

of employment, the classification of Inspectors has been one of exceptional difficulty. While the nationalization of school-inspection will ultimately be to the advantage of the majority of the Inspectors, owing to the wider field now open to them, there may possibly be a limited number of cases in which this advantage is not regarded by one or more Inspectors as compensation for a possible promotion which might have been obtained in the district to which they were appointed ; but this disability, if it exists, should rapidly disappear. Thirty-four out of the forty Inspectors have been seen personally, and the Commissioners could not but be impressed with the character of the men whose duty it is to carry out the important work of school-inspection. The selection of Inspectors by the Education Boards throughout the Dominion has evidently been made with great care, and the Public Service is to be congratulated on this accession to its ranks.

The number of Inspectors classified was forty, who, on the 31st December, 1914, were drawing salaries totalling £19,612. Their salaries as classified for 1915 were fixed at £20,581. No appeals have been received against the classification.

PUBLIC SERVICE LIST.

Under the Public Service Act the Commissioner is required to issue in the month of April a list of all persons in the Public Service on the 31st March preceding, showing the salary then drawn and other particulars. In order to make the list complete and to convey the maximum information to Parliament, it was considered desirable to show in a parallel column the salary to be drawn by the officer under his classification for the succeeding year. As this prevents the work, which is of considerable volume, being commenced much before the 31st March, it is only by strenuous effort that the list can be completed within the time fixed by statute. For some reason which it is difficult to explain, and to which reference has been made in previous reports, more than one Department is far from accurate in its method of keeping staff records, and this increases the difficulty.

SENIORITY LIST.

Attention has been given to the preparation of a seniority list for each Department, but in view of the conflicting claims which must arise as the result of temporary officers having become automatically permanent in 1907 no satisfactory progress has been made. The Public Service Lists for Departments other than the Post and Telegraph Department are not, therefore, regarded as seniority lists. There is no urgency about the matter, as the principle of the Public Service Act is to place merit and fitness before long service, and it would probably be as well to defer the issue of a seniority list until the next reclassification of the Service takes place. By that time promotions and other changes will have determined seniority in the majority of cases. As the Post and Telegraph Department had been classified for twenty-one years before the Commissioners assumed office, there has been no difficulty in continuing its list on a seniority basis.

DEPUTATIONS FROM OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Deputations from officers' associations have met the Commissioners on several occasions during the year. While the representations of the associations have received a maximum consideration, it has not been found possible to give favourable replies to the whole of their requests, which have covered a very wide range.

BREACHES OF PUBLIC SERVICE ACT.

Under section 15 the Commissioner is required to call attention to any breaches or evasions of the Act. While nothing of sufficient importance has occurred which would justify the statement that there has been any direct breach of the provisions of the Act, attention must be called to the fact that in more than one Department there have been attempts to evade the spirit of the Act and regulations. These have been confined to irregularities in the method of employing temporary officers. The following instances may be given :—

(1.) The Permanent Head of a Department engaged four temporary clerks without authority, in the belief, it is supposed, that he was empowered to charge