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TOP PUBLIC SERVANTS IN
TWO STATES

by

B. B. SCHAFFER and K. W. KNIGHT

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TOP PUBLIC SERVANTS IN TWO STATES

I

Each department in a public service, and hence the public service as a whole, has some level which may be called its top or senior group: its administrative elite. To define or recognize this group is much easier in some public service systems than in others; or, at least, this may appear to be the case. In most Australian public services, though more in some than in others, recognition of the administrative top is especially difficult. Not merely do Australian practices fail to clarify the difference between promotion and advancement,¹ but the classification structures of our public services also draw no readily distinguishable line between the elite and the rest.

The easiest way of recognizing an elite is simply to take the most highly paid positions. This, however, has at least two serious disadvantages for our purposes. The first is the difficulty of comparison between one public service and another. There is no reason to assume that the precise level of monetary award for positions of similar status, authority, or responsibility will be the same in one service as another. On the contrary, it would be a better hypothesis to assume that some public services will tend to be ahead of others. The second disadvantage is that in any public service the positions carrying the highest salaries include not only the top administrators, but also the top professional officers. By top professional officers we mean simply those who receive high salaries, not because they have wide administrative responsibility but because they have had a high level of training and education. Many such officers—doctors, dentists, solicitors, scientists, and so on—were employed essentially as professional consultants or specialists. They fall into a quite

¹See B. B. Schaffer, "Staff Conditions and Careers as a Problem of Management", and V. Subramaniam, "Comparisons and Contrasts", in *Public Administration* (Sydney), Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March, 1960).

different category from other officers who, although professionally trained, perform work which is primarily of an administrative nature. Here one thinks of, say, architects or engineers who control large sections or whole departments concerned with public works.²

We have attempted to select the top administrative positions in two public services, but have recognized that the occupants of many of these posts are professionally qualified and have moved to administration from professional positions. Indeed, some will have become administrators because of professional rather than administrative competence and success.

The positions examined have been selected by a combination of criteria. In the main, what we have done is to choose a few of the most senior positions in each department or major organizational unit of the Queensland and New South Wales Public Services. For each department this gives us one, two, or three top positions. We have excluded from consideration purely professional officers in the sense defined above, even though they may be paid more than some of the administrators included in the survey. These methods have given us a group of 91 officers of the Queensland Public Service and 129 from New South Wales. Position for position, the selection has been made as comparable as possible. The comparison, however, cannot be completely between equivalents. There are positions which exist in one state but not in the other. The organizational structures are in many instances different, and, while positions with similar titles may occur in each state, the responsibilities may vary radically. The role of the Co-ordinator-General in Queensland, for instance, is quite different from that of the officer bearing the same title in New South Wales.

There are also problems arising from the lack of precise comparability, not merely between the two states, but between one department and another within each service. In attempting to select for each organizational unit the senior public servant and one or two other top administrators, difficulties most commonly occur where the department is of a technical nature and is staffed at the top not only by professionally qualified officers but also by high ranking administrators. The situation in one department varies widely from that in others. In Queensland, for instance, the position at the top of the Co-ordinator-General's Department is quite unlike that of Education or Health and Home Affairs, and each of these has to be treated differently from, say, Agriculture and Stock. Furthermore, some departments have peculiar structures at the top. The Lands Department in Queensland is a case in point. Again, in New South Wales, there is both a Housing Commission and a Housing Ministry. The Housing Ministry is altogether the smaller of the two; hence only one officer of the Ministry was included in the survey.

The essential concern of this paper is with the way in which public servants in the two states move towards the top level, by whatever method this is selected or defined. To bring this out we have examined within the general context of each service the following points:

- (i) the significance of certain positions;
- (ii) the significance of various qualifications and the concentration of officers with qualifications in some departments rather than others;
- (iii) the degree to which tertiary, technical, or professional qualifications operate as an alternative to service in certain positions;
- (iv) typical ages and methods of entry;

²Some interesting observations relevant to this point were made by Professor R. S. Parker in summing up the proceedings of the fifth Annual Conference of the Australian Regional Groups of the Royal Institute of Public Administration. See *Pub. Admin.* (Syd.), XXII, No. 1 (March, 1963), 97.

- (v) the number of departments in which senior officers have served;
- (vi) the age of first reaching a classified position in Queensland—that is to say, the age at which each officer moved out of the early automatic salary range of the Service;
- (vii) the ages at which officers were appointed to their present top positions; and
- (viii) their age at the time of the survey.

In addition to the existing administrative elite, certain cadre groups have been examined. These are categories of officers who are not yet at the top of their public service, but who, judging by the history of the present top, may be peculiarly likely to move towards the most senior positions. As far as Queensland is concerned, this examination included public service inspectors, audit inspectors, and ministerial secretaries. For New South Wales, we looked particularly at Public Service Board inspectors and officers of the Treasury's Budget Branch.

The information was collected for each service as it existed in 1959. It is our impression that the various appointments and structural changes that have been made since that time have not significantly altered the picture. The trends which were then present are still present.

There are, nevertheless, some drawbacks to our whole method. For one thing, the study could not in the end be purely statistical. The total groups in each case were small. As soon as they were divided by department or by any other of the several criteria used in our examination, the groupings became very small indeed. In any event, the individual, whether he represents an exception or the rule, is altogether more significant for assessing the quality, atmosphere, and traditions of the top of a service than some not particularly dominant statistical trend which may appear in groups that are as small as these and that have been arbitrarily selected at many points.

Furthermore, this is a study of the results, rather than the causes—although causation may be implied or interpolated at various points. That is to say, we are concerned in this paper with what the top of the public service in each state looks like, and what the comparisons or contrasts between these two tops appear to be. We have not examined why the services have been shaped at the top in these ways. A study of that sort would take us into much deeper water. The causation of the top is partly structural and functional. It is quite clear that a service which is much bigger than another, or has different structures and functions from another, must have a different type of top group.

There were other difficulties with each of the questions examined, partly because of the nature of the records maintained about public servants, and partly because of changes in conditions and methods over time. Thus, when the age of entry to the public service is being considered, the holder of a state service cadetship, scholarship, or fellowship may be regarded as having entered the public service either on the date of the award or after he has completed his course. Similarly, some officials enter the public service in a capacity such as temporary clerk and are examined and made permanent after their first entry. There is also difficulty in assessing the number of departments in which officials may have served. This occurs partly because of the re-forming of departments, and partly because of service in many sub-departments of one major department, such as Justice. The number of departments served in may be exaggerated, in such a way as to make statistical analysis misleading, by moves at very early stages of an official's career. Movement during, or immediately after, the initial period of probation was quite common in Queensland at one stage but not so frequent in New South Wales. In any case this must be contrasted with the relatively few moves which occurred at the later stages of the careers of many officers. In assessing inter-departmental movement there is also the problem of distinguishing

between genuine movement and a simple loan or temporary secondment of an officer from one department to another. In New South Wales, for example, budget inspectors may be loaned for a year at a time to the Public Service Board.

In assessing movement and other broadening of experience, wartime service was excluded, though, of course, it is clear that many state officers did, in fact, serve with the Commonwealth Public Service during this period. Such service, often at senior level, outside their normal departments and career structures, undoubtedly broadened their outlook and may, indeed, have been highly significant in determining their later promotion. In both states there were, for example, some officers who served during the war in the manpower directorate, and there are one or two outstanding instances where this did seem to have an effect on their post-war careers.

There are points not covered by this survey which students would want at some stage to investigate. This applies especially to the sensitive issues of patronage and religion. It may be that some of the present senior officers came into the service as a result of patronage. Much more likely, however, is that some officers have been influenced in their movement and promotion by assistance from outside the service or from ministerial sources. It may also be that members of one religious body have greater or lesser chances of advancement in one service than another, or, more particularly, in one department rather than another within a public service. It is probable, for example, that there is a lesser degree of representation of Roman Catholics at the top of the New South Wales Public Service than is the case in Queensland. Clearly, in both states, there is less in some departments than in others: more in Justice departments, less in Education and the Public Service Commissioner's Department or the Public Service Board. It has also been suggested that in some departments—for instance, the New South Wales Police Department—top positions traditionally go to members of the Masonic Lodge. Some tentative observations of this sort have been put forward from time to time,³ but considerably more study of such aspects is necessary if we are to understand better the road to the top of these Public Services.

II

One of the major groups of factors underlying promotion to the top is the general structure or context of the public service within which this promotion is operating. Here we refer to things like the normal or technical means of recruitment to the service; its basic procedures for handling promotion or advancement; the degree to which it provides a distinction in methods or tradition between promotion and advancement; and the way in which these methods are expressed, or fail to be expressed, in classification. In comparing the Queensland and New South Wales Services in relation to these basic questions, one major point emerged very clearly. This point is that the size, that is to say the total number of employees, of typical ministerial departments or major organizations is much closer than one might have thought. For example, the Public Service Commissioner's Department in Queensland has seventy-six employees; the New South Wales Public Service Board has ninety-four. The Department of Justice in Queensland employs forty-five; in the corresponding department in New South Wales there are forty-nine. Local government, including professional staff in Town Water Supply and Sewerage, accounts for ninety in Queensland, compared with 110 in New South Wales; and so on. Despite this somewhat unexpected similarity, however, both the number and the percentage of officers at senior levels is very much greater in New South Wales than in Queensland. This can be seen if we take the numbers or percentages appearing above two significant points; each tends typically to be two to three times as great in New

³E.g. "Catholics in the Australian Public Service", *Australian Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3 (September, 1960).

