

activities by local authorities may be gauged from the fact that in 1919 the amount paid in salaries and wages to employees of local authorities was £2,172,668, and in 1928 it had grown to £6,176,856. The amount paid in salaries to officers subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act was £1,431,720 in 1919, and £2,239,971 in 1929, a considerably lower ratio of increase.

In recent years the complexity of modern life has created a whole new range of civic and national problems, chiefly in connection with health, education, and social amenities, and any criticism or review of the cost of public administration must take these considerations into account.

EXAMINATIONS.

The regulations under the Public Service Act provide for a Public Service Entrance Examination for admission to cadetships in the Public Service. The syllabus for this examination is based on a two years' course at a secondary school.

The regulations further provide that lads who have gained a higher leaving-certificate or who have matriculated take precedence over those who have passed only the Entrance Examination. A large number of matriculated lads have been offering for cadetship during the year, with the result that a smaller number of appointments are being made from the Entrance Examination pass-list. As indicative of the keen competition for cadetships, it is noteworthy that of the lads offered appointment fifty-one had gained a higher leaving-certificate and 216 had matriculated. To enable matriculated lads to be placed on a footing equal to Public Service candidates the entry age is extended to nineteen.

It is recognized that fitness for advancement to the higher administrative and executive positions is enhanced by a continuance of study. Officers are therefore encouraged to qualify for the University and professional examinations. As an illustration of the extent to which officers have responded to the stimulus to improve their fitness for promotion by further study since the Commissioner system was inaugurated, it is to be noted that in 1913, when the Public Service Act first came into operation, the number of officers who had passed the Law Professional Examination, LL.B., or LL.M. was forty-three, whereas now there are 177 who have so qualified; and similarly the number who have passed the Accountant's Professional Examination, B.Com., or M.Com. in the Public Service has increased from eighteen in 1913 to 228 at the present time. The number who held Engineering degrees or diplomas in 1913 was 159, as against 200 at the present time. The number who possess other University degrees has increased from twenty-one to 197. With few exceptions, the higher executive positions are now filled by officers whose merit and fitness are substantiated by appropriate examination qualification.

It is not suggested that scholastic or professional examinations in themselves are instruments of scientific accuracy in estimating the calibre of an officer, as there are so many variable factors that influence examination results. The mere examination may not reveal all the special qualities that go to make up the ideal public servant—many a promising student in things practical often turns out a complete failure—but it can be said that the examination is a test impersonally and impartially directed to the estimation of merit, and in the administration of an Act which affirms the principle of selection for public appointments not by favour, not by chance, but by merit alone, the examination is of material assistance in the making of selections.

An encouraging feature of this principle which induces officers to pursue their studies is the fact that the majority of younger officers now embark upon a course of study upon entering the Service. This has an added virtue in that not only is the officer thereby becoming better equipped to take his place in the higher ranks of the Service, but also, as many lads recruited for the Public Service come from country homes, the utilization of leisure hours in profitable study has other indirect advantages from a social-welfare point of view.

ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS.

The usual annual Public Service Entrance Examination for admission to cadetships in the Public Service was held in November, 1928, when 2,462 candidates, including boys and girls, entered for the examination, as compared with 2,362 in the previous November. Of the number presented, 1,090 candidates passed the examination, 1,307 failed, and 65 absented themselves from the examination. The examination was conducted at sixty-nine centres, including Suva (Fiji).