

made in order of merit as ascertained by the examination. Upon the list existing to-day there are only two male cadets eligible for appointment to any Department in order of merit. There are seven more who, having previously declined appointments, have at their request since been reinstated on the list; and there are nineteen who have limited their applications to special Departments. It will be seen that, excluding the nineteen eligible for special Departments, there are now only nine male cadets who can enter the service under the present regulations. It is probable that the opportunities and commencing salaries offered by mercantile institutions are now found more attractive to young men than the service of the Dominion. The immediate difficulty may be met by the issue of amended regulations, permitting the entry of young men who, by a slight modification of the conditions for a pass in the last examination, may be considered to have reached the required standard.

But some means must be found to make the Public Service permanently more attractive to young men, and it will probably be found necessary to increase the salaries at present paid during the first year of service. The Government has invited the advice and co-operation of the heads of Departments, and records with the greatest satisfaction the spirit in which its invitation has been met. The heads of all the unclassified Departments of the Public Service have held meetings, and have joined in recommendations to the Government, the general effect of which will be laid before Parliament during the present session if legislation is proposed on the subject.

Advantage has been taken of this conference of the heads of Departments to arrange a method by which the increases of salaries proposed to Parliament for the officers of unclassified Departments in the current year shall be uniformly dealt with. Hitherto each head of Department has submitted independently to the Minister of that Department the proposals for the increases of salaries in his own Department. Such proposed increases have been considered in the past—first, by the Minister of the Department, and then by Cabinet, before submission to Parliament; but it is manifest that under that method the personal equation was too largely involved, and, rightly or wrongly, the officers of some Departments considered that in their claims to increases they had not, in comparison with the officers of other Departments, equal advantages of advocacy. The heads of all unclassified Departments have now agreed to nominate a small advisory committee, the members of which have already conferred with the Minister upon all proposed increases, which are to be adjusted, if necessary, in accordance with their advice. By this means it is intended to effect uniformity in the presentation to Parliament of the claims of officers of the Service to increases, and thereby effectually remove whatever discontent in this respect has been hitherto felt in the Service.

RAILWAYS.

A full statement of the position of the railways of New Zealand and the future policy to be pursued with regard to them will be given to members in the Railways Statement.

Mr. T. Ronayne, after seventeen years' faithful service as General Manager, and thirty-seven years' service in the Public Service of the Dominion, is retiring in January next, and the Government has determined to invite applications in London for the position of General Manager to fill Mr. Ronayne's place.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

The construction of main lines of railway will be prosecuted with such vigour as the funds at the disposal of the Government will permit. As to other lines of railway, it is proposed to try the experiment of adopting some cheaper form of construction without altering the present gauge.

CUSTOMS.

The Government has decided that, owing to the short time at its disposal, there is no likelihood of its being able to introduce into the House this session any proposal to revise the Customs tariff. Whilst fully sensible of the many anomalies that exist at the present time, and of the necessity of stimulating the engineering, ironworking, and other manufacturing enterprises of the Dominion, the Government