South Wales as in Queensland. That is to say, on classifications above a £1,250 p.a. minimum in Queensland or a £1,249 p.a. minimum in New South Wales, and on salary scales above £2,000 p.a. in both states, there are two to three times as many and two to three times as great a percentage of officers in New South Wales as in Queensland. The number of positions between the basic levels of the service (for example the automatic range in Queensland) and the top is much greater in New South Wales than in Queensland. This is a very significant factor in determining the road which will be taken to the top in these services.

For recruitment, promotion, and classification, the aim here is not to give a fresh description of these comparatively familiar matters but to make one or two points which seem to be genuinely significant for the top level of each of these services.

There are in Queensland a number of positions, forming a very significant part of the top of the public service, which a student has to consider, and towards which the eyes of the ambitious officer may tend, but which are not covered completely, if at all, by normal public service provisions. These officers include: the Public Service Commissioner; the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works; the Valuer General and Deputy Valuers General; the Director-General of Health and Medical Services; members of the Land Administration Commission; the Commissioner of Prices; the Director-General and Director of Publicity, Queensland Government Tourist Bureau; the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of Education; the Auditor-General; the Commissioner for Railways; the Commissioner of Police; the Commissioner for Main Roads; the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Electricity Supply; the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Transport; the General Manager and Assistant General Manager, State Government Insurance Office; the Director, Art Gallery; the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Housing; the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners of Water Supply; the Government Printer; the Manager of the Golden Casket; the Insurance Commissioner; and the Director of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Some, but not all, of these posts are included in this survey. In general, the situation is that there is a significant group subject to the Public Service Acts, like other officers (including some top officials), except that their salaries are not fixed under those Acts but in other ways: by statute; by the Governor-in-Council as directed by statute; or by the Governor-in-Council. In addition, there is a much larger group exempted from the Public Service Acts either by those Acts themselves, by other statutes, or by Order in Council.

Crown employment, then, is headed by a range of officers of the permanent head type. In Queensland some are permanent heads of the eleven ministerial departments, while some are permanent heads of other organisations: e.g. the Co-ordinator-General, the Commissioner of Main Roads, the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, the Commissioner of Electricity Supply, the Director of Forestry, the Queensland Housing Commissioner. There are, in addition, the Auditor-General, the Public Service Commissioner, the quasi-judicial appointments, and some other senior officials. Some of these, including most but not all of the important permanent heads of ministerial departments, are employed wholly under the Public Service Acts; others of the group are not.

As far as classification through the Service is concerned, the Queensland system is basically a very simple one. There is an automatic range, the most important aspect of which is the salary scale for male clerks. This has varied in length or number of increments through its history. In pre-Story Commission⁴ days—that is, until the end of the first world war—the height of the range and the number of increments

⁴Substantial changes in the organization of the Queensland Public Service resulted from this inquiry, conducted by a Royal Commissioner, Mr. J. D. Story. The report is contained in *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1919-20, I, 45-805.

was very small. Between then and 1959 the number of increments varied from twelve to thirteen; in 1959 this was raised to nineteen with two efficiency bars along the way, so that there are now three grades on the automatic range. Outside and for the most part above the automatic range are many other classifications. There were forty-seven different classifications until 1959 and there are now twenty-six. Some of these are graded professional positions like those of engineering and science officers, medical officers, architects, and legal officers. For non-professional officers the classified positions are those which particularly concern us: the administrative and clerical positions to which male clerks may aspire after they have moved out of the automatic range. Thus, we are mainly concerned with a difference between the automatic range on the one hand and what may be called the classified positions on the other.

When it comes to recruiting, the basic method is, and has been for a long time, the ordinary public service examination. That is, in effect, the Junior Public Examination for those candidates, aged about sixteen, who signify their desire to enter the Public Service. This is the normal avenue of appointment for clerks, clerk-typists, and some cadets. An order of merit is established by taking the marks obtained in certain prescribed subjects, and appointments are offered in that order. There are, of course, numerous other forms of entry to the Public Service. Fellowships and scholarships are available to those who have taken examinations at the Senior or Matriculation level; there are departmental examinations for appointment as vacancies occur to positions such as those of Inspectors of Stock and Slaughtering or Inspectors of Machinery and Scaffolding; there is entry by special certificate; temporary entry or entry into non-examinable positions; graduates may enter certain positions, mainly professional; there are some departmental qualifying examinations; and some clerical entry at post-Junior level. At one stage of the Service's history there were various types of cadetship or apprenticeship. This is no longer so, but it was when many members of the present top of the service were entering. Three important groups were cadet clerks and learners, pupil-teachers in the Department of Public Instruction, and student-teachers of commercial subjects, Department of Public Instruction.

How far entry through the Junior Public Examination dominates the field may be seen from the following table:

ENTRY TO THE QUEENSLAND STATE PUBLIC SERVICE 1958-59
(excluding Police Force, Railways Department, and Teaching Service)

	Males	Females
Number appointed from Junior Public Examination	315	171
Qualifying examinations, temporary officers, messengers, etc.	16	2
Admitted at standard equal to or above Matriculation	71	18
Diplomates	57	1
Graduates	37	12
Admitted under special certificate ..	1	—
Scholarship and Fellowship holders who entered the service on completion of training	11	—

As far as promotion above the automatic range is concerned, all vacant classified positions must be advertised in the *Government Gazette*. An officer of the Public Service Commissioner's Department then confers with responsible departmental officers as to which applicant should be appointed. These officers report to the

Commissioner who then makes his recommendation to the Governor-in-Council. According to the statute, promotions are made on the basis of efficiency and not seniority, and the formal statement is to the effect that seniority is to be taken into account only when two or more applicants are equally efficient.⁵ The Acts provide for appeals by officers against acceptance by the Governor-in-Council of the Commissioner's recommendations. Under the Public Service Act of 1922 the right of appeal was limited to officers employed in the department in which the vacancy occurred. A further limitation was imposed by the Public Service Acts Amendment Act of 1950 which restricted the right of appeal to those officers of the department who had applied for the vacancy; and in the event of a successful appellant being appointed to fill the vacant position, appeals against his appointment could only be made by officers who had themselves been successful appellants against the original appointee. An appeal may be based on superior efficiency, or on equal efficiency and seniority over the officer promoted. Appeals do not apply in respect of appointments to the higher administrative offices in the Public Service.⁶

In most cases the Appeal Board consists of a Stipendiary Magistrate as chairman, with a representative of the Commissioner, and a representative of the officer appointed by the Union. In special cases an appeal court might be constituted by a judge of a Supreme Court sitting alone. The Commissioner and the appellant may be represented by counsel during the appeals. It is prescribed that the Appeal Board should direct itself by the best evidence it can secure. The Official Inquiries Evidence Act lays down the procedures. The Appeal Board may by its decision recommend to the Governor-in-Council that the decision or recommendation of the Commissioner shall be upheld, certified or varied in any manner. The final decision in all cases, however, rests with the Governor-in-Council and is not subject to further appeal to any other court or tribunal whatsoever.⁷ It might also be noted that while the retiring age in the Service is fixed at sixty-five years,⁸ there is a provision for continuation of service to the age of seventy years.⁹ An officer may also be retired earlier on the grounds of ill-health or redundancy.

It will be seen that the role of the Appeal Board is advisory, while the right of appeal is relatively restricted and the procedure of appeals relatively formal. Appeals are limited to the officers of the relevant department and only to those who originally applied for the appointment. As indicated, moreover, appeals do not lie against appointment to the top administrative positions. The nature of the Board, the use of legal representation, the procedures under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act, the use of the Police Court, and practice itself have all tended to provide a comparatively formal atmosphere in the appeals machinery. Statistics about appeals contained in the annual reports of the Commissioner show that the number of appeals is low in comparison with the number of appointments. The bulk of appeals lapse, are withdrawn, or do not lie. Few appeals are upheld, and very few indeed are unanimously upheld. This may presumably be either an indication of the care with which the promotion system itself is conducted, or of the limitations of the appeals system.

As in the case of Queensland, there are in New South Wales a number of top appointments which do not fall under the terms of the Public Service Act. Among these would be positions the occupants of which, it is felt, should have some degree of independence, such as that of Auditor-General or State Electoral Commissioner. Others who come into this category are heads of statutory authorities providing

⁵These are the provisions contained in s.19 of the Public Service Acts and pt.6 of the Public Service Regulations.

⁶Public Service Regulation 127.

⁷The provisions about appeal are contained in ss. 30, 35, 35A and 36 of the Public Service Acts, while certain rights and procedures are provided for in the Public Service Regulations.

⁸Public Service Acts, s.24.

⁹*Ibid.*, s.25.

services or conducting trading undertakings. Here one thinks of officers such as the President of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, the Chairman of the State Electricity Commission, or the Director of the State Lotteries Office. Other heads of organizations which are not normal ministerial departments are, in fact, employed in terms of the Public Service Act. There appears to be no pattern in the arrangements, the situation depending apparently on historical accident. One finds too, that New South Wales, unlike Queensland, has some cases where the head of an organization is not covered by the Public Service Act but the staff below him are. This is so with the Public Trust Office and the State Lotteries Office, but it is not the case where the Water Board and the Electricity Commission are concerned. In most instances the staff of the particular organization can aspire to the top position, but experience suggests that where the top post does not come under the Public Service Act, and hence the Public Service Board, the appointment may be influenced by ministerial patronage.

As in all state public services, recruitment in New South Wales is mainly at the bottom of the service ladder, and there is a tendency to be reluctant to bring in "outsiders" at higher levels. There is, in effect, substantial preservation of promotion opportunities for those within the Service.

