

*Mr. D. Jones.*] Do you agree that the Secretary of the Post and Telegraph Department is the person most competent to judge as to the number of officers required in the Administrative Division?—I agree that the Secretary is the only one who can say how many should be in the Administrative Division.

*Mr. Sullivan.*] We gather that what you object to is the financial basis—the naming of a certain sum. Supposing it appears in a form providing that certain administrative officers whose positions were named should be the subject of appeal: what would be the attitude of your association?—Our association in that case would still be opposed to the principle, but would consider your alternative as less dangerous and offensive to us than the present clause. It would be a case where we would have to choose the lesser of two evils, in the sense that we would still be in opposition to the proposal.

Apparently from the statement you have made promotion is made on the basis of merit?—That is so.

Can this clause have the effect of giving the Government the right to appoint some person of lesser merit for reasons of its own?—So far as I can see under this clause the Governor-General in Council would have power to appoint any individual he saw fit without giving reasons. The result might be the appointment of persons of lesser merit.

Could the clause give the right to appoint some person of lesser merit? If the Government acted in the same way as the Promotion Board and decided to appoint a person best entitled by merit, it would appear that the same individual would get the appointment?—I presume that is what would happen. The only point is that if in the first instance the Promotion Board made an error, that error would be subject to review by the Appeal Board.

On the basis of merit?—Yes, pure and simple. If the Governor-General in Council made an error there would be no review possible.

*Mr. A. Hamilton.*] The appointment is made to-day by the Board in the first instance?—Yes, that is so.

And I presume under this clause it will be made the same way?—No, they will have nothing to do with it; the Promotion Board will not come into it in any way.

They will recommend some one?—No, they will have nothing to do with it. It will be on the Secretary's personal recommendation to Cabinet.

*The Chairman.* I think that is quite clear.

*Mr. A. Hamilton.*! Your only objection is the right of appeal against the appointment?—The right of appointment in the first instance. The right of representation on the Promotion Board gives us a certain say in the actual appointment itself; furthermore, the right of appeal is a safeguard of which we are very jealous.

You think there is no danger under the present system of any new appointment being made that would cause difficulty in the control?—I see no reason why there should be provided the statutory requirements under which the Promotion Board operates are adhered to.

Supposing there was an appointment made to-day and the Appeal Board upset it and put some one else in and that some one else might not accept—is there any danger of that?—Such things do happen, of course; human nature is the same all the world over; and whether it is the Appeal Board or the Head of the Department there is a possibility of error, but we do contend that through the operations of the Promotion Board the possibility of error is narrowed down very considerably; and I say that the operations of the two tribunals are likely to result in the appointment of the right men—more so than a decision of an individual, the decision of the Secretary of the Department. The Secretary is liable to err, so we all are; but the machinery of the two Boards referred to would reduce the liability of error to a minimum.

If the Government makes a bad appointment they would soon get to hear of it?—They would in general terms, but I cannot see that that would operate as expeditiously and efficiently as the machinery at present in operation. There would merely be a growl from the long-suffering public, which would not be able to lay its finger on the cause.

*Right Hon. Sir Joseph Ward.* That is one of the privileges they possess.

*Mr. McNamara.*] You have said that the Promotion Board may err in making senior appointments, and the Appeal Board would have the right to correct that error. Have you considered which body is the more competent to select an officer—say, Chief Inspector—the Promotion Board or the Appeal Board? Who would be the most competent to select that senior officer?—On the face of it, sir, it would appear that the Board of administrative officers should be the most competent. Experience has shown, however, that the right of appeal has been availed of in these senior positions and the possibility of error fully explored; and while probably the decisions of the Promotion Board have not been upset, we have at least the satisfaction of traversing the decisions of that Board and perhaps confirming the Promotion Board in its appointments. If you are going to take away that safeguard, that is what we protest against.

You do admit that the Promotion Board, by virtue of its training, must be more competent to select a Chief Inspector than an Appeal Board?—It should be, sir, but it may make an error, and a more or less judicial tribunal is there under present conditions to correct that error.

But the Appeal Board may make an error, too?—Well, we all make errors.

*The Chairman.* I think we have carefully noted your objections, and we thank you for coming before the Committee and explaining your views. We will give them due consideration.

*Mr. Carr.* Thank you very much on behalf of my association. The patient hearing you have given us has been very gratifying, and I shall not fail to convey to the members of my association that we have received a very courteous and considerate hearing. I thank you.