

MINIMUM WAGE.

Although the principle of a minimum wage for married men had obtained in the Post and Telegraph Department for a number of years, it had not been applied to the rest of the Public Service. As there appeared to be no power under the Act to make a regulation to govern the matter, and as it was considered desirable that such cases should be provided for, I made representations to Government, who readily agreed to provide the necessary funds to bring married men already in the Service up to a minimum of £140 per annum as from the 1st April last. I would suggest that a minimum salary for married men on as liberal a scale as possible should be fixed by Act.

It is also worthy of consideration by Parliament whether the present minimum wage of £100 fixed by Act for male officers of twenty-one years of age might not with advantage be raised, and a suitable minimum for women of the same age be fixed.

MEDICAL OFFICERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS.

For admission to the Service, the practice adopted has been to select one or more medical practitioners in each centre, and to require candidates to present themselves to one of these practitioners for examination before taking up duty. The number of persons rejected has been small.

Before the Public Service Act came into operation cadets appear to have been the only class of entrants in the case of whom medical examination was always required. It is quite likely that the Superannuation Fund has suffered on this account in the past. The question of waiving the medical examination in connection with the domestic staffs of Government institutions, and retaining them on a non-established footing, is at the present time being considered, as it is found that many of these employees only remain for short periods, and the requirement of a medical certificate increases the difficulties of the management in obtaining suitable domestics.

EXAMINATIONS HELD AND TRAINING OF OFFICERS.

The examinations conducted during the year under the Public Service Regulations have been the Public Service Entrance Examination, the Public Service Senior Examination, the efficiency examinations in the Post and Telegraph Department, and examinations for admission of shorthand-writers and typistes.

Under the regulations recently issued governing examinations for promotion of Inspectors of Factories in the Department of Labour an examination is shortly to be held.

Charwomen and Rabbit Inspectors have been appointed without examination, in accordance with the provisions of section 40, subsection (2), of the Act.

The question of discontinuing the Public Service Senior Examination after January, 1916, and of substituting, instead, special examinations for individual Departments or groups of Departments has been under consideration for some time. There would then be required from officers a theoretical and practical knowledge of the work of their Department and a pass in the subject of English. Replies are now being received from Permanent Heads to an inquiry that has been made in regard to making some such change.

• *Entrance and Senior Examinations.*

By the terms of clause 172 of the General Regulations the syllabus and procedure in connection with the recent Public Service Entrance and Public Service Senior Examinations were the same as for the corresponding examinations in previous years.

The Public Service Entrance Examination was held between the 19th and the 26th November at fifty-one centres. The examination was not open to female candidates, and the number of entrants consequently showed a marked falling-off—868 in 1913, as against 1,708 in 1912. While the main reason for the decreased candidature was naturally the exclusion of female candidates from the examination, there was also the reason that only those boys who were actually desirous of obtaining admission to the Service were allowed to enter. In the past many candidates have taken the examination merely as a test of educational proficiency, and without any idea of entering the Public Service. Of the 868 candidates admitted at the