As is the case in Queensland, New South Wales makes use of the school examinations for recruitment purposes. Most recruitment occurs at the Intermediate Certificate level, though cadets for professional fields and a substantial number of clerical officers are brought in after the Leaving Certificate examination. There are, of course, numerous other methods of entry. Graduate recruitment is mainly to professional positions, but there has been in the past some experimentation with university cadetships for potential administrators.¹⁰ Attempts are also currently being made to encourage undergraduates to enter the Service by assisting them with their university fees and employing them on a part-time basis, while the fees of selected serving officers are also being met.¹¹ At various times there has been recruitment of clerical officers from below Intermediate Certificate level in the case of particular groups such as ex-servicemen or employees already in the General Division of the Service.

It is well known that in the Commonwealth Public Service positions with special qualifications are created, particularly of the assistant research officer or research officer type, either as a way of obtaining graduates by offering them a reasonable classification level, or as a means of assisting the promotion of certain types of officers and circumventing the appeals machinery. There may also be some tendency to do this in New South Wales with the creation of positions in the professional division, including in some cases research officer positions. There is no evidence that this is done in Queensland or that there is any understanding of the advantages which may accrue.

Where promotion is concerned, the power of recommending to the Governor-in-Council is vested in the Public Service Board. This provision was contained in the Public Service Act of 1895 and has been retained in subsequent Acts. Early Public Service Boards tended to delegate the recommending authority to departments, but this practice was severely criticized by the Allard Commission of 1917 which recommended that the Board should strictly supervise promotion and suggested the appointment of an inspectorial staff to assist with this function. The present Public Service Board has a strong inspectorial section which maintains close contact with departments. Every recommended promotion is closely examined by the inspector

¹⁰K. W. Knight, "Administrative Cadets in the New South Wales Public Service", *Pub. Admin.* (Syd.), Vol. XX, No. 4 (December, 1961).

¹¹K. W. Knight, "Part-time University Study for Administrators", *A.P.S.A. News*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (February, 1962).

for the particular department. In practice, the inspector will normally be drawn into the discussions in the initial stages, before an official recommendation is made by the department to the Public Service Board itself.

There is no requirement for gazettal of all vacancies, and in fact most vacant positions would be filled without advertisement. Advertisement in the *Public Service Board Notices* circulated weekly throughout the Service will be resorted to if a department finds difficulty in filling a vacancy from within its own ranks, where senior positions are concerned, or in the case of special groups such as the Budget Branch of the Treasury. Newspaper advertisements seeking applications from members of the public are used mainly for professional or other positions requiring special qualifications.

The Public Service Act provides that in making promotions seniority is to be subordinated to considerations of "special fitness". Here, one must not lose sight of the fact that the term seniority may have a quite different meaning in one service from that in another. In the Commonwealth Public Service, for instance, seniority is related to length of service in a particular division. In New South Wales, however, this is not the case. Seniority of officers in New South Wales is based primarily on salary, or, where the level of remuneration is equal, on the length of time that the particular salary has been drawn. Relative seniority, therefore, changes as officers receive or fail to receive promotion. Equally important is the fact that seniority is not service or division wide, but operates only on a departmental basis. Indeed, in most instances seniority is even more limited than this and applies only to a specified section of a department. That is to say, within a department there may be several seniority lists, not only dividing professional from clerical officers, but also cutting across these basic divisions. Thus, there may be a seniority list for clerical officers in the Births, Deaths, and Marriages section of the Registrar-General's Department and another for clerical officers attached to the Land Titles branch of the same Department. There were in 1959 more than 250 distinct seniority groupings in the Service,¹² so that transfer of an officer from one list to another involved his seniority being determined afresh. There is some point in treating seniority as being relative and basing it on salary, rather than allowing it to remain fixed in terms of length of service. However, the fragmentation involved in the multitude of seniority groups existing in New South Wales has little to commend it, and, in fact, is likely to cause considerable difficulty when transfers and promotions are being made. In our view there is much greater merit in the Victorian system where seniority is based on considerations of salary, but is service wide for each division of the Public Service.

Before considering the system of classification used in New South Wales, something must be said of the divisional structure of the Service. The Public Service Act of 1884 introduced a system of divisions similar to that of the Victorian Act of the preceding year. Four divisions were created. These were Special, Professional, General (equivalent to the present Clerical), and Educational respectively. The Act of 1895 and later Acts have recognized five divisions: Special, Clerical, Professional, General, and Educational. The Special Division, consisting of thirteen officers in 1959, covers permanent heads of major departments and a few other top positions; while the General Division (over 15,400 strong) includes technicians and manual workers of various types and degrees of skill. The strengths of the other divisions in 1959 were:

Professional—	3,271
Clerical —	8,673
Educational—	20,803 ¹³

¹²Subramaniam, *op. cit.*, p.74.

¹³Report of the Public Service Board, year ending 30 June 1959, p.62.

At the turn of the century the system of classification was much simpler than it is at present. At that time there were ten grades covering the Clerical, Professional, and Special Divisions. Since then, however, at least six different methods of classification have been tried, and this was a factor which considerably complicated our examination of the careers of the top public servants at whom we were looking.

Since the last war the grade structure for each division and each class of employee has been fixed on the basis of agreements negotiated every three years between the Public Service Board and the appropriate officers' association. Most officers in the Clerical Division are covered by a single agreement which in 1959 provided for a ten year incremental range and sixteen grades above that.¹⁴ Beyond the grading structure there are a number of "classified" positions. Each group of professional officers is covered by a separate agreement, so one cannot speak of a general grade structure for the Professional Division. However, most groups have a classification pattern similar to that of the Clerical Division. That is to say, there is an incremental range followed by a series of graded positions.

At various stages there are promotion barriers which can be passed only after an officer has satisfied the requirements of a public service examination, or has obtained equivalent outside qualifications. As far as the 1959 Clerical Division classification was concerned, for instance, there was an examination barrier at the end of the sixth year of the incremental range¹⁵ and another at the end of the tenth year¹⁶ before an officer was permitted to progress to graded posts. The final examination applied at the grade IV level¹⁷ and qualified an officer for promotion, subject to vacancies, to what was known as the "higher series of grades", *i.e.* grades V to XVI. Similar examinations applied for some professional classifications.

This classification structure does not necessarily involve an officer's slowly working his way through the incremental range and each of the series of graded positions which follow. It is possible, and indeed common, for an officer to "break out" of the incremental range well before he reaches his tenth year of service, and he may subsequently jump particular grades. The likelihood of an officer's by-passing one or more grades will, however, depend very largely on the classification pattern of his department—a factor which is important in Queensland also. In other words, "promotion" as distinct from mere "advancement" is possible, but this is more the case in some departments than in others.

As in Queensland, the appeal rights of officers of the New South Wales Public Service are limited and the proceedings very formal. In the first place appeals cannot be based on considerations of superior fitness, but only on seniority. That is to say, an officer may appeal only if he has been superseded, either by somebody who was junior to him on his particular seniority list, or by somebody brought into his department from another department, or from outside the Service. In 1959 appeals did not apply in the case of appointments to positions carrying a salary of more than £2,500 per annum.

There are provisions for appeal to what are known as promotions committees, but these seem to be seldom used. In addition, any officer has a right of appeal to the Public Service Board against a decision made by the Board. The main avenue of appeal, however, is to the Crown Employees' Appeal Board, which was created in 1944. This Board consists of a Chairman, having the status of a supreme court judge, and a representative respectively of the employer and employees. Any dissatisfied officer of the Public Service or any government instrumentality coming under the

¹⁴In the 1961 agreement this system of classification was altered to provide for an incremental salary range extending over fifteen years, followed by fourteen levels or "graded positions".

¹⁵Public Service Regulation 116.

¹⁶Public Service Regulation 119.

¹⁷Public Service Regulation 122.

provisions of the Crown Employees' Appeal Act may approach the tribunal on matters of promotion as well as discipline. Through its successive decisions the Appeal Board has built up a useful and consistent body of case law on efficiency and seniority. At the same time, however, the Public Service Board has strongly criticized the highly publicized and formal proceedings of the tribunal, in which senior officers of departments may be subjected to cross-examination by their subordinates and their counsel.

The significance of seniority for promotion appeals in Queensland is somewhat indeterminate. Seniority is stated as one condition of appeal under the Public Service Acts,¹⁸ but the nature of seniority is not defined. Section 42 of the Acts requires the Public Service Commissioner to keep a record showing, amongst other things, each officer's age and date of appointment, while s. 42(2) specifies that a biennial list setting out this information is to be published by the Commissioner in the *Government Gazette*. In fact, such a list has not been published for some considerable time.

There are many formal differences between the two promotion systems, the rights of appeal, the procedures of appeal, and so forth. However, our impression is that for the ambitious officer of either Service—the officer who is relevant to a consideration of the administrative elite—the use of his rights of appeal is unlikely to be effective. It may indeed be dangerous, save at an early stage of his career or for officers in the larger and more impersonal departments. Victories are unlikely and, if they do occur, may well be Pyrrhic.¹⁹

III

These, then, are some of the conditions within which the struggle for promotion ensues. The outcome of the struggle is the administrative elite that exists in each case. At this point we may begin to consider the various characteristics of these elites. The first of these characteristics that we have looked at is method of entry.

Some of our group of higher public servants in Queensland entered the Service when they were fourteen years of age or younger by examination for appointment as pupil-teacher or to positions in the Government Workshop. There are six cases of this sort. Another fifty-eight entered at the Junior Examination or similar level in the age group fifteen-seventeen. Not all of these entered by examination; some came in, for example, as pupil-teachers; some as apprentices; some as cadet clerks. The great majority, however, did enter by examination. A few joined at Senior level, through entrance examinations or in similar ways, as cadet clerks, assistant teachers on probation, or as cadet agricultural scientists. Those who entered the Public Service at an altogether later stage were primarily appointed under s. 79(15) as doctors and so forth, or under s. 18(34) on transfer. Hence, of ninety-one officers, fifty-eight came in at Junior level or lower, and eight at Senior level; most, but not all, of these sixty-six being entrants by examination. As contrasted with this group, there were twenty-five who were appointed at a later level. These provide an extremely varied picture: ten were qualified doctors or engineers; five were agricultural scientists or the like. There were two more who entered as pupil-teachers at the relatively late age for that category of twenty-two or twenty-three years.

