

with salary up to £800. For higher positions we have urged a modified procedure (page 16 of our 1948 report and page 12 above) that is meant to ensure fair consideration of every applicant's claims, including the right of representing his case personally to the Commission before a final appointment has been made, and at the same time to give certainty and finality to these higher appointments once they have been made.

Aiming to hold the scales fairly between persons already in the Public Service, who on the score of experience will always have very strong claims to advancement, and possible appointees from outside the Service, our recommendation is that the law should provide for preference to the senior applicant already in the Service when he and another are equally the most suitable and efficient applicants available: subject to this, the Commission to be required to appoint the most efficient and suitable person available, whether from inside or outside the Public Service.

We have recommended that a number of important Public Service positions that are now exempt from the Act should be brought under it. The case for reconsidering such exemptions is illustrated by an appointment made recently, the Director of Broadcasting. Not doubting that the proper appointment was made—members of the Commission were, in fact, consulted, and concurred in it—we yet remarked that because of the present law the new holder of the office loses, after thirty-five years' service, his Public Service status and its security of tenure. Appointed instead under the Broadcasting Act, he has a term of three years, at the end of which the then Ministers will determine whether he remains. If the principle of non-political appointment has any validity, hardly any position seems more fitting for it than this one. Yet it remains exempt.

The Commission has also recorded its belief that the interests of the country and of the Public Service would be well served by the partial reversal of the changes in statute and regulations made in 1936, changes that allowed and encouraged the active participation of public servants in party political activities. A review can, we think, be reasonably consistent with both officers' rights of citizenship and their obligation to render loyal and disinterested service to whatever Government holds office.

We would be amongst the first to acknowledge that issues raised by these recommendations admit of reasonable differences of opinion. In a measure they are apt to be controversial, and not less so in this election year. Indeed, it is reasonable to expect that interested organizations will be active in demanding promises and pledges before the proposals have been calmly examined on their merits. Against this, it should be an encouraging circumstance that both parties in the Legislature, and, of course, the country as a whole and the Public Service particularly, have a common interest in good administration that far outweighs any differences on this or that detail. Hence one might hope that administrative questions could be kept distinct from party political controversy.

Apart from any changes in substance, the Public Service Act badly needs to be consolidated: this has not been done since the original Act was passed in 1912. A draft consolidating and amending Bill has been prepared, and the Commission would welcome its being referred to a Committee of the Legislature for examination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the helpful co-operation it has enjoyed from officers throughout the Service.

All of which is respectfully submitted for Your Excellency's consideration.

R. M. CAMPBELL, Chairman,	} Members,
G. T. BOLT	
A. H. O'KEEFE	

Public Service Commission.

Office of the Public Service Commission, Wellington, 20th June, 1949.