

Mr. NELSON: Not these prevailing-rate men; they are exempt, taken on by the Department concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: There is another question I would like to ask you, Mr. Nelson. When a Department wishes to expand its establishment, perhaps, in some branches of the Department, first they must make application to you. Then do your efficiency people or your personnel people go over and examine the situation in the Department?

Mr. NELSON: That is the usual practice. Our organization classification officers go over and look into the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you recall any cases where you have said, "No; as far as this work is concerned you can get along with the staff you have got"?

Mr. NELSON: Yes. That is the explanation of these savings I have mentioned,—the refusal to honour the requests of a Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Does that happen pretty frequently?

Mr. NELSON: I think modification occurs quite frequently.

The CHAIRMAN: There is just one other question I would like to ask. If you do not care to pass an opinion on it it is quite all right. After the first war there was a regulation laid down that veterans, in their application for Civil Service positions, if they get their minimum of marks, were immediately put up to the top. I am correct in that, am I not?

Mr. NELSON: That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you care to venture an opinion on the effect of that over the years on the efficiency of the Service as a whole?

Mr. NELSON: I suppose, in theory, if the law provides that persons at the bottom of the list, those who barely qualify, can go to the top, it would be difficult to say there was not some loss of efficiency. But on the other hand, in the case of the positions that count, that is the higher positions, not custodial positions or lower-grade positions, the standard of qualification that is set, the examining standard that is set, is such that we are satisfied that any who qualify are competent to do a good job.

The CHAIRMAN: That is, there might be a fluctuation of perhaps fifteen marks, but within that range there is not much difference between them?

Mr. NELSON: They are all competent.

Senator CONNOLLY: It is a great advantage to the veteran, of course, to have that preference; and there is no impairment of the efficiency of the Service, I think you said before, because of the way it operates?

Mr. NELSON: Yes. If I were asked—and I have not been asked—my idea about the preference, I would express myself very positively; I think I will do it anyway. I think it is the least a grateful country can do to its ex-service men,—to give them a preference.

Senator CONNOLLY: I think Mr. Nelson has given us a very good understanding of what the position is for the Civil Service Commission in this matter of establishing grades and employing new people and transferring existing civil servants within the Service. We probably will have to make some inquiry as time goes on in this committee with reference to the responsibility of the Deputy Minister in that whole operation. We have also been told that within each Department there is some administrative officer who has the main responsibility for these personnel problems, if I may so style them. I wonder if Mr. Nelson would comment in a general way upon the function and responsibility the deputy minister has for that problem, and how far the responsibility of the head of the personnel section goes?

Mr. NELSON: I would suppose that the responsibility imposed upon the personnel officer would depend on two things. First of all, the attitude of the