¹⁸S.36(2)(a).

¹⁹In relation to the question of promotion appeals, it is interesting to note in examining the case histories of some public servants that it is possible to overcome the "stigma" of a reprimand. In New South Wales, at least one assistant under secretary was, at an earlier stage of his career, suspended pending an inquiry, and was subsequently reprimanded for "maintaining a minute objectionable to the permanent head of his department". This did not prevent his subsequent promotion. Similarly, following the "Vitnell Inquiry" some years ago, three senior officers of the New South Wales Education Department were severely reprimanded and demoted. Each was later promoted to a position above that held at the time of the Inquiry.

Another joined as a temporary land ranger at twenty-three years of age; while one, aged twenty-three, became a stock inspector; and one had outside experience in insurance. Most of these twenty-five men, therefore, entered: (a) as qualified professional officers in engineering, agriculture, veterinary or forestry science, or medicine; (b) into special positions like that of stock inspector; or (c) as very special cases.

Each of the two Public Services was dominated, at least in the past, by one method of entry; in Queensland at the Junior, in New South Wales at the Intermediate Certificate level. This is reflected in the administrative top in Queensland, but is less obvious in New South Wales. In Queensland, taking the ninety-one positions examined here, 57 per cent entered at Junior or equivalent level, and only 32 per cent at any level in advance of that. Very few of this latter group were graduates, except for certain medical officers, though several came in as graduates after a period as scholars, fellows, cadets, or teachers. About 11 per cent entered public employment at a sub-Junior level. This included some people who came in under special certificate, some who entered in early days as pre-Junior cadets, and two who entered through the police force.

Of the 129 officers in New South Wales, fifty-three or 41.1 per cent joined at the Intermediate Certificate level. Only two entered below this level; while fifty-eight, i.e. 45 per cent, came in at the School Leaving Certificate level, after completing five years of secondary schooling. There were sixteen graduates appointed, mainly to professional positions or as school teachers who subsequently transferred to administrative work. The category of Leaving Certificate entrant includes eight who came to the Service as cadet draftsmen or as agricultural cadets. Clearly then, amongst those who move to the top of the New South Wales Public Service, there is a significantly higher percentage of entry at a post-Intermediate Certificate level than is the case in Queensland.

Both in Queensland and in New South Wales the number of late recruits to the service would be increased if one included the heads of organizations like the Queensland Art Gallery, or in New South Wales, the Museum, the Art Gallery, or the Observatory. Since the 1959 figures were examined, too, there have been several other cases, a significant one in Queensland being the appointment of the Main Roads Commissioner from outside the Public Service.

To measure the situation more fully, we must also look at qualifications that are gained after entry, and we may find that this reveals still more marked differences between the two Public Services.

In Queensland, of the ninety-one officers at the top of the Service in other than purely professional positions, forty-nine had some further or tertiary education. This figure by itself, however, may be misleading. Of these cases, twenty had technical or professional qualifications directly relevant to specific jobs: diplomas or degrees in agricultural science, medicine, or engineering, or valuer's qualifications, for example. These consisted of three with qualifications in agricultural or forestry science, including one post-graduate qualification; six former teachers with arts degrees, some of whom also had bachelor of education or masters' degrees; four doctors, including some with post-graduate experience; four engineers, one a graduate; and three valuers. Secondly there was a group of no fewer than twenty-three officers with accountancy or secretarial certificates, some of whom also had other higher qualifications counted elsewhere. Thus there were only six officers whom one might regard as graduates with university qualifications of a general nature, providing a non-professional rather than a specific basis for their public service careers and/or their present positions. These officers were found in the following departments: Agriculture, Justice, Labour and Industry, Police, and State Electricity Commission. Even amongst these, moreover, one or two could be excluded, since their qualifications were very nearly professional. We might say, then, that at this level there is an

even chance of finding officers with some tertiary qualifications, but almost all such qualifications are either professional or quasi-professional, such as accountancy and secretarial certificates.

Of the purely professional qualifications, most were obtained at universities, except for those of engineers who tended to possess technical college diplomas. Some included post-graduate work. There were, however, extraordinarily few arts or economics graduates at the top, though there may be signs in some departments of a potential change in this respect. There were very few university graduates indeed, outside teachers, agricultural scientists, and doctors. Overall, of the top ninety-one men forty-nine had some tertiary qualifications. In twenty-three instances these were specifically relevant to their work or their past work. This, of course, takes no account of senior officers and others like architects in the Department of Public Works who occupy purely technical positions.

If, within this group of ninety-one, one looks at the permanent heads or chief officers of departments and major organizations, broadly the same picture emerges. There were sixteen organizations whose heads were without tertiary qualification of any sort. In eleven the chief officers had appropriate qualifications, including Education where the Director-General was qualified as a teacher. There were only six organizations whose heads had non-professional qualifications. In five of these six cases, however, the qualifications were accountancy or secretarial certificates. It will be seen then, how very thin indeed, at the present top, was the supply of the generally qualified person.

There was a concentration of officers with relevant professional tertiary qualifications to be found at the head of seven or eight organizations. This was particularly so in Agriculture, Health and Home Affairs and, for the most part, Education. There were also two subordinate departments with a significant concentration of this type. These were the Co-ordinator-General's Department and the Forestry Department. Health and Home Affairs probably ought not to be included in the category since the concentration at its top was due almost exclusively to its subordinate section, Health and Medical Services, rather than to the department as a whole. There were also three non-ministerial organizations, that is the Department of Main Roads, the State Electricity Commission, and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, in this situation. The head of the State Electricity Commission, however, was an arts graduate, not an engineer. The heads of departments like the Auditor-General's and Valuer General's were appropriately qualified. On the other hand there were departments not in this situation; departments that were either not headed by technically qualified people, or in which control at the top was divided between the administrators and the technically qualified. This was so, for instance, in Public Works, Health and Home Affairs, and Justice. In these cases we had the interesting situation of a non-professional under secretary as permanent head, plus some other chief technical officer. This was different from other Queensland departments such as Main Roads, where the chief officer was a technician, and the chief administrator came lower down in the organization. In New South Wales Health and Justice were in the same position as in Queensland but Works had a professional head: the existence of these two distinct patterns might well be emphasized as a characteristic of Australian public administration.

Turning to the 129 officers constituting our group of higher public servants in New South Wales, we get a distinctly different picture. In the first place there were those with professional qualifications: two in agricultural science; one in forestry; one in architecture; two in medicine; five with science degrees; seven with engineering degrees or diplomas, including one with surveying qualifications; and one, in the Maritime Services Board, with a ship's master's certificate. Several of these had post-graduate degrees: an agricultural scientist with a master's and a doctorate, another with a master's and a philosophy doctorate, a scientist with a master's degree, and

another with a doctorate. Then we had a group with accountancy, secretarial, and legal qualifications: twenty with accountancy and secretarial or similar certificates, and ten with Barristers' or Solicitors' Admission Board qualifications. Of this group one was also qualified in accountancy. Apart from these officers with professional, accountancy, or similar qualifications, however, there was a very large group with what we might regard as more general university type qualifications in arts, economics, law, and so forth. There was, for instance, a total of ten with arts degrees, including three with masters' degrees, and some with diplomas in education. There were nine with economics degrees, three with commerce and similar diplomas, sixteen with law or arts/law degrees, and six with diplomas in public administration. Of the arts graduates, three also had economics degrees. Of the law graduates, two also had economics degrees. There was also one amongst the group who had a doctorate in education.

If we take only the members of the Public Service Board and the heads of major departments and corporations, we have a group of thirty-six very senior officers. Of these, ten had no academic qualifications, thirteen were qualified professionally, and thirteen had non-professional qualifications. Unlike the Queensland situation, therefore, there was a very even distribution between each of these three categories. Moreover, those we regarded as having non-professional qualifications were in most cases graduates. The head of the Treasury, for instance, had an arts degree and an economics degree. It is interesting to note the contrast between the Housing Commission, where the chairman had no academic qualification, and the Ministry of Housing, the secretary of which had a non-professional qualification. A more important difference, however, is between the twenty-three top officers with no qualifications or with non-professional qualifications and the thirteen who were professionally qualified. Those with professional qualifications were those one might have expected. They included the heads of the Education, Technical Education, Mines, and Agriculture Departments, the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, and the Forestry Commission, the Crown Solicitor, Registrar-General, and Valuer General. The only contrast here with Queensland, apart from the fact that in New South Wales there are separate departments for the Crown Solicitor and for Technical Education, was that the permanent head of Public Works was professionally qualified in New South Wales but was an administrative officer in Queensland.²⁰

Amongst the permanent heads or chief officers of smaller organizations in New South Wales there was a similar situation: five without qualification, four with professional qualifications, and five with non-professional qualifications. Again, by taking, generally speaking, one senior administrative officer from each department at a level just below that of permanent head, we found the same picture of fairly even distribution in New South Wales between those without tertiary qualification, those with professional qualifications, and those with non-professional qualifications. At the level of assistant under secretary or similar grade we found officers without qualifications in twelve departments, with professional qualifications in nine departments, and with non-professional qualifications in fifteen departments. There were some interesting cases here. Technical Education had officers at this level with professional and others with non-professional qualifications. In Agriculture, there were two officers at this level, one without qualifications, and one with professional qualifications; and the picture was the same in Health. Thus, one might say that in those departments at the assistant under secretary level there is a balancing of professionally qualified and other officers. This is parallel to, but not quite the same

²⁰In both states we found officers with combinations of professional and non-professional qualifications, e.g. law and accountancy. These were regarded as being non-professionally qualified, with the exception of ex-teachers possessing, say, arts degrees and education qualifications, whom we included with the group of professionally qualified officers.

as, the situation which occurs both in Queensland and New South Wales of having a professional head assisted by an administrative officer or an administrative head assisted by professional officers.

