

The following are the more important suggestions for improvements made by officers :—

L. G. Gosney, Printing and Stationery Department: Improvements in connection with ready-reckoners for justifying scale-drums on Monotype machines. Estimated saving to Department, about £60 a year. Mr. Gosney was granted £50.

C. B. Redward, State Fire Insurance Department: Improved form of fire-insurance policy. Estimated saving to Department, £250 a year. Mr. Redward was granted £75.

C. L. Purdie, Lands and Survey Department: Improvement in land-ballot system. The suggestion is a valuable one, and has resulted in a very considerable saving of work. Mr. Purdie was granted £30.

W. G. Dent, Lands and Survey Department: Improved method of marking records. The suggestion is of material assistance in tracing papers, and effects a considerable saving of officers' time. Mr. Dent was granted £7 10s.

DECENTRALIZATION.

At an early stage of their operations the Commissioners observed that there was unnecessary centralization, particularly in connection with payments to creditors of the Government. From time to time arrangements have been made by the Treasury under which individual Departments have been enabled to make payments locally without reference to Wellington. This has resulted in a considerable reduction of time between the presentation of claims and their payment. It is satisfactory to report that the Treasury has now decided to decentralize, as far as practicable, its operations in connection with the payment of claims. As a commencement, a District Treasury has been established in Auckland, which should be of considerable service to the mercantile community and others having transactions with Government. Where District Treasury Offices are stationed, the auditing of vouchers will also be performed locally, under arrangements made by the Audit Office.

FURLOUGH.

Reference was made in the Second Report to the desirability of reviewing the question of furlough, so that officers of, say, twenty years' service would be entitled to six months' leave of absence on full pay, which, if not taken previously, could be granted before retirement, or an equivalent in money allowed. The Commissioners are now pleased to be able to say that an approximation of the benefits then suggested is likely to be agreed to by Government. The present proposal is that an officer of forty years' service who has not previously taken extended leave of absence may, on retirement, be granted six months' leave of absence, or equivalent pay in lieu thereof, at the discretion of the Commissioner.

CONFERENCES OF OFFICERS.

The following are the principal conferences of officers which have been held during the year: Agriculture Department—Live-stock Division and Farm-managers; Lands and Survey Department—Principal Clerical Officers; Native Department—Registrars of Native Land Courts and Maori Land Boards; Labour Department—Inspectors of Factories; Mental Hospitals Department—Medical Superintendents; State Fire Department—Managers; Public Trust Department—Accountants and Local Controlling Officers; Audit Department—Audit Inspectors.

Arrangements are also in hand for conferences of officers of the Public Works and Mines Departments.

STORES.

Attention has been frequently called by the Commissioners to the desirability of dealing comprehensively with the purchase of stores and supplies for the Government Service. The Public Service Act provides, *inter alia*, that the Public Service Commissioner may make regulations determining the mode of procuring stores or other material or requisites for the Public Service; but, as a proviso was added empowering the Governor-General to determine and carry out methods of procuring supplies for the Public Service independently of regulations framed by the Commissioner under the Act, the power given to the Commissioner has proved of little value, and the regulations made under the Act have, as might be expected, had only a minor effect.