

and took evidence as to the working of the classification schemes now in existence in the Railways and Post and Telegraph Departments, but found the general opinion as to the way in which they work out in practice strongly against them. The evidence went to show that the general effect of both these classification schemes was promotion by seniority rather than promotion by merit, although the Post Office scheme, as the result of twenty years' working, seems to run fairly smoothly. Officers, however, who have directed and worked under both unhesitatingly declare against any classification, except on the basis of merit, beyond a minimum or living-wage. It is promotion by merit and not by seniority that is demanded (and we think rightly so) not only by the vast majority of the younger members of the Service whose opinions we obtained, but also by heads of Departments and those in responsible positions, who look upon it as the only means of maintaining a high standard of efficiency in the Service.

### PART III.—ORGANIZATION OF THE WHOLE SERVICE.

*As we think it should be.*

The foregoing sets out briefly the organization of the Service as it at present exists, and we will now endeavour to set out the changes that we consider necessary to be made in the organization in order to produce the best results. The object to be aimed at in a Service which is conducting the business of the country is just the same as that to be aimed at in a service that is conducting any other business—thorough efficiency combined with economy. To secure this it is necessary to have first an efficient head controlling the whole Service, and under this head an efficient and contented staff, proud of the service to which they belong, and intent on rising in it. Without these two things thorough efficiency cannot be obtained, and without efficiency it is hopeless to think of economy.

Taking the head first: it is to our mind essential that there should be one controlling head for the whole business of the country, to hold the whole Service together, and make it work as one well-oiled and efficient machine. Without this it is the tendency of each of the Departments to drift off on its own account regardless of the others, and with its chief object to magnify the work of the Department for the glorification of the principal officers who are running it. In the past, the only head of the Service has been the Cabinet of the day. We are quite satisfied that a Cabinet is not, and never can be, an efficient controlling business head. The work which the controlling head of the Public Service has to do is to attend to (*a*) the business policy, (*b*) the general organization and working methods, and (*c*) the staff, engagements, promotions, transfers, and the general handling of officers. A Cabinet which is in touch with Parliament, and through Parliament with the people, can settle the broad policy lines upon which the people of the country demand that the business of the country is to be conducted, and they are undoubtedly the best body in sight to conduct this part of the business; but while they can settle the policy, they are not fitted to attend to the detail of the general organization and working methods of the staff, engagements, promotions, transfers, and handling of the officers generally. This is the work of experts trained in the business of the country, and in business methods generally, and this work cannot be attended to efficiently by Ministers, who, in most cases, have not had the necessary previous training for the administrative work which is entailed. Moreover, even if they had, their time is so fully occupied considering policy matters, carrying them through Parliament, and keeping in touch with Parliament and the electors generally, that they could not possibly attend to the details of the business of the country properly. At the present time heads of Departments have to refer all sorts of minor details to the Ministers in charge of their particular Departments. This not only wastes the time and hampers the operations of the Department itself, but it takes up the time of Ministers attending to a mass of detail which, in many cases, they can know very little about, and which would be done very much better if they were relieved of them altogether, and the responsibility