

I have been pleased to learn of the support that has been accorded the scheme by Permanent Heads, who realize that it can mean much in the improvement of the efficiency and the organization each controls. There has been a total absence of complaint or protest from the officers themselves, and I take that as expressive of corporate recognition of the endeavour to lift the status of their occupation.

I do not expect otherwise than that a great body of the clerical and professional division officers will receive my project with the same good sense, realizing that anything that is proposed for lifting the efficiency of the Public Service must inevitably have beneficial reaction upon themselves.

By the time this is published I shall have made known my plans in greater detail. In respect of the Clerical and Professional Divisions I shall provide exemptions from the first test to *bona fide* students of external professional and academic qualifications as it is my desire not to hamper study for such. I shall also indicate that there will be no obstruction in payments of increments for two years, although the examinations will first be held at the end of 1940. It will be made clear that the tests will be effective for the Departments in which the officer is placed at the time, but that inter-departmental promotion and transfer will be available to those who have special qualifications.

PHYSICAL WELFARE.

I am naturally keenly interested in the physical welfare of the Public Service. Just as a high standard of education is a vital necessity in the maintenance and enhancement of the efficiency of the Public Service, so too a high degree of physical fitness is equally indispensable. Loss through ill health and lack of vigour could conceivably amount to disastrous proportions in an organization as large as the Public Service of this country. It is one of those aspects of employment on a large scale for which it is difficult to regulate.

In this country there are many natural advantages, climate and the like, which all combine to make for healthy people and active workers. For instance, we do not have to contend with a staff enervated by excessive heat and humid atmosphere. Nevertheless, it is agreed that much can be done to lift the general standard of physical fitness, and whatever is done in this direction is necessarily of the greatest interest to me because it must inevitably reflect in the increased efficiency of the people generally and incidentally of the Public Service. One cannot therefore be otherwise than in full accord with the policy of the Government as expressed in the Physical Welfare and Recreation Act in which the Government indicates its desire to promote within the Dominion a movement directed towards the improvement of the physical welfare of the whole nation.

Apart altogether from the general health aspect of the matter, I welcome the tendency among Public Servants to unite in Departments and districts for the purpose of engaging in various forms of sports and recreations. There are few things that can better assist in inducing friendliness between and a hearty morale in a staff than their joining in play and recreation. I am therefore pleased to observe that the Public Service is engaged as a combination and departmentally in many of the national sports. I am gratified to notice that Public Service clubs for a variety of games are being formed all over the Dominion and that they are competing with success in open competition and moreover organizing inter-departmental and district contests. The most prominent example of this is the Public Service Tournament in Wellington, which includes sections devoted to tennis, swimming, golf, and general athletics in which a trophy presented by the late Sir Joseph Ward is at stake. The Wellington Public Servants have also competed successfully against Wellington representative teams in both cricket and football. The activity, however, is not centred in Wellington, and there appears to be a quickening of interest in the provincial centres also.

There has also been commenced in Wellington a gymnasium for both ladies and men who are in the personnel of the Public Service. Government has assisted