

THURSDAY, 29th March, 1877.

Committee met :—Mr. CASEY in the Chair.

Mr. W. H. GRIFFIN, Deputy Head of Post Office Department, called and examined :

I have been virtually in my present position under different names for 43 years. I think the inside employés in my Department number 87. The limits of age prescribed by the Civil Service Act are 18 to 25. Special reasons must be given for appointments of persons between 25 and 40. If over 40 these reasons must be submitted to Parliament. It has always been a moot point how far these and other regulations of the Act apply to the outside Service. These regulations as to age have been generally observed in my Department in both the inside and outside service. Not one per cent. of nominations have violated this rule. Certificates of character, age, health, &c., are required from such candidates as come before the Civil Service Board. When they do not do so there is official enquiry into these points. I have no power to compel the examination of any employé sent to me, and I do not know officially whether he has been examined or not. There is no departmental examination in my Department.

The Act of 1857 was intended to introduce the competitive system to some extent, by providing open qualifying examinations, of the result of which an official record was kept, showing marks obtained by candidates; no one was to be appointed except from this list. The Act became imperative in this respect from the facility of examining and passing any one whom it was intended to nominate at the time of appointment. A provision that the examination should have been passed, say three months before appointment would have assisted in carrying out the intentions of the Act. The Act did not provide for appointment in order of merit; some weight should have been given to standing at these examinations in making appointments.

Promotion.

There are no examinations for promotion in my Department. My clerks are divided into four classes. The duties of the three junior classes cannot be discriminated with any accuracy from the nature of their work. They are therefore promoted from class to class by seniority after the expiration of the time fixed by the Act for service in each class. Conduct is of course, considered in making promotions. Bad conduct may keep a man back but good conduct cannot hasten his promotion before the fixed time. Industry and application can have no direct effect in hastening promotion. Promotion is always made after consultation with me; my recommendations are generally, though not always, taken; but I remember no case of a man being promoted contrary to my recommendation. My recommendation is based on seniority. I have no power to promote of myself. This refers to the three junior classes. A man cannot become a first class clerk by mere length of service or until a vacancy occurs, or a new clerkship of that grade is created. Promotions to these places are made generally in order of seniority, though a choice is permitted throughout the Department down to the most junior clerk.

Above the clerks come the Departmental officers. They are two classes :—

1ST CLASS :

Accountant;
Secretary;
Superintendent of Money Order Branch.

2ND CLASS :

Assistant Accountant;
Cashier;
Superintendent of Savings Bank.

The grades in the outside service are 1st Chief Inspector, Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors, forming the staff.