

In laying down a policy to be adopted in such matters questions of great complexity will arise which must be treated from a comprehensive point of view and which require for their elucidation the highest technical and professional skill which can be made available.

The carrying out of the policy when decided on, and the execution of the necessary works must, of course, be left to the particular Department dealing with the matter in hand. This departmental autonomy is necessary for administrative purposes, and must clearly be maintained; but it has two drawbacks. In the first place it results in questions being dealt with in a fragmentary or piecemeal fashion without sufficient consideration of all their various aspects; and in the second place, the technical officers of the Departments, being mainly occupied with the projects and business of the moment, have not sufficient time to deal in a deliberate manner with all the problems involved, many of which do not directly concern their own Department and may consequently be lost sight of altogether.

For example, almost every waterway may be considered from at least two points of view. It may be utilised either for purposes of navigation or for the purpose of the production of power. These two objects may, and probably will, be antagonistic to each other. It may happen that the Department dealing with one is not the Department dealing with the other; and in that case one or both of the Departments will in all probability be found to be acting independently. Yet it is clear that a sound judgment can only be formed on a careful balance of all the considerations affecting the subject.

By the appointment of the Conservation Commission, under an Act passed in 1909, the first step was taken towards a comprehensive treatment of these important questions; and I understand that some progress has been made with the work. But I venture to think that it is necessary to define with greater precision the objects to be aimed at; and that the Commission is not adequately equipped with the expert assistance without which the best results cannot be achieved. I notice that the whole cost of the staff for the current year does not amount to \$25,000. Moreover, the size of the Commission (32 members) seems to me inconveniently large for practical purposes.

I think that a more suitable body for the purposes which I have indicated would be a small permanent Commission of three, or at most five, members, who should devote their whole time to the work, and who should be assisted by a staff of the best experts procurable either in Canada or elsewhere. Their functions should be (a) to initiate and work out—but not to execute—schemes for the utilisation in the future of the natural resources of the country; (b) to examine and report upon every scheme affecting these resources, whether promoted by the Government or by private parties, before it is sanctioned by Parliament; and (c) to train up a body of technical experts who could be transferred, as opportunity offered, to the permanent service in any Department in which they were required. The Commission would in short be a thinking, planning, advising, and training body, with no executive functions. It should be directly responsible to and under the general control of the Prime Minister.

(ii) *General control of the public service.*—In paragraph 103 I called attention to the want of some co-ordinating authority with power to deal with the staff and organisation of the different Departments so as to secure the application of uniform principles and methods; and in paragraph 118 I suggested that the Department of Finance should be charged with this duty. I attach importance to this recommendation because I feel sure that many of the defects in the existing system are attributable to the want of such an authority. But I think that its functions might usefully be extended to certain other matters in which general control is desirable;—such as the modification within certain minimum and maximum limits of the prescribed scales of salary; the number and character of the situations which may be filled under section 21 of the Act of 1908; exchanges and transfers between different Departments or different branches of the service; the hours of work in the