

It is the practice of the Public Service to retain shorthand-typists, typists, and female office assistants on the temporary staff, and the amending legislation was provided in order that such employees might be afforded the opportunity of becoming contributors to the Public Service Superannuation Fund. It is pleasing to note that a large number of applications to join the fund has been received from this class of employee.

So far the privilege has been given only to the class of employee already referred to.

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT ACT, 1927.

In last year's report reference was made to the amendment to the Public Service Act, 1912, by the Public Service Amendment Act, 1927, and details of the main alterations were given. It is satisfactory to note that the amendments have considerably facilitated the administration of the Service, particularly in the matter of promotions, appeals by officers, and complaints and charges against officers.

DEFALCATIONS.

It is satisfactory to note that the number of defalcations and misappropriations in the Service is steadily diminishing. At the same time, it is with a measure of regret that several officers have required to be dealt with in this connection during the past year. The publicity given to these matters to some extent conveys the impression that lapses are more frequent in the Public Service than in private employ. The fact that under the Public Revenues Act the Auditor-General is obliged to prosecute in every case tends to magnify the extent of the improprieties in the Service. It is well known that many private employers, either from a dislike of the publicity and the association of their firm's name with criminal proceedings, or from a misplaced sense of sympathy, hush up these unfortunate incidents.

The improved methods of accounting and system of internal check undoubtedly contribute in no small degree to the detection of improper practices, and at the same time the greater certainty of detection no doubt acts as a deterrent in many cases. When one considers the extremely wide ramifications of the Service, extending to remote localities where close supervision and check are difficult to maintain, it is indeed surprising that the number of lapses is not greater.

Offences by officers are dealt with as prescribed by sections 12 and 13 of the Public Service Amendment Act, 1927.

Minor offences may be dealt with by the head of the Department, but must be reported to the Public Service Commissioner. All the more serious cases are required to be referred to the Commissioner, who may conduct an inquiry himself or delegate his powers to others. In all cases the officer must be specifically charged in writing and is required to answer the charge in writing. In the case of the more serious charges the officer has a right of appeal to the Public Service Board of Appeal against both the finding of the Commissioner and the penalty inflicted. Three such appeals were made last year, and all were disallowed by the Appeal Board.

The principal classes of cases dealt with, and the decisions arrived at, are as follows :—

- (a) Misappropriations (3) : Forfeited office.
- (b) Irregularities in connection with stores (3) : Disrated.
- (c) Unsatisfactory conduct and work (4) : Appointments annulled, 2 ; dismissed, 2.
- (d) Breaches of discipline (4) : Fined.
- (e) Breach of Regulations (1) : Dismissed.
- (f) Making false statements at inquiry (4) : Dismissed, 3 ; resignation accepted, 1.
- (g) Unsatisfactory conduct (6) : Dismissed, 3 ; services terminated, 1 ; fined, 2.
- (h) Falsifying records (1) : Transferred and disrated.
- (i) Neglect of duty (3) : Fined, 1 ; censured, 2.
- (j) Unsatisfactory work (1) : Transferred.

EVASIONS OF THE ACT.

There is nothing to report under this heading.