

thousand. This has resulted in a marked enhancement of the efficiency of the Public Service and in the elevation of its status in the community. It cannot be otherwise than gratifying to the Government, to the Commissioner, and to the public alike that this should be so.

The successive Public Service Commissioners have always encouraged officers to improve their educational standard, and this will continue. However, it is felt that the swing to academic achievement has been excessive and that more emphasis can and should be given to the need for study of the immediate tasks that concern an officer. Moreover, there is a tendency for officers, after securing University honours, to relax and consider themselves as relieved from any further attempt to acquire knowledge. I think that a University degree must be regarded merely as a foundation on which to build and that all officers should realize how necessary it is to be fully acquainted with everything that concerns their Department and to be right up to date in their knowledge of its functions, its policy, and practice. In order to stimulate officers to do this I have decided to set tests at various stages.

I am under no misapprehension as to the opposition in some quarters that will be encountered in giving effect to this programme. Reforms have ever been met with antagonism. If we were to await the concurrence of the whole Public Service before introducing an innovation the Service would simply stagnate, and I do not propose that that state of affairs should ever obtrude itself. Because a certain standard of knowledge and efficiency has been reached, no matter how much better it may be than twenty-five years ago, or even ten years ago, it is no reason why we should be content. It may be said that a certain standard has been sought and that officers have striven to reach that standard. That is not a reason why we should stand still. It is obvious that a career Service, such as the Public Service is, must be constantly advancing. I would not fulfil my duty as Commissioner if I did not make reasonable demands for progressively higher standards of efficiency on the part of my officers. The very word "career" suggests advancing not only in personal status, but in personal competence.

In deciding upon these tests I ask no more than that an officer should display his knowledge of matters directly concerning the duties he is required to perform. This is not an unreasonable requirement. Much more stringent demonstrations of knowledge and capacity may yet be imposed, especially for the higher positions, but it is realized that these must be implemented gradually. Meantime I think that no officer can justifiably complain when he is asked to show no more than that he possesses knowledge which will qualify him for promotion.

Some months have elapsed since the examination prescriptions for a considerable number of groups in the General Division were made known in the *Public Service Official Circulars*. These prescriptions were drawn in pursuance of a special regulation enacted in 1937. The position in regard to the General Division is different from that of the Clerical and Professional Divisions. In the latter there was statutory provision in the original Public Service Act to impose tests, but there was nothing of that nature for the General Division. The reason for this omission is easy to understand. In 1913 the General Division was largely composed of persons of the workman class or those doing unskilled work. The character of the Division has radically changed since then and, although the same class are to be found therein, the Division also contains officers who are required to have at their command a high degree of technical knowledge and skill and who are remunerated at rates commensurate with the importance of their duties. It is therefore no less than equitable that these officers should be called upon to demonstrate their capabilities seeing that they are being paid, in many cases, on a scale equal to that of professional officers who have to reach a high standard of knowledge to secure admission to their respective professions.

The first series of examinations for the General Division will be held in December, 1939. As is only fair, generous exemptions have been allowed for older officers, although every one will have to submit to some test, even if it is only an oral one. But gradually these oral tests will become no longer necessary and each group will have a definite standard which will have to be passed before any officer can pass to a higher grade within his group.