

In regard to the General Division, the responsibility of fixing scales of salaries is left to the Commissioner, as is also the question of remuneration for temporary employees. In the Administrative Division the salaries of officers are, as before, to be determined by Parliament itself in the estimates. Parliamentary control over the classification issued by the Commissioner is provided in the Act by the power reserved to reduce or increase the total of all salaries in any ratio desired. A periodical reclassification of the Public Service is contemplated.

The Act provides for the setting-up of a Board of Appeal, to which officers dissatisfied with the ruling of the Commissioner or with their classification might appeal, the Board to be constituted partly by officers elected by members of the Service and partly by persons appointed by the Government.

In consequence of the fact that the Public Service Act repeals the previously existing Acts under which the Civil Service was administered, it became necessary for the Commissioner to immediately make fresh regulations for the guidance of officers and conduct of public business. Power to make regulations is given for a variety of purposes, amongst the most important of which are those for the examination and admission of applicants for employment, for the attendance of officers, for the testing of officers for promotion, for the granting of leave of absence, for the determination of the amounts of travelling and other allowances, and for the control of departmental stores.

The Commissioner is further required to conduct inspections of Departments, and to report periodically upon the results of such inspections. Wide powers are given for the reduction or dismissal of officers where this may be found necessary, but in all such cases officers have the right of appeal to the Board of Appeal.

#### EFFICIENCY AND CONDITION OF THE SERVICE.

Although there are several Departments the organization and working of which are of the highest order, it may be said, broadly, that the Service generally was not found to be in so efficient a state as it should have been. The reasons for this will appear under the headings which follow. There has, however, been a marked improvement, and, according to information received from certain heads of Departments, there is now an enthusiasm on the part of members of the Service and a desire to improve the working-methods which was not before known. There is still, however, a great deal to be done to bring Departments into a thorough condition of efficiency, and no time will be lost to ensure the accomplishment of this when the heavy work in connection with the final settling of the classification is completed. There is in the meantime abundant evidence to show that greater efficiency can be secured in many Departments at a reduced cost of working.

When it is stated that the efficiency of a Department is shown by its capacity to carry out promptly and properly its duties and obligations to the public, it is evident that any failure to do this reveals faulty management. Complaints have reached the Commissioners of delays which might be avoided, and I can only come to the conclusion that in one or two Departments which have been specially referred to the convenience of the public is not given first place. It is rarely that a member of the public is unreasonable in his demand for attention, and the Commissioners are strongly of opinion that no person who pays a fee for any service or is otherwise entitled to receive a service should have to wait more than a minimum time for the service to be performed. It should be impressed upon every lad from the day that he enters the Service that he is part of a great organization in which, by faithfully performing his duty, he can assist towards efficiency. If the methods of a Department require a fortnight in which to perform a service, controlling officers should strive to devise means to perform the service in a week; if a week, then a shorter time, until the organization is perfect, care being taken to see that all interests are safeguarded.

#### CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF DEPARTMENTS.

Under the system by which the Public Service was divided into a number of Departments there was little co-operation between them. One of the most glaring examples is, or has been, the lack of co-operation between Departments and the Treasury. Although the latter Department is in sole charge of the accounts of the Dominion, it has not for a long time exercised