There were some other interesting points about the distribution of qualifications at this level in New South Wales. The Department of Conservation had a non-professional permanent head, where one might have expected a professional officer. The fact is, however, that Conservation is, in effect, only a small ministerial office, rather comparable with the Development portfolio in Queensland. The contrast would be with the Department of National Development in the Commonwealth where a professionally qualified officer is the permanent head. The contrast between the Housing Commission and the Ministry of Housing has already been noted; as has the combination of professional and non-professional officers at permanent head and assistant level, or jointly at assistant under secretary level. Factors such as these provide the material for a most interesting structural comparison between one state machine and another.

There is, of course, a problem in this categorization of officers' qualifications. What should be counted as professional and what as non-professional qualification is one aspect of this. The case of teachers who are now heads of education departments is an instance. Officers in treasury departments with accountancy or economics qualifications are another case in point. Whether these should be counted as professional qualifications or not depends partly on the level of the officer; but there is no doubt that an economics degree may be professional in the sense that the officer on his way to the top of the organization may be doing work where his training as an economist will be relevant. On the other hand—and this is particularly significant in Queensland—an accountancy certificate may have been obtained specifically as a professional qualification in a department such as the Auditor-General's Department; but it clearly ceases to be of a professional nature and becomes only a useful supplementary qualification when the officer is transferred to a senior Treasury post concerned essentially with financial policy, save that his transfer may be due to his success in the Auditor-General's Department. An economics degree in, say, the Budget Branch of the New South Wales Treasury may lead to the sort of success in that branch which will later open the way for promotion to the top of the Treasury. In this sense it should be counted as a professional qualification which has assisted the officer's career. The decisive point here—one of great importance—is the nature of the work of the Budget Branch and its role in the overall financial system of the state; hence the differing impact on the future top of having qualified accountants in the Auditor-General's Department transferred to the Treasury in the one state, or qualified economists in the Budget Branch moving up to the top of the Treasury in the other.

The pattern of qualifications at the top of any public service consists of both the number of qualified officers and the distribution between professional and other types. Clearly, this is partly related to overall structural questions. If education and health departments have prestige, there are likely to be teachers and doctors at a high level in the state public service. Internal structural matters also affect the situation very much. The clearest instance here is the existence of a Budget Branch in New South Wales with a strong group of economists, and the absence of such a branch in the Queensland Treasury, coupled with the Queensland tradition of appointing ex-audit inspectors. Again, in New South Wales there is a separate department for the Crown Solicitor, but in Queensland there is not. New South Wales will therefore have one more permanent head with legal qualifications than Queensland will have. On the other hand, Queensland has a Co-ordinator-General's Department, which puts among the permanent heads a qualified engineer. There is no such department in New South Wales.

There are other contrasts, as well as some similarities. The permanent head of Mines in New South Wales was professionally qualified but this was not so in Queensland. The Housing Commissioner in Queensland had quasi-professional qualifications while the Chairman of the Commission in New South Wales was without qualifications. Agriculture, Education, and Forestry have similar top structures in both states. The practice of having administrative and non-professionally qualified assistant under secretaries assisting the professional top is common to both state machines: in Public Works in New South Wales; in Main Roads in Queensland. The use of a top professional officer with an administrative non-professional officer just below that level is also repeated in New South Wales in the regional organization of the Education Department.

So far, then, one could say that the road to the top of the New South Wales Public Service is obviously more likely to be taken by the qualified than by the unqualified officer—roughly twice as likely as is the case in Queensland. However, about half these qualified people will have professional qualifications rather than general qualifications. The important fields of professional qualifications are the same in each Service: agricultural science, architecture, engineering, education, law, and quasi-professional fields such as accountancy. This, overall, reflects departmental fashions. On the whole the pattern of departments is the same for each state Service with some important exceptions already mentioned, like the separation of Technical Education and the existence of the Crown Solicitor's Department in New South Wales. Nevertheless, the pattern of qualification is significantly different. As we have seen, this is partly due to internal structural differences, such as the existence of a Budget Branch in New South Wales, but presumably it is also due to a difference in recruitment practices and in attitudes. Over the next few years, moreover, another factor will emphasize the greater amount of qualification at the top of the New South Wales Service: for at least seven years now stipendiary magistrates in New South Wales have had to be professionally qualified as barristers or solicitors. Previously the New South Wales situation was the same as that in Queensland: officers progressed through subordinate clerical posts to the position of clerk of petty sessions and obtained in-service qualifications for promotion to stipendiary magistrate. In future, then, there will be a greater number of legally qualified people moving through this important branch of the New South Wales Public Service. This is not yet the case in Queensland.

It is always likely that creation of positions requiring specific qualifications or of new and fairly highly qualified branches of a service will affect movements to the top over the ensuing years. This has been true in New South Wales in the case of the Budget Branch. It may also be true in Queensland as a result of the radical increase in the number of economists employed in the Marketing and Economic Research sections of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. There is a similarly highly qualified group in the Agricultural Economics section of the New South Wales Department of Agriculture, consisting of eight officers, all of whom are graduates in economics, agricultural science, arts, and similar fields, and several of whom have more than one degree, including some with high post-graduate qualifications.

IV

Pre- or post-entry qualification is only one of the things which affect the road to the top. Experience in particular positions and departments is another. In looking at the significance of previous posts and experience for promotion to the top of the Service, we found one outstanding feature about the Queensland situation. This may be affected in future by the recent creation of new positions such as the secretaryship to the Cabinet; but, if it can be assumed that the past will apply to the future, then the present holders of private secretary, audit inspector, and public service inspector positions will constitute major sources from which the top public servants are drawn,

outside of professional fields. Amongst our group of ninety-one top officers in Queensland, there were no fewer than twenty-seven who had served as private secretary, audit inspector, or public service inspector: ten as private secretary, ten as audit inspector, seven as public service inspector. One top official had been an assistant clerk in parliament, as had two others already accounted for; another had been acting official secretary to the Premier, which may be counted as a quasi-private secretary position. There were also several cases where officials had served as secretary to a board or bureau, and there had been a very recent case of a direct movement from a private secretaryship to the top of a department.

Positions in Queensland as parliamentary clerk, assistant clerk, or in the State Reporting Bureau may have some relationship to promotion. Nothing is more striking, however, than the relationship between a position as private secretary and further promotion. The career of the present Agent-General for Queensland in London is noteworthy, but perhaps simply unusual in his having achieved at a very early age what is potentially possible for other officials within the private secretaryship ranks. After five years in the Department of Public Lands and one year in the Premier and Chief Secretary's Department, the future Agent-General became acting private secretary to the Premier, secretary to the Chairman of the Sugar Cane Prices Board, private secretary to the Treasurer, and again private secretary to the Premier, between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-one. He was then acting Assistant Under Secretary in the Premier and Chief Secretary's Department and acting Under Secretary at the age of thirty-one. He became Under Secretary at the age of thirty-two; was appointed Agent-General at the age of thirty-five, and still fills that position.

Some of this will appear to be somewhat misleading when the details are examined. For one thing we shall see, when we look at the present holders of private secretaryships, that there are in Queensland at least two distinct types of private secretary: the promising young man who is given a private secretary's position during, or at the start of, what may be a fairly rapid rise through the service; and the officer who occupies the position of private secretary as a long-term career position. Furthermore, individual cases loom large amongst such a small group. There may be relatively few promotions indeed as a result of experience in Parliament House, but these few promotions may be very significant. The career of the then Under Secretary of the Premier and Chief Secretary's Department was obviously significantly related to previous experience in Parliament House, even though there were few other cases of this sort. The Assistant Under Secretary in that Department had also had similar experience, and this may perhaps suggest a significant departmental tradition.

In New South Wales we found somewhat similar numbers and percentages. Examination of individual cases, however, suggested very important differences between the two states, and behind the figures there appeared to be very different reasons for the promotions and the experience. In the first place service in Parliament House did not seem to be significant for promotion to the top of the Public Service in New South Wales.²¹ Comparing the situation in the two states, we found that against ten ex-audit inspectors in the top group in Queensland there were six in New South Wales; against seven with public service inspector experience there were thirteen in New South Wales; and compared with ten having experience as private secretary, there were in New South Wales seven who had served on ministerial staffs, generally in a junior position, and six specifically as private secretaries. There is no post in New South Wales comparable to the Queensland position of official secretary to the Premier. On the other hand, there is nothing in Queensland comparable with the Budget Branch in New South Wales, seven former officers of which now occupy

²¹Parliament House positions are, in fact, outside the Public Service "proper", though this would not necessarily preclude the possibility of a parliamentary official being appointed to a senior post in the Service.

very senior positions in the Public Service.²² Of the top group of thirty-six Public Service Board members and heads of major departments and corporations in New South Wales, two had previously served in ministerial offices, one as private secretary; one had been a public service inspector; and one had served in the Budget Branch.

The first comment on this is that previous experience in the Auditor-General's Department is very significant indeed in Queensland, but this is not the case in New South Wales. Moreover, the significance in Queensland tends to continue, partly because of the common practice of moving people from the Auditor-General's Department to the Treasury.²³ This tradition is probably due in part to the high level of recruits to the Auditor-General's Department. In New South Wales there is no such tradition of movement from the Auditor-General's Department to the Treasury and back again. Nor, indeed, is it customary for audit inspectors to move to senior departmental posts other than as departmental accountants. We found two instances, among the top positions in the Service, of officers who had been audit inspectors. These were both Assistant Under Secretaries of the State Treasury. In these instances, however, the movement was from the Auditor-General's Department to the Budget Branch of the Treasury, and experience in this latter branch was probably of more significance.

