

an officer is rendering satisfactory service, and that the increment is merited in the proper sense of the term. In one particular case an officer in a responsible position in one of the principal Departments was actually adversely reported on by the Permanent Head, who, notwithstanding this fact, took no steps to exercise his authority in pursuance of this section. That an amendment in the direction indicated is one of urgency would seem apparent.

The Commissioner also should be empowered to arrest the increment of an officer where such a course was in his opinion necessary.

DIVISIONS OF OFFICERS.

Section 16 of the Public Service Act, 1912, provides for the constitution of four principal divisions—that is to say, the Administrative Division, the Professional Division, the Clerical Division, and the General Division. Section 160 of the Education Act, 1914, provided for the constitution of the Education Division.

The nature of examinations passed by an officer, or which he is supposed to pass, is the principal factor governing the decision as to class in which an officer is to be graded.

Discontent and heartburning have arisen through a number of officers who claim professional or semi-professional status being placed in the Clerical and sometimes in the General Division of the Service. To meet such cases an "Expert" division has been suggested.

On the whole, it is considered no good purpose is served by the present separate grouping of the Clerical and Professional Division. It is felt that the grouping of the divisions should be as hereunder:—

"A" Division, to include Permanent Heads of Departments only:

"B" Division, to include Professional and Clerical Divisions as at present constituted, also those officers of the Administrative Division other than Permanent Heads:

"C" Division, to include the Education Division:

"D" Division, to include all employees now placed in the General Division.

At the present time the scale for the Clerical Division is more liberal than that for the Professional Division. This situation arose in the first instance as a result of the statutory provision that salaries in the Professional Division exceeding £700 (£750, new scale) must be specially appropriated by Parliament. No such limitation occurs in respect of the Clerical Division. It is hoped that the anomaly at present existing will be amended prior to the issue of the next annual list.

AMALGAMATION OF DEPARTMENTS.

Economy may be effected in the direction of amalgamating Departments and securing greater co-operation and co-ordination between Departments. If the number of Departments were reduced a considerable saving would be effected by the elimination of those officers whose services could be dispensed with under the new conditions. The growth of separate Departments has tended to largely increase expenditure without commensurate advantage.

Another tendency, and one which should be avoided, is that of Departments to acquire special expert staffs, notwithstanding that such expert assistance is in many cases available from other Departments. For instance, Government decided that it was necessary to appoint an Architect in connection with the housing scheme, and later an Architect was also appointed to the Education Department. At a time like the present, when there is urgent need for economy, such work should be performed by the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department, notwithstanding that it may be desirable from a purely departmental point of view to have a special staff for the particular service of that Department. This matter is fully dealt with in the report of the Economy Committee.

STAFFING OF DEPARTMENTS.

During the war and the years immediately following the conclusion of hostilities considerable difficulty was experienced in staffing Departments. This was primarily due to the expansion of the activities of Departments such as the Public Trust, Lands