

The Commissioner appreciates the efforts by all officers to give to the public the benefits of the provisions of social security legislation with as little delay and inconvenience as possible.

SHORTAGE OF MENTAL NURSES.

Towards the end of 1938 it became apparent to the Commissioner that the various institutions under the control of the Mental Hospitals Department were experiencing considerable difficulty in filling locally vacancies occurring on the female staff. Although the rates of pay for mental nurses are considerably higher, and the conditions of service, such as hours of work, &c., are more attractive than they have ever previously been, the female staff is, and always has been, very much a changing population. Medical Superintendents usually experience little difficulty in filling vacancies locally, but at the commencement of the present year the position, due to the lack of local applicants, was acute. Many of the female staff were working far longer hours than the Commissioner thought desirable.

Considerable prominence was given to the attractions of mental nursing as a career for young women by radio and by newspaper throughout the Dominion. As a result a very good type of applicant became available and the shortage at hospitals was rapidly relieved, and institutions at present have a waiting-list of applicants desirous of appointment.

EMPLOYMENT OF ALIENS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

Section 36 (1) of the Public Service Act, 1912, provides—

Except with the permission of the Governor-General, no person shall be admitted to the Public Service unless he is a natural-born or naturalized subject of His Majesty.

The international unrest in Europe has resulted in many people of alien birth leaving their own countries and settling in New Zealand. The section of the Public Service Act above quoted prohibits the employment of these people except with the approval of the Governor-General. Approval has not been sought unless—

- (1) The person whom it was desired to appoint had qualifications not possessed by any natural-born or naturalized applicant available for appointment and already resident in the Dominion—*e.g.*, specialists in the Agriculture or Scientific and Industrial Research Departments; or
- (2) The supply of certain professional services was not equal to the demand and well-qualified foreign applicants were available—*e.g.*, draughtsmen, architects, and engineers in the Housing Construction and Public Works Departments.

In all, some twenty appointments of the above nature have been made. In all cases the appointments are to the temporary staff of the Public Service, so that the rights of present members of the Service are not affected.

INTRODUCTION OF OFFICE MACHINERY.

New and urgent problems resulting in applications from certain Departments for substantial increases in staff have necessitated the closest consideration being given to the introduction of further mechanical aids and labour-saving devices. Machines for adding, calculating, and reproduction work have been employed throughout the Public Service for many years, although latterly their use has been largely extended. In order to keep abreast of the latest developments in this