In some ways officers from the Queensland Auditor-General's Department are treated rather as are officers of the Conseil d'Etat in France; that is, as a reserve administrative cadre to be moved permanently or temporarily to other departments. On the other hand, it is clear that, in New South Wales, experience as Public Service Board inspector is much more significant for inter-departmental movement and promotion than is the case in Queensland. This is particularly so for positions just below the very top. Here, of course, the classification of officers of the New South Wales Public Service Board is very influential. Those occupying the higher positions in the Board's office are very well classified, and this sometimes makes it difficult to move them from that organization to another. Senior inspectors are classified at the level of assistant under secretary, while the chief inspector is above that point. There are very good classifications for other inspectors. This does not, however, prevent inter-departmental movement, save occasionally at the very top level. By 1959 the Budget Branch in New South Wales had already provided one permanent head and two assistant under secretaries. It is likely to be even more significant in the future.²⁴ It is difficult to be convinced, despite some specific cases, that experience as private secretary or in junior posts in ministerial offices has really mattered to many officers of the New South Wales Public Service. These positions and the office of Official Secretary to the Premier do matter in Queensland. It may be too that, in the future, service as Secretary to the Cabinet will also be important to an official's career in Queensland.

V

We have seen that experience in the Auditor-General's Department and as private secretary in Queensland, or in the Public Service Board and Budget Branch in New South Wales, may lead to promotion to the top of the Public Service. This suggests that some degree of inter-departmental experience may be the way to promotion. How far is inter-departmental movement significant in general in these two

²²For a description of the work of the Budget Branch, see K. W. Knight, "Formulating the New South Wales Budget", *Pub. Admin.* (Syd.), Vol. XVII, No. 3 (September, 1959). The total of 129 higher public servants in New South Wales does not cover public service inspectors or budget inspectors, only the chief inspector of the Public Service Board and the officer in charge of the Budget Branch having been included.

²³There is also a virtual tradition of movement back from the Treasury in the appointment of the Under Treasurer as Auditor-General.

²⁴As a result of movements since 1959, six officers of assistant under secretary level or higher have had service in the Budget Branch.

services? Certain comparative features stand out very vividly. In Queensland, for instance, most officers at the top of the Public Service Commissioner's Department had experience exclusively in that department. This applied to the department's three senior officials, except for the first three years' public service experience of the secretary to the department. That is to say, in 1959 the Commissioner, the Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary of the Queensland Public Service Commissioner's Department had, in effect, experience in only one department. In New South Wales the officers at the top of the Public Service Board were in a quite different situation. Looking at the members of the Board itself, we found that one member had served in four other departments; one had been in two others; and one in one other department. In addition, the then Chairman of the Public Service Board had had experience in three other departments.²⁵ The chief inspector had had experience in four, one senior inspector in two, and another senior inspector in eight departments. There was, in fact, no member of the top of the New South Wales Public Service Board who had not had a considerable degree of significant experience in other departments.

As indicated, in the Queensland Treasury the top officials have often had experience in audit inspection, and the Under Treasurer tends to be promoted to the position of Auditor-General late in his service career. Apart from their audit background the top officials of the Treasury as a whole had had some inter-departmental experience: two in four departments, and one in two departments. Only one was without experience in another department. The situation at the top of the New South Wales Treasury is different from this. There is no tradition of movement to the position of Auditor-General. The top three officials had all had inter-departmental experience, but this was not particularly related to experience as audit inspector. The Under Secretary had had experience in four departments; two Assistant Under Secretaries had each had experience in two departments. There was some movement from audit to the Budget Branch and so to the top. It was, however, experience in the Budget Branch which appeared to be most significant in leading to promotion.

The Budget Branch itself represented a high degree of inter-departmental experience. Of its fifteen officers twelve had had some inter-departmental experience for periods of over twelve months: seven in two departments, one in three, three in four, and one in five. Only three had served exclusively in the Treasury. Quite apart from actual inter-departmental movement, it must be borne in mind that the nature of the work performed in the Budget Branch gives members of that organization a very detailed and intimate knowledge of the operations of the other departments of the Public Service. Inspectors maintain close supervision over the work of departments to which they are assigned, and there are regular changes of departments deliberately made to give inspectors a broad background in the work of the Service as a whole. From time to time inspectors are also seconded to other departments to carry out special duties or investigations, or merely to broaden their knowledge.

Looking at the whole top of the New South Wales Public Service under various categories, one finds slightly different pictures. The heads of medium-sized organizations often have had experience in only one organization. This was so with seven of them. On the other hand, there were eight with experience in more than one department, and five with experience in two or three departments. Assistant under secretaries in major departments were fairly evenly divided. There were thirteen with experience in one department, but eighteen who had served in two, three, or four departments, and some with experience in more than four departments. Other senior administrative officers were in a fifty-fifty situation, with a slight tendency towards inter-departmental experience: six with experience in only one department, but eight with experience in two departments, and another nine with experience in more than two departments. The situation was similar for heads of boards and other

²⁵The present Chairman of the Public Service Board has served in five other organizations.

small organizations: seven with experience in one department, nine with experience in two or three departments, and another five with experience in four to seven departments. The permanent heads of major departments presented an even picture: seventeen of them had been in only one department, eleven in two or three departments, and four in more than three departments. The seventeen without inter-departmental experience were mainly the professional heads of professional organizations, such as the Departments of Technical Education, Mines, Education, Agriculture, Police, the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, the Forestry Commission, and the Registrar-General, Valuer General, and Auditor-General.

Looking at the overall picture in New South Wales, we found that fifty of the top officers had had experience in one department, thirty-four in two, twenty-four in three, fifteen in four, and six in six departments. That is to say, about 61 per cent of these officers had served in more than one department, but experience in many organizations was unusual. We may say, then, that in New South Wales the situation, except for the professional top, is that the man who goes to the top of the Public Service will have had a certain amount of inter-departmental movement; one or two changes coming up fairly early in his career, after which he consolidates. These moves occur despite the transfer difficulties occasioned by the seniority regulations previously mentioned.

In Queensland there is less movement of officers between organizations. Among the ninety-one top officials, for instance, forty-five had served in only one department. Of the others, twenty-two had served in two departments, thirteen in three, nine in four, one in five, and one in six. Some of this inter-departmental experience occurred very early in the public servants' careers. For the rest, most of the movement, as an avenue to the top, corresponded with the significance of service as audit inspector, public service inspector, private secretary, assistant clerk, or in similar positions commented on earlier. If, however, one looks at the very top of the Service, some degree of inter-departmental movement (with the notable exceptions of the Public Service Commissioner's Department and certain professional organizations) does seem to become more significant. With three exceptions, the permanent heads of the major ministerial departments had had some inter-departmental experience; while of the top twenty-five to thirty departmental chief officers there was a fairly even division between those with and those without inter-departmental experience. Furthermore, amongst the top group there were clearly one or two cases of genuine administrative movement; that is to say, of non-professionally qualified administrative officers moving from the top of one organization to the top of another. This was so, for example, in Public Works, Treasury, and at the administrative level of Health and Home Affairs. Nevertheless, if one excludes certain professional and other positions previously mentioned, one would have to accept that there was considerably more inter-departmental experience as a significant condition for promotion in New South Wales than in Queensland: although in neither case was it usual to have a very high degree of mobility at a late stage of a career.

VI

In Dr. Encel's study, "Careers of High Officials",²⁶ one of the comparisons made between high officials and the rest in the Commonwealth, New South Wales, and Victorian services was the length of time which had elapsed between entry and first promotion of those who had subsequently moved to the top of their service. It is not quite clear what the figures given by Dr. Encel represent, but his general argument appears to be that officials who will progress to the top of the public service, whether Commonwealth or State, will move out of the ruck at an earlier stage than

²⁶*Pub. Admin.* (Syd.), Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (March, 1959).

other officers. Dr. Encel concludes that "it appears that this median period of waiting for an initial promotion is just below four years in the case of the Commonwealth, between five and six years for New South Wales, and between nine and ten years for Victoria".²⁷ Furthermore, at the end of his paper he suggests as a major conclusion that "it may be said that, despite variations between the three cases, each of them exhibits the situation where a significantly high proportion of their higher officials are, as it were, atypical—they . . . reached senior rank at an age below the average for the whole group".²⁸

It is very difficult to measure and compare either first promotion to a senior rank, or simply first promotion, in any significant way at all. However, bearing in mind Dr. Encel's finding that officers in New South Wales served five or six years before their first promotion, we may look in Queensland at the age at which higher public servants first obtained classified appointments; that is to say, first moved out of the automatic salary range, since promotions cannot be said to occur within that range.

Age at First Classified Appointment	Number of Officers
20	2
21	2
23	7
24	5
25	13
26	5
27	12
28	9
29	4
30	4
31	1
34	1
35	2
36	1
40	1
47	1

Certain special cases have been excluded here, such as the Director-General and divisional directors of Education, top medical officers, Comptroller-General of Prisons, Police Commissioner, and so forth. We also excluded the significance of the comparatively late entry to the Public Service of specialists in such organizations as the Co-ordinator-General's Department, Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and the Electricity Commission, as being outside the scope of this examination. We may say that officers who get to the top of the Queensland Public Service do move at a comparatively early age to their first classified position. In our sample the typical age of movement out of the range was between twenty-three and twenty-eight. This occurred at times when the automatic range was twelve or thirteen years in length, so that the normal age of reaching the top of the range would have been at least twenty-nine or thirty. A few moved before the age of twenty-three years, but a number also moved at the comparatively late age of twenty-nine years or more. The figures suggest that there is a possibility of some degree of earlier movement out of the automatic range into classified positions than for officers who would not later move to the top of the Public Service. But it is difficult to be clear about the

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 73.

conclusions that one can draw from this. In any case it is almost inevitable that officers who reach the top positions must begin their movement somewhat early.

