

they will be failures for life, but if they pass out of it early in life they will probably get into something else which will suit them, and perhaps be successful.

POLITICAL RIGHTS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS.

The matter of conferring full political rights on public servants is again the subject of discussion, and the Commissioners repeat the opinion expressed in the last report, that the prohibition from an active part in public politics makes for greater contentment in the Public Service, and enables officers more easily to render loyal and more efficient service. There is little doubt but that complete liberty of political action for all officers alike would inevitably result in frequent conflicts between the desires and interests of an officer as a citizen and his duty as an official, and that such conflicts could not but be inimical to the Service.

BOARD OF APPEAL.

There were two sittings of the Appeal Board for the year ended 31st March, 1922. The total number of appeals received was 150, of which 109 were promotion appeals, the remainder, 41, being classification appeals. Fourteen of the appeals were allowed; 52 were not allowed; 46 did not lie; and 38 were withdrawn.

In last year's report it was stated that "the Commissioners have no representation on the Board as at present constituted, and, as information as to the reasons actuating the Board in its finding is not usually given, the result at times is that decisions are arrived at which cannot be understood either by the Commissioners or the Department concerned. It is felt that until the Commissioners are given direct representation on the Board it will not be possible to secure a greater measure of satisfaction." This matter is again brought forward by the Commissioners as one of importance, the work of the past year further strengthening the previous view held.

INQUIRIES HELD UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT.

During the year fifteen inquiries have been held into charges made against officers in terms of sections 52 and 54 of the Public Service Act. As the outcome of the inquiries eleven officers were dismissed, four of whom were subsequently reinstated on appeal; three officers were required to resign; and eleven officers were penalized to a lesser extent in the direction of reduction in grading or salary, forfeiture of salary during period of suspension, transfer at own expense, or censure.

DEFALCATIONS IN THE SERVICE.

The number of cases of dishonesty which have come to light within the past few years might almost be regarded as indicating a weakening of the moral fibre resulting from the Great War, more than as evidence of the inefficiency of the departmental methods for maintaining effective control and audit. This condition is not peculiar to the Government Service, but, on the contrary, commercial institutions usually held up as patterns of effective organization and businesslike methods have afforded many instances during the past year of moral turpitude on the part of those responsible for dealing with money.

There is also this further point, that under existing legislation it is the duty of the Controller and Auditor-General to institute prosecution in all cases where an officer is found to be short in his cash. The result is that in *all* cases of defalcations in the Service, whether the amount is small or large, and even where full restitution is made, a prosecution necessarily follows, while it is a well-known fact that in commercial houses such defalcations are very often hushed up.

In view of the criticism at times levelled against the Public Service the Commissioners feel constrained to repeat their previous observations that the majority of officers to be found in the Public Service are of a fine type, well-educated, keen and intelligent, interested in their work, and anxious to conserve the interests of the State by every means within their power.

EXAMINATIONS HELD DURING THE YEAR.

The examinations conducted during the year under the Public Service Regulations have been the usual Entrance Examination, a special examination for Public Service Entrance, the Public Service Senior Examination, and examinations for admission of shorthand-typists and typists.