

The General Departmental Examination was held in October, 1939, in conjunction with the Efficiency Test Examinations for officers in the General Division. Candidates from seventeen different Departments presented themselves for the Departmental Examination, which was held in forty-three centres.

The two main series of examinations are the General Departmental Examination and the Efficiency Test for the General Division. In the former, it will be observed from the table, the outcome of the examination was much more disappointing than it ever has been before, only 15 out of 80 succeeding, or 18·75 per cent. The perusal of the papers in the English section of the examination has led to a reconsideration of the prescription of this examination. It is thought that a more practical paper over a two-hour period would give the candidates a better opportunity of displaying their competence in the workmanlike use of English.

The Efficiency Test Examinations for the General Division drew a much larger number of candidates than in the first year, 221 presenting themselves on this occasion. Of this, 85 secured a full pass or completed a partial pass gained in the previous year, representing 38·5 per cent. of the candidates. It was pleasing to observe the much higher standard of work presented by the entrants. It is obvious that in the majority of Departments there had been a good deal of preparation not only on the candidates' part, but also on that of the Department and its senior officers. Altogether from the examiners' point of view the results were gratifying, and the Commissioner has been informed by Departments that the examinations have had the effect of inducing, on the part of the candidates and intending candidates, a much greater interest in the work that is expected of them and in training programmes generally.

A highly successful innovation this year was the inclusion on the Examining Committee dealing with the field officers of Professor Hudson, the Director of the Canterbury Agricultural College. Professor Hudson was associated with the Committee in the practical and oral tests, and rendered invaluable assistance. His report to the Commissioner was both illuminating and constructive. Among other things he said was :—

In consequence of my observations, I am of opinion that if the officers of the various Departments are expected to lead and to command the respect of the members of the farming community with whom their work brings them in contact, it is desirable that a higher standard of efficiency than that generally displayed by the cadets should be insisted upon. By helping to differentiate between the less efficient officers and those more worthy of advancement in the Service, the tests should serve a useful purpose.

It is to be observed that the addition of Professor Hudson to the Examining Board has the effect of bringing together the educational institutions upon which we depend for teaching our officers and the Controlling Officers of Departments who employ the product of the college. Such an association cannot be otherwise than mutually beneficial.

EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

Section 12 of the Public Service Act, 1912, imposes a duty on the Commissioner as regards the efficiency of the Public Service.

In my opinion all inspecting officers, not only those attached to my own office, but also those attached to the various Departments of the Service, have carried out their duties with efficiency and economy as their main objects. At the present time all Departments are labouring with staffs which have not been trained to the standard of efficiency one expects to find in a well-ordered, peace-time Public Service. Officers generally, however, are responding well to the tasks placed upon them. Despite the many handicaps at present existing, I am able to certify that in my opinion the efficiency of the Service is being maintained.

STAFFING DIFFICULTIES DUE TO EMPLOYEES SERVING WITH THE ARMED FORCES.

From a staffing viewpoint the year has been one of increasing difficulty, due to the large withdrawals of staff for war service. From a permanent and temporary male staff of approximately 18,700, 2,468 employees are overseas or about to proceed