What one cannot estimate significantly is whether there is more or less of this comparatively early movement in Queensland than in New South Wales, since the structures of the two services at their lower levels are scarcely comparable. It is not possible by analyzing staff record cards to decide when an officer of the New South Wales Public Service first received significant promotion. The term "clerk" is used to describe positions of a quite senior nature, and most of the record cards of the officers examined in this survey merely show a series of positions as clerk at various salary levels, and without any indication of the nature of the work involved. We could, as Encel did, have used questionnaires and obtained information from each officer as to when he was first promoted, but this clearly has difficulties also. In the pre-war period in New South Wales, for instance, there was a long initial salary range with more or less automatic annual increments, but merit was often recognized by the award of a double increment. This sort of factor, along with the nature of the classification system at the time, would undoubtedly affect officers' interpretations of the promotion situation. Even with the present classification system, which clearly shows when an officer moves from the incremental range, there will be the difficulty of deciding when the lowest grade in New South Wales, i.e. Grade I for the clerical division, is comparable in work value or responsibility to the lowest classified positions in Queensland.

The classification system current at the time of our investigation was introduced in 1941. Before that time there was a long incremental range with relatively few classified positions above the scale. This is very similar to the present Queensland situation. Most of the top group of the New South Wales Service received their first promotion before the present classification system was introduced. It is our impression—and this corresponds with the conclusions reached by Dr. Encel—that younger officers in the top category who were promoted after 1941 received their first movement at the age of approximately twenty-one or twenty-two. This general situation is likely to continue, though the introduction in 1961 of a longer incremental range and reduction of the number of grades to fourteen will undoubtedly involve some raising of the age level at which first promotion is commonly obtained.

This contrasts with the typical age of twenty-five years, at which the future top officer in Queensland reaches the first classified level. However, the evidence and categories on which this comparison is based are too tentative to enable us to reach firm conclusions about this matter.

Easier to judge, and perhaps more significant, is the age at which the higher public servant moved to his present position in the top group of the service. To give a general picture to begin with, if we take thirty-two heads of major departments and corporations in New South Wales, we find the following situation.

Age at Appointment as Permanent Head	Number of Officers
38	1
39	1
41	1
44	1
46	2
47	3
48	2
49	3
50	3
51	2

52	3
53	1
54	2
55	3
56	1
58	1
59	1
60	1

Comparing lists of very senior officers in Queensland and New South Wales, one reaches the conclusion that on the whole there is a fashion for younger appointments in New South Wales than in Queensland. This is best illustrated by examining top positions in each state that are more or less comparable.²⁹ Some instances are:

ORGANIZATION	AGE OF CHIEF OFFICER AT APPOINTMENT	
	N.S.W.	Q'ld.
Agriculture	46	54
Auditor-General's Department	52	62
Education	49	54
Electricity	51	50
Health and Home Affairs ..	52	51
Housing	47	52
Insurance	44	54
Irrigation	55	43
Justice	50	53
Labour and Industry	60	56
Lands	52	65
Land Tax	53	55
Local Government	47	34
Main Roads	56	63
Mines	54	47
Premier's Department ..	46	57
Public Curator's Office ..	54	51
Public Service Commission ..	43	57
Public Works	58	48
Rural Bank	38	51
Stamp Duties	53	57
Survey Office	37	57
Titles Office	41	45
Tourist Bureau	50	64
Transport	41	52
Treasury	39	54
Valuer General's Department ..	53	57

It will be seen that of the twenty-seven positions listed nineteen were filled in New South Wales by appointees younger than their counterparts in Queensland. There are, of course, positions in each state which are not as closely comparable as these; and, indeed, one or two of the positions included in the table may, in fact, be of doubtful comparability. Local Government is a good case in point; it is a very small department on the administrative or non-engineering side in Queensland, but quite a large one in New South Wales.

²⁹Note that the titles of the organizations and positions concerned vary in the two states.

If we take the top thirty officers in Queensland, we find that seven were appointed below the age of fifty, nineteen in their fifties, and four in their sixties. The youngest appointment was at thirty-four, the oldest at sixty-five. The most common ages were fifty-seven and fifty-five. Looking at Queensland as a whole, our examination showed that amongst the ninety-one making up the top group the great majority were appointed in their fifties, most commonly at the age of fifty-two or fifty-seven. Where they were appointed to their present positions at age sixty or more, there were generally special explanations; as, for instance, the appointment as Auditor-General of the former Under Treasurer. Those who moved to the top positions below the age of forty were mainly technicians, doctors, forestry scientists, and the like; but there were clearly some "fliers" in the Public Service. The present Agent-General and the then Director of Local Government (now Under Treasurer) are cases in point. Nevertheless, considering the size and the expansion of the Service, there were, at the time this analysis was made, very few young promotions to the top, and this may suggest a coming gap. Over 50 per cent of the ninety-one top public servants were then aged sixty or over. Recent appointments to the Treasury, Main Roads, Lands, Railways, and Harbours departments are results of this situation. Another significant feature of the Queensland situation is that there are a few cases where the top public servant has occupied his position for an extraordinarily long time: one for over thirty years, one for over twenty-five years, and two for twenty years or more. This, again, will create a peculiar promotion situation when their tenure finally comes to an end, and this is already beginning to occur.

It will be seen that none of the most senior New South Wales public servants received his top appointment at an age of more than sixty, and only one at that age. Very few received appointments at an age of more than fifty-five. There was one at fifty-six, one at fifty-eight, and one at fifty-nine. Most were well below that. One may wonder why there was such a significant number of more elderly appointments in Queensland.

When we turn to the present age (i.e. in 1959) of the top of the Public Service in each state, we again find a more elderly service in Queensland, twenty of the twenty-seven occupants listed being older than their opposite numbers in New South Wales. We also see a Queensland habit of retaining very senior officers beyond the normal retiring age of sixty-five. The comparison is as follows:

ORGANIZATION	AGE OF CHIEF OFFICER IN 1959	
	N.S.W.	Q'ld.
Agriculture	63	56
Auditor-General's Department	61	68
Education	56	62
Electricity	59	53
Health and Home Affairs ..	63	58
Housing	49	63
Insurance	60	68
Irrigation	62	48
Justice	53	64
Labour and Industry	61	64
Lands	63	66
Land Tax	56	66
Local Government	60	45
Main Roads	62	70
Mines	56	58
Premier's Department ..	49	65

Public Curator's Office ..	57	64
Public Service Commission ..	63	60
Public Works	59	51
Rural Bank	63	65
Stamp Duties	64	67
Survey Office	64	68
Titles Office	43	64
Tourist Bureau	64	66
Transport	52	58
Treasury	44	60
Valuer General's Department ..	63	60

From each of these tables certain non-equivalent positions have been omitted. Their inclusion would, however, have reinforced the general conclusions reached.

At this point one may wonder why there was a Queensland practice of retaining certain officers beyond the normal retiring age. In 1959 seven of the top public servants listed above were in this category. This might have had much to do with the then poor public service superannuation scheme on the one hand, or the lack of obvious cadres to fill vacancies on the other hand. It has never been usual in Queensland to create special jobs to which retiring senior officers can be appointed. The tradition of keeping some officers on until an advanced age is a long-standing one, a former Public Service Commissioner being a good case in point. There is no evidence of any particular pressure from public service staff associations in Queensland to retire very senior officers who have been retained, and it may be a function of a relatively small service that senior officers are looked after in this way.³⁰ Nevertheless, the combination of this situation with very long tenure in certain positions, and relatively late appointment to many others, does clearly create a difficult promotional situation. This long tenure, for example, has occurred in one or two significant positions at the very top of the Queensland Service—in Titles, Agricultural Bank, Surveyor-General's, and Housing. On the whole, our impression is that in New South Wales very long tenure can occur more easily at the assistant under secretary level than at the very top of a department. There is, moreover, in New South Wales no tradition of allowing permanent heads to remain beyond the normal retiring age. This may be partly because of the larger size and hence rather more impersonal nature of the Service, but it does not mean that no account is taken of the difficulties faced by senior officers who retire on relatively small pensions. The present superannuation scheme in New South Wales is similar to that of the Commonwealth Public Service, but in past years it provided only small pensions, and a number of senior officials who reached retirement age were permitted to remain in the Service as temporary officers at lower classifications or were appointed to specially created positions. By this means it was possible to avoid the promotion difficulties which have been experienced in Queensland.

VII

Important aspects of promotion to the top in Queensland in the past have, then, been age and tenure. Another side of the question has been experience in particular positions which we identified as those in the Auditor-General's and Public Service Commissioner's Departments, or as private secretary to ministers. We have suggested that if past experience were to be repeated, present holders of these positions would

³⁰Although the Public Service Acts still permit retention to age seventy, there are some indications that fewer officers are likely to be so retained than was earlier the case. Government policy favours retention only to 30 June or 31 December following an officer's sixty-sixth birthday, except where there are special circumstances which make it difficult to obtain a replacement.

be likely to move to the top of the Public Service. Furthermore, the age situation at the top will probably cause this to happen in the immediate future.³¹ What are these officers like and how does the situation compare as between Queensland and New South Wales?

