

general condition of the Service is, however, being carefully watched, and opportunity is being taken of the retirement of officers to fill their places in such a way as to keep in view possible changes in organization when affairs become normal.

It is, however, to be remarked that the unsettled state of the times has not lessened the effort on the part of some officers to build up their Departments. The tendency in this direction led the Hunt Commission, who investigated the Service in 1912, to say, and their remarks are worthy of repetition,—

There is a great tendency for each Department to magnify and glorify itself. The Secretary for each of the main Departments desires to make his Department an important one, because it means a more important position for himself. He is assisted in this way by all the officers of his Department, for raising the status of the Secretary means raising the status of all the principal officers under him. The head of every minor Department wishes to magnify his office and make it appear as important as possible, in order that he may break free from the leading-strings of the Secretary of the Department under which he is grouped, and become a Secretary on his own account; and he, too, is assisted in doing this by all the principal officers under him, because if they can increase the importance of the head of their Department their own importance also increases. . . . In business life the tendency to magnify one's position is held in check by the unceasing demands of the profit and loss account, and the only way a man in business can magnify his office is by swelling the balance to the credit of his account. To do this in the face of the competition usually met with in business life, the strictest economy and efficiency have to be observed. With the exception of a few trading departments, the Government officers are not in the same position; they have no profit and loss account to face at the end of the year, and nothing to hold them in check except the head of the whole organization.

So long as small Departments exist, economy and efficiency are not likely to be regarded by them as of equal importance to the aggrandizement of the Departments. This condition will probably be kept in check to a certain extent by classification. It is not, however, unknown for a recommendation to be made involving a change in title of an officer, which is stated to be more or less formal, and for the recommendation to be followed by an application for promotion, the improved status being used as a lever therefor.

It has been the constant endeavour of the Commissioners to extend, wherever possible, the policy of co-operation between Departments, particularly in the matter of special and routine office-work. For instance, where there has been a rush of business in one Department, which so often occurs when special returns or statistics are demanded in a hurry, the Commissioners have enabled Departments to cope with it in some instances by utilizing the services of officers in other Departments in which there was no pressure of work at the moment, instead of employing outside temporary assistance, working overtime, or sending the work to commercial firms, as was usual in the past. The same practice has also been followed in regard to the exchange of mechanical appliances (including typewriters) between Departments, to enable work to be overtaken at the point where the pressure has been most urgent. The Commissioner's Office has further been used in this connection as a medium for distributing work between Departments, thus enabling an accumulation in one Department to be transferred to and dealt with by one or more of the other branches of the Service. This policy has proved most useful and economical in dealing particularly with occasional statistical returns and kindred work of Departments which have no regular use for mechanical appliances.

ACCOUNT-KEEPING.

It was pointed out in the Commissioner's First and Second Reports that a large saving would result from a reorganization of the system of imprest advances. It was stated in the First Report that savings to the extent of about £16,000 per annum could be effected by better methods of account-keeping and better arrangements for the payment of accounts. There was then an average of £375,000 of floating cash in the hands of imprestees throughout the Dominion; and there was little doubt that this could be reduced to £100,000, provided the Treasury kept the whole matter of imprest accounts constantly under review by means of inspection of imprestees' balances and an examination on the spot of the conditions requiring imprests. Co-operation between the Treasury, Post Office, and other Departments would result in the saving estimated.

It is understood that so far little has been done in the direction indicated, although the Commissioners appointed a Treasury officer in 1913 as Inspector of