

19th August. Prior to his departure overseas Mr. Barnett devoted great energy and enthusiasm to his new responsibilities in acquainting himself fully with the administrative set up of the Department and with the functioning of our several institutions. During his absence overseas Mr. E. J. Gifford is Acting Controller-General.

(2) *Inspector of Prisons*.—Following the retirement in 1948 of Mr. D. A. Mackintosh from this position Mr. P. McGrath, the Superintendent of His Majesty's Prison at Wellington, temporarily acted as Inspector. At the end of 1949 Commander H. R. Sleeman, O.B.E., R.N.Z.N., formerly Assistant Naval Secretary, was appointed to the post and took up duty on 5th December. While Mr. Barnett is away he is also acting as Deputy Controller-General.

(3) Mr. J. J. H. Lauder, Superintendent at Auckland, was awarded the M.B.E. in the recent honours list. This is a well-merited recognition not only of his own long and efficient service but also of the service of prison officers generally who perform such an important but insufficiently appreciated work in the community.

(4) Mr. H. W. D. Blake, B.A., Dip.Ed., was appointed Superintendent of the Invercargill Borstal Institution, and took up his duties on 31st October, 1949. He succeeds Mr. H. C. Mathew who accepted appointment with the Victorian Prison Service earlier in the year. Mr. Blake was previously a District Vocational Guidance Officer with the Education Department.

DISCIPLINARY

38. The normal establishment of the Department is 308 disciplinary officers. At 31st March, 1950, the strength was only 254. Of these 84 had been in the Service for less than three years. During the preceding twelve months 47 men were enlisted, but 59 left the Service. It is recognized that staffing problems are not peculiar to the Prisons Service, but the present position is frankly disturbing and difficult.

39. Before he left for overseas Mr. Barnett wrote the following note for this report :—

I had often heard and read criticism of the prisons staff before I myself took office as Controller-General a few months ago. Quite recently one clergyman referred to our officers contemptuously as turnkeys. Having met all the staff, seen them at work, and talked with them in discussion groups, I find them, as a body, a decent, sensible, and practical group of men who have a high conception of duty and responsibility. By and large, that is the sort of man we need in the Prison Service—men who can teach and oversee other men engaged in a variety of occupational undertakings: men who can handle the fractious and unwilling firmly and good-naturedly: men who have insight born of good sense and experience.

A speaker over the national broadcasting network recently told his listeners :—

“The first and foremost requirement in dealing with delinquents is to have men and women with character, with high ideals, and with intelligence . . . Promotion . . . must be limited to men with University and social-work training.”

Men of good intelligence, surely: men of reasonable education, of course; and men of character, above all. But it is nonsense to propose that promotion should be limited to men of University and social-work training. The plain fact is that we want men who know how to work at ordinary day to day tasks and trades and who can handle other men and command their respect. Of course we should have a leavening of men who have passed successfully through the University: this may enable them to understand better the psychological and mental ills to which mankind is heir.”

40. The conditions of service in New Zealand seem to offer inadequate inducement to either class—the non-University man, or the University graduate. The Public Service Commission has improved the career value of the Prisons Service to a modest extent, but still further improvement is necessary and is being sought. The Department itself has in recent months been surveying staff conditions generally: improvements are being made to living-quarters, better transport arranged in the remoter localities, and improved uniforms are to be provided: in short, better staff relationships are being sought.