

it remains for officers to give such close attention to the notices in the Official Circular as will assist the Commissioners in dealing with a difficult problem, particularly such assistance as can be rendered by early application for any advertised positions for which they desire to apply.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION.

In last year's report attention was called to the desirability of classifying Permanent Heads. It is recommended that this matter should, if possible, receive attention whenever any further legislation concerning the Public Service is contemplated. At the same time, it is considered that provision should be made to classify Assistant Secretaries in the larger Departments. At present the number of administrative officers is unduly large, mainly as the result of the Public Service Act fixing a maximum salary for the Clerical Division of £600, a lower salary than some Assistant Secretaries were receiving at the time of the classification.

The Commissioners are of opinion that there should be only one officer in each Department in the Administrative Division—namely, the Permanent Head—and that the salary of an officer should never be a determining factor in connection with placing him in that division. Until the classification suggested is provided for by Act it does not appear possible to reduce the number of officers in the Administrative Division.

CLASSIFICATION.

In the Second Report reference was made to a proposal to add to the salaries of Mental Hospital officers the value of such emoluments as rations and lodging, a corresponding deduction being made for refund to the maintenance vote. This was provided for in the 1915-16 classification, and a similar arrangement was made in regard to like emoluments payable to officers of the Education Department employed in special schools, and to cases in other Departments. There is no doubt that the provision was a reasonable one, as it goes without saying that the cash salary of officers who receive rations and lodging was in the past fixed on the basis of the cash salary plus emoluments. It appears to be a hardship that an officer drawing a cash salary of, say, £120, and receiving emoluments valued at £30, should receive superannuation on the basis of the cash salary only. As in many other matters, Departments were found to be treating such emoluments differently. Where an official residence was available there was no uniformity in the method of charging rent, and in many cases residences were allowed free of charge.

The Crown Law Office has now advised (as regards the Teachers' Superannuation Fund) that the alteration made in the Public Service List has no effect either upon the contributions of officers or their retiring-allowance. By section 2 of the Classification and Superannuation Amendment Act, 1908, it is provided that "salary" means, with respect to a contributor, the actual sum paid to him as salary in respect of his service, but does not include allowances or payments for overtime. For the purpose of that Act, therefore, an officer's total remuneration is irrelevant, as "salary" is the net amount of cash actually paid to him. As a similar provision exists in the main Act, officers other than those of the Education Department are in a similar position. As the Education and Mental Hospitals Departments had been pressing for years to have their officers' total remuneration treated as salary, and the value of house-rent and rations deducted therefrom, it is unfortunate that there should now be any difficulty in the matter. The attention of Government has been drawn to it, with a suggestion that the Superannuation Act might be amended to meet the case.

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOL INSPECTORS.

Under the Education Act, 1914, School Inspectors appointed by the Education Boards under any former Act became members of the Public Service. As the Inspectors had been appointed by thirteen separate Boards, which differed widely in their estimates of the salary-value of the position, and to some extent in conditions