

It would be much more satisfactory to all concerned if it were enacted by Parliament that no increase to an officer's classified salary by way of allowances not provided for by Act or regulation should be made unless the officer's name or position is stated and the allowance specially provided for in the Estimates.

THE PROFESSIONAL DIVISION.

The regulations prescribing the tests for admission to the Professional Division have been amended, and a pass in the Public Service Senior Examination in certain specified subjects is now required. Not only is considerable eagerness for admission to this division displayed by candidates for cadetships from outside the Service, but there are numerous inquiries from within the Service from junior officers who are anxious to obtain a transfer from the Clerical to the Professional Division. The number of openings is, however, very strictly limited, and it must be clearly understood by these applicants that the mere fact of qualifying does not ensure their admission, but simply makes them eligible for consideration if vacancies should arise.

A special course of physics lectures was held at the Victoria College during the year 1913 for engineering officers of the Post and Telegraph Department, and such satisfactory results were achieved as to warrant equally favourable conditions being afforded engineering officers of the Public Works Department.

Liberal conditions have accordingly been provided in regulations just issued for enabling engineers of the Public Works Department to pursue their professional training. Leave on half-pay will be granted to approved applicants during the college sessions, in order that they may take a two-years course in engineering at Canterbury College, and the lecture fees and cost of books will be paid. In the interests of the State due measures are required to be taken to see that the students pursue their courses with diligence, and provision is made to bind each engineer either to serve his Department for a certain time after the completion of his training or to refund the money advanced.

POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

The manifold activities of this Department continue to extend rapidly, and have necessitated a considerable increase in staff during the year, principally owing to the very rapid extension of the telephone.

As the result of further revision, the condition of the General Division of the service has been considerably improved. The principal alteration has been the raising of the maximum of letter-carriers, telegraph-linemen, &c., to £180, and providing facilities for the transfer of other classes of General Division officers to the Clerical Division. The growth of the service in other directions has warranted the creation of a number of positions above the Seventh Class, while the fullest opportunity has been taken to provide an outlet for officers of meritorious service who, under previous conditions, were blocked at £220 per annum.

The Post and Telegraph Department is peculiar as compared with others, as under the Public Service Act transfers to the Department from other Departments are practically impossible, although there is nothing to prevent Postal officers being transferred to other Departments. This was at the request of the officers of the Department, but I am afraid the provision is one which is a disadvantage rather than an advantage to the officers themselves, as the rest of the Public Service is now claiming through its association that the same treatment should be applied to them. The full effect desired by all officers would be met if the restrictions were modified. The Post Office has unusual facilities for training officers in certain classes of clerical work for which it is at times difficult to find officers properly trained in other Departments, while, on the other hand, the Post Office is often in need of General Division officers, who could be supplied from other Departments instead of being engaged from outside the Public Service.

This Department was classified for twenty-one years before the Commissioners assumed office, and the manner in which the officers expressed themselves during the passage of the Public Service Bill was a striking testimony to the high regard which they had for the system of classification.