

of public servants is called upon to exercise its administration and control."

Promotion by efficiency is the watchword of the Australian Public Service Act. It provides that only where competing officers are considered to have equal claims of merit is seniority to have weight. The Commissioner states that these principles have "been of pronounced advantage to the service and the officers. The natural law of the survival of the fittest is that of the service. During the past year the service has undergone development and expansion, new powers and functions have been assumed by the executive, the system of departmental administration has become strengthened by the filling of positions of responsibility in accordance with proved efficiency, and competitive and qualifying examinations have been extended. Departmental heads and other responsible officers have become more imbued with the spirit of national progress, as exemplified in a desire to do the nation's work in a manner befitting a great public organization existing to interpret the wishes of the people. Throughout the whole of the service a greater spirit of contentment and satisfaction exists than probably ever obtained under pre-Federal management. Conditions of remuneration and advancement have improved beyond the anticipation of officers. As to the future personnel of the service, conditions are most hopeful. The service is being continuously rejuvenated. The marked tendency exhibited amongst officers to improve their positions by qualifying for advancement promises efficiency in the future.

Among the new departures during the year was the arrangement for competitive examinations to allow female typists and shorthand writers to enter the service. From 268 candidates 13 were appointed in New South Wales and 7 in Victoria. It was decided that promo-

tion of telegraphists should in future be dependent, among other factors, on proficiency in Wheatstone operating. The revised system of general division grading has come into effect, affording fuller inducements to such officers as postal assistants to fit themselves for higher work. The adoption of a uniform system of sorting tests for letter carriers in the postal service has been proceeded with, and officers have been enabled, by cards and diagrams supplied by the department, to practise in their leisure hours. Regarding the telegraph messenger service, which has been much discussed in Parliament, the Commissioner reports that boys should not be compulsorily retired at the age of 20 if they have qualified for promotion but better positions are not available for them in the service. A tentative measure for this retirement expires in January next, and the Commissioner recommends that it be not re-enacted. His grounds are—(1) that the service should provide by promotion for all qualified messengers before they reach 20 years of age, and (2) that a guarantee of permanent advancement will tend to popularize the messenger service, stimulate competition for positions, and induce a steady flow of lads with a sound elementary education. The Commissioner reports that in Victoria no difficulty had been experienced in securing messengers, while in the other States the demand for boys has frequently exceeded the supply. During the six years of the Commonwealth service 2,045 lads had been promoted from the messenger service to higher grades.

Commonwealth medical officers have been appointed for examination of candidates for admission to the service, it "having been too clearly proved that the admission of constitutionally unfit persons in some States in past years is likely to prove a heavy burden on the Commonwealth." The department will now be fortified by independent medical