that cannot be otherwise than ascribed to a genuine desire to assist the country toward victory.

*Overtime.*—It will not escape notice that the influx of women far from balances even numerically the outflow of men to the armed forces. An unparalleled burden of work has been thrown upon the remainder. The dispersal of staff in many centres and over forty-seven Departments makes it impossible to distribute the work with entire equity, but much has been done to achieve that. An inevitable consequence is that large sections of the Public Service have a very long hour week. Protracted periods of overtime have been worked in many Departments. In the other Departments where the volume of business does not call for overtime, the staff have been employed at nights and during the week-ends in war Departments. Very effective co-ordination has been brought about whereby the staff of one Department or a group of Departments cares for some phases of work in a war Department by working overtime. What has to be guarded against is that overtime is not performed to an excessive degree. The incidence of strain has to be watched with the greatest care, because too heavy pressure to serve immediate ends may in the long-run prove exceedingly expensive and detrimental to efficiency.

*Rehabilitation.*—Rehabilitation is the biggest personnel problem that confronts the Public Service in the near future. During nearly three years of war, over 6,000 men have already left their positions and many others have been seconded to civilian duties associated directly with the conduct of the war. Of these, some 3,000 have left with five years' service and some hundreds merely a few weeks or months in the Public Service. With the exception of the lamented number who will never return, the rest must be presumed to desire to return to their former civilian occupation, and preparation has accordingly to be made for their placement. Not only do heavy staff adjustments have to be made to accommodate them again, but also means of bridging the gap in their official career have to be planned.