

we are treated generously, and we have no reason to grumble at the fair allowance of leave each year for recreation. It is well we should remember this, if any of us have our eyes glued on the regulation hours of each day's service.

### Efficiency.

Efficiency can only be attained and maintained by industry. It is the practical application of the knowledge we acquire, not only of the particular details of our own work, but of its relation to the work generally of our department. The most successful officer, the one most sought after, and the one who attracts most recognition is the handy man, who, keeping his eyes open, has maintained an intelligent interest in all that pertains to his department, and finds it no difficulty to undertake any reasonable task at a moment's notice.

To be efficient we must ever be progressing. Has the danger occurred to you of repetition, tradition, and constant practice in our daily routine of work? Have you ever considered how beneficial it would be if at times we could with other eyes than our own indulge in introspection, and criticise the reasons why we do this or that, or why in this way or that way? Because a certain detail of work has always been done in a certain way, it does not follow by any means that it is the correct way. This seems to be such a trite saying as to be almost absurd, and yet how many of us have been told, in asking why such and such a thing has been done in a certain way, that it has always been done that way before. I think one of the most important steps towards real efficiency is a clear understanding of the why and wherefore of the things we do. Each of the officers present, I am sure, has his own safeguards and methods in avoiding waste work, associated with the hateful appellation of "red tape."

In times past I have personally found very valuable assistance by ap-

pointing committees of officers to examine into the work; a committee of three, always including a stranger to the details of the work immediately under review. He it is who generally asks questions as to why this is done, why that form is necessary, what purpose is served by repetition of certain details, and so on. Untrammelled by tradition, and the practice which so often blinds one's judgment, his suggestions may often awaken enquiry on the part of his colleagues to see some features of the work in an entirely new light.

Those who have had long service, and have reached positions of some trust, will agree with me that a close association with and encouragement of the younger members of the service for a full expression of any useful and original suggestion is worth cultivating. It tends to rub off some possible rust from the older officers, and stimulates the younger ones to a keener interest in their work.

Before I leave the subject of efficiency, I would add that if we desire to achieve success in our own business we must mind our own business. The interference with other people's business is as common a failing as any of the frailties of human nature, and it seems a very hard and almost impossible task on the part of not a few to mind their own business. An efficient officer is so fully occupied with his own work and responsibilities that he has neither time nor inclination to meddle with the affairs of others.

And talking of meddling brings me to a matter which, I think, is of the gravest importance to us all.

### Civil Servants and Politics.

It has been recently announced in the press that, in deference to the wishes of some of our officers, it is proposed to amend the public service regulations with the view of permitting officers to a more or less extent engage in political controversy, and enable them to take part in those contentious matters of public policy which,