

The Junior Examination consists of a speed test in shorthand at the rate of eighty words a minute, and in typewriting at the rate of thirty words a minute; and the Senior Examination is at the rate of 110 words a minute in Shorthand and forty words a minute in typewriting. Candidates are also required to pass a prescribed test in English.

Owing to the need for girls with a greater speed to fill higher positions, it was decided to hold last year Intermediate and Special Examinations in the four chief centres, for which there were 113 entries: 24 of the candidates were successful, while 89 failed.

The Intermediate Examination consists of a speed test in shorthand at the rate of 130 words a minute and in typewriting at the rate of fifty words a minute; and the Special Examination is at the rate of 150 words a minute in shorthand and fifty words a minute in typewriting. Candidates are also required to pass a test in confused manuscript.

Those who desire to qualify as Court reporters are enabled to sit for the examination held by the Justice Department in terms of regulations made under the Shorthand Reporters Act, 1908.

PROBATION.

Under section 39 of the Public Service Act, 1912, all appointments to the Public Service were made subject to a period of probation of not less than six months. This period was found to be too short, and since 1921 the period has been extended to two years. Experience proved this to be a very necessary provision, as the theory of probation is that the best test of an appointee's capacity is the manner in which he actually carries out the duties of the position to which he is appointed, and in many instances it has been found that applicants for Government positions have had no well-defined ideas of the kind of work they want or are fitted for, and they have proved to be either ill adapted or entirely unsuitable. In some cases, in order to do full justice to the individual, it has been considered desirable to extend the period of probation, and in order to meet such cases provision was made in the Public Service Amendment Act, 1927, for the probationary conditions to be made more elastic to suit individual cases, with provision to modify the period by way of extension or otherwise where necessary. During the year ended 31st March, 1930, twenty-five appointments were annulled for reasons indicated hereunder. The number in the previous year was thirty-seven. In addition to those whose appointments it was found necessary to determine on the grounds of unfitness, in several cases the period of probation was extended until such time as the Commissioner was satisfied that the appointees were likely to become efficient officers. The reasons for annulling the appointments mentioned above were as follow:—

(a) Duties performed unsatisfactorily	..	..	9 cases.
(b) Temperamentally unsuited	..	..	7 „
(c) Misconduct	..	..	4 „
(d) Absent without leave	..	..	3 „
(e) Health reasons	..	..	2 „

DEFALCATIONS.

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.

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

- (a) Misappropriations (3): Forfeited office.
- (b) Breaches of regulations regarding handling of cash (2): Dismissed, 1; severely reprimanded and leave privileges forfeited, 1.
- (c) Irregularities in connection with stores (1): Reprimanded and disgraced.
- (d) Unsatisfactory conduct and work (1): Reprimanded and disgraced.
- (e) Breaches of discipline (3): Fined, 2; reprimanded, 1.