

Senator KING: That is requests from the departments?

Mr. NELSON: From the departments, yes.

I would like to refer to the activities of our operations and methods division. The work done is that similar to a commercial firm of efficiency engineers. It is a developing service. It is difficult to get and retain good men, but we now have a sound nucleus of staff. We have already added several, and during the year we will add about ten men to the quota of last year. The figures of saving for 1954 may not appear too significant in relation to the other figures I have given you, but the actual savings involved during the year through an improvement in methods, better ways of carrying out the operations, elimination of paper work and that sort of thing, from this fairly small group, resulted in an actual saving of approximately \$250 million and a potential saving of the same amount. These are savings which result from changes and improvements in operation and methods of departments. Of course those savings made in any one year would carry on through later years, and continue until the need for some change is indicated.

This is a service that is given on request from the departments; that is, we do not step in and say we are going to look at this or that. Rather, a department will say to us, "Will you look over our purchasing and stores division, or at our central registry and see what you can do to improve it?" The demands for that kind of service are growing and necessarily our staff will have to expand to meet those demands, because it does seem that the service is worthwhile.

Senator HAIG: Mr. Chairman, I have a question to ask, and with your permission I will put it now. I admit that I have been under a great misapprehension, and that my ignorance of the work of the Civil Service Commission was greater than I thought it was. I was surprised to learn, Mr. Nelson, that when a position becomes vacant and applicants are advertised for, they are then referred to your department.

Mr. NELSON: That is right.

Senator HAIG: And that you get together people who are experts in the line of work with which you are concerned, and you reduce the four or five applicants to two or three and finally decide on the one man you want to choose. Has that been general procedure for some time?

Mr. NELSON: Of course there are two steps—first there is the authorization for the position which has to be covered. In the matter of appointments, every position is advertised.

Senator HAIG: Yes, I know that, but when you get answers to that advertisement, what then becomes of the applications?

Mr. NELSON: An examining board is set up within the civil service commission on which the department is represented and on which very frequently we have an outside expert. They go over the group of applicants which is usually considerable, and they eliminate those who obviously appear to be unqualified, and narrow their selection down to a reasonably small group; this group will no doubt be subject to an oral examination, which means they are called in before the board. If it is a dominion-wide application, the board travels out throughout the country.

Senator HAIG: Who appoints that board?

Mr. NELSON: The Civil Service Commission; we are responsible for effecting the selection, but we think it proper and wise to have represented on these boards the department representative under whom the man is going to work, and an outside expert.

Senator HAIG: Is the department ever represented on a board by the Minister of Public Works?