

invariably remains in the room while the appeal is being heard and is present when a decision is being arrived at, and indirectly, if not directly, the decision may be affected by the presence of the representative who did not sit on the appeal.

I am of opinion that the constitution of the Board should be amended by providing for one elected Service member only. I am also of opinion that it is better that the Chairman should be an entirely independent man—preferably a man with good business experience.

PERIOD OF PROBATION.

Reference has been made in previous reports to the important provision that all new appointments to the Public Service, shall, in the first instance, be on probation. The Act provides that the period of probation shall be not less than six months. This period was found to be too short, and since 1921 the period has been extended to two years.

Provision was made in the amending Act of last year that the services of an officer on probation might be dispensed with at any time during the period of his probation, and, further, that the period might be extended from time to time should such a course be deemed necessary. This probation is not lightly regarded, and should an officer while on probation be found unsatisfactory in any respect the practice is either to dismiss him or to extend the probationary period until his efficiency is assured.

The system of open, competitive examination, which is in operation in regard to the appointment of junior officers, has proved to be a satisfactory system of recruitment; but it is necessary, in addition, to have a probation period in order that those who have merely an examination sense but who have no practical aptitude for the work on which they are engaged are eliminated by practical test as soon as deficiencies are discovered.

To ensure that the progress of the appointee is carefully reviewed, progress probation reports are furnished by local controlling officers at the expiration of the first month of employment and thereafter at three-monthly intervals until the period of probation has expired or until the appointment has been confirmed.

During the year the services of thirty-eight persons serving on probation were dispensed with for various reasons.

ANNUAL REPORTS ON STAFF.

The Public Service Acts provide that where several officers are being considered for promotion the appointment should be given to the one who is most efficient and suitable for appointment to the position vacant. The method of ascertaining, as far as practicable, the degrees of efficiency and suitability of the officers in the Service is mainly by the following methods:—

- (1) By inspection by departmental Inspectors;
- (2) By inspection and personal interview by the Public Service Commissioner or a Public Service Inspector; and
- (3) By the furnishing of an annual efficiency report in respect of each officer.

By the judicious combination of these three means it is possible to obtain a reasonably accurate pen picture of an officer.

The development of an accurate method of rating officers is very important, and in framing an annual report form an endeavour is made to adopt a systematic rating plan which will enable all the important personal qualities of an officer to be considered. Briefly, it may be said that the main uses for which a systematic periodical report is required are the following:—

- (1) To ascertain if the officer's value to the Service is increasing or decreasing;
- (2) To provide a uniform basis for salary increases or decreases;
- (3) To be used in making selection for promotion;
- (4) To help controlling officers in pointing out and correcting employees' weak points; and
- (5) To be used as a means of checking the effect of the entrance and promotion methods in vogue.