Let us look first of all at the staff in the Auditor-General's Department in each state. In Queensland there were in 1959 twelve senior inspectors of accounts, all of whom came into the Public Service as normal entrants, mainly in the fifteen to seventeen age group. There is some evidence of an attempt to find the good entrants in this age group and direct them to the Auditor-General's Department. All had appropriate technical qualifications. Some of them moved very early indeed to their first classified positions. In fact, three of the twelve were first classified at the age of nineteen—an astonishingly early age by Queensland standards. All save two were in classified positions by the age of twenty-eight. There were very good entrants to the Public Service in the 1930's and at least two of the senior inspectors of accounts were originally specifically selected for the Auditor-General's Department on the basis of their results in the Junior Public examination. These two were among the three who were first classified at the age of nineteen. Only one of the group of senior inspectors of accounts had service confined to a single department; ten of them had been in two, and one in three departments, including one of the "fliers" mentioned above. The three who were first classified at the age of nineteen were promoted to their present senior positions very early—at the ages of thirty-two, twenty-nine and thirty-four respectively. One of these has, in fact, since 1959 moved to the top of another subordinate organization. Having got nearly to the top of the Service at that stage, senior audit inspectors may stick at that point, except where they are promoted out of the department. Very little opportunity for further movement within the department occurs. However, the present top of the Service is predominantly over sixty, so the group of senior inspectors may expect a significant degree of promotion to other departments in due course. Little promotion in their own department, but exciting inter-departmental movement is possible. On the other hand, while all the senior inspectors reached classified positions relatively early in their careers, because of the past promotion block their present age has already become fairly high. Except for the three special cases already mentioned, and one other, virtually all were, in 1959, over fifty years of age. Peculiar promotion practices and structural limitations create problems for the present, and even for the best public servants.

The senior auditors in New South Wales are a markedly different group. In 1959 there were four officers of the Auditor-General's Department in this position. All had been in the Auditor-General's Department for very long periods (two for thirty-two years, one for forty-two years, and one for forty-four years), although two had had service elsewhere early in their public service careers. They reached their present positions at the ages of fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven, and fifty-eight, and by 1959 were aged fifty-eight, fifty-eight, sixty-three and sixty-one respectively. Clearly, then, the top element in the Auditor-General's Department in New South Wales did not represent a significant source for top promotion to other departments of the Public Service. The prospect for those just below the level of senior auditor is to succeed to the positions occupied by this somewhat aged group of officers. In New South Wales careers tend to be made in the Auditor-General's Department exclusively. In Queensland, some make their career in that department, but a goodly number may expect quite early promotion to top positions in other departments.

The picture for the public service inspectors is also different in each state, and the comparison goes the other way. In Queensland, there were six public service inspectors. Of these, four had secretarial or accountancy qualifications, but there was

³¹Changes at the top since 1959 support this contention.

no particular evidence of an especially high entrance examination performance. Only two were 1930's entrants; and there was no outstandingly early classification pattern. On the other hand, there was a high degree of inter-departmental experience—in marked contrast to top public servants as a whole, and also to the very top of the Public Service Commissioner's Department itself. Only one of the six had service in a single department. Of the others, three had been in two departments, one in three, and one in four. None had had breaks in service, and none was appointed to his present position at an age of less than forty. Hence they had served for shorter periods in their present positions than the senior audit inspectors, the average being five years. Nevertheless, as a result of the relatively late promotion to this position, the present group of public service inspectors does not necessarily provide a "young" group for top promotion in due course. Only two of them were below fifty. However, the appointment of these two inspectors at the ages of forty-one and forty respectively, and their relative youthfulness in 1959 (forty-five and forty-six), may represent the beginnings of a new tradition in the Commissioner's Department, tending more to the New South Wales situation.

The senior staff in the New South Wales Public Service Board present a picture quite different from that of the Queensland Commissioner's Department. The comparison is as follows. In Queensland there was one senior inspector who had been appointed at the age of forty-eight. In New South Wales the chief inspector was appointed at forty-four, and two senior inspectors at forty and fifty-two respectively. In Queensland the other five inspectors were appointed at the respective ages of fifty-three, forty-one, forty, fifty-five, and forty-six. In New South Wales the inspectors were appointed at thirty-four, thirty-seven, forty-one, forty-four, thirty-two, thirty-three, forty-one (former budget inspector), thirty-one, thirty-one, thirty-five, thirty-eight, forty-four, and forty respectively, with one assistant inspector appointed at thirty-eight. They were, then, a much larger and a much younger group, despite the recent Queensland tendency to which we have referred. Not only were the New South Wales inspectors younger when appointed, they were in 1959 still a younger group than was the case in Queensland. The youngest Queensland inspector was then aged forty-five, whereas in New South Wales there were of the total group no fewer than eight officers at this or a lesser age. These included one of the two senior inspectors, while the chief inspector himself was aged only forty-seven. Only one of the officers was aged over fifty; three were still in their thirties.

The whole tradition surrounding appointment and service as a public service inspector in New South Wales is full of significance for the top of that Service. It is the usual practice for selected officers in other departments to be invited to serve at the Board's office, generally for a period of about twelve months, on an informal, but very testing, probation. During or at the end of this time they may be returned to their departments, or, if considered suitable, may receive appointment as an inspector or assistant inspector. In effect, the road to the inspectorial staff of the Board is open to promising young men in the other departments who come to the notice of inspectors during the course of their work. Indeed, inspectors are always on the lookout for departmental officers who may, when vacancies occur, be invited to serve in this testing and experimental way. This method can be criticized, of course. It may be hit or miss; it may depend on favour by the inspector; it may be a form of co-optation and self-continuation. At the same time, inspectors do gain a good knowledge of the abilities of most officers in the departments they supervise, and it is clearly a fairly conscious way of recruiting promising people to the Board's staff. There is no real inspection in Queensland in this sense of a fairly continuous and close check on the work of departmental officers, and certainly no evidence that officers are brought into the Public Service Commissioner's Department in this way.

In New South Wales, then, the relationship of a young, ambitious officer to the Board's inspector can be very significant for the young officer's career. Because

inspectors are normally selected in this way, there is a guarantee that virtually all of them will not merely have had inter-departmental experience, but that such experience will have been significant for their later promotion. They got onto the Board's staff not simply from other departments, but precisely because they were doing well in those departments.

Since 1959 additional senior inspectors have been appointed, so that now groups of departments come under the supervision of a senior inspector who has several inspectors in his section. The promotion system to the Board continues, but the new method of having a group of inspectors working on a department is likely to provide some guard against an erratic or idiosyncratic selection of young officers to the Board's own staff.

In Queensland there were, in 1959, a senior inspector and five inspectors; in New South Wales there were a chief inspector, two senior inspectors, thirteen inspectors, and one assistant inspector. Queensland inspectors had had some inter-departmental experience: one had served in three other departments; one in two others; and three in one other. Only one had no inter-departmental experience. In the case of New South Wales the chief inspector had served in three other departments; the two senior inspectors in one and seven respectively. Overall, seven had served in one other department, six in two, three in three, and one in eight. It is common for inspectors in Queensland to have accountancy qualifications. Of the New South Wales staff, five had no tertiary qualifications; eight had degrees in arts, law, or economics (including two with accountancy certificates); one was a diplomat; and three had accountancy qualifications. Since 1959 New South Wales has appointed a woman as a public service inspector. Queensland has appointed an acting inspector who is a graduate.

On the whole, it is not evident that amongst the inspectors in Queensland there is a very high likelihood of appointments to very senior positions in other departments. This may also be true for some of the New South Wales inspectors; some because they have served for so long in the inspectorate, others because they may have become specialized (in Organization and Methods work, for example). It is our impression, however, that about half their number might well go to other positions—to assistant under secretary or even directly to permanent headships of other departments. The present Land Tax Commissioner was appointed directly to that office from the inspectorate. This movement depends partly, of course, on the willingness of inspectors to move; and here we have already commented on the problem created by the relatively generous gradings for the inspectors. Nevertheless, it may sometimes be worthwhile for an inspector to transfer, even without an actual salary increase, in the expectation of later progression to a very senior departmental post. One former inspector, for instance, was prepared to move to a position as sub-accountant of a department, with the prospect of becoming accountant, and later secretary of the department; and in the end this prospect was fulfilled. A peculiar aspect of the New South Wales situation is that public service inspectors are classified in the Professional Division of the Service, although budget inspectors are in the Clerical Division. If public service inspectors accept transfer or promotion to other departments, for instance to assistant under secretary positions, they may be transferred from the Professional into the Clerical division. In general, the New South Wales group is young, well qualified, highly experienced, and very likely to serve as a field for recruitment to senior positions in other departments. This is much more true for New South Wales than for Queensland.³²

³²Since 1959 the Chief Inspector of the New South Wales Public Service Board has been appointed as head of a department, and two others of the inspectorial staff have moved to senior departmental posts.

Certain other points may be made about the movement and promotion of New South Wales public service inspectors, and audit inspectors in Queensland. One aspect is that whatever their other qualities, inspectors in each case will have a good deal of inter-departmental knowledge and experience. This is more likely to be true for these groups than for many other available categories of candidates for promotion. Secondly, large services are likely to need more promotees, but also have comparatively larger cadre groups from which promotees can be drawn. Small services will be without these groups to any significant degree, although pockets may exist, as in Queensland with audit inspectors.

The two remaining cadre groups which might be examined are the ministerial private secretaries in Queensland and officers of the Budget Branch in New South Wales. Looking first at the ministerial private secretaries³³ we had here in 1959 a group of thirteen officials. Like the other groups the normal entry to the Public Service covered most of these officials, though one, the then secretary to the A.L.P. leader, entered very late in 1957, and not all came in through the public service examination. Others entered as temporary clerk, police cadet, cadet warder, junior railway clerk, probationary clerk, etc. There was some degree of broken experience, and some experience outside the immediate limits of the Public Service, e.g. as secretary to the Fish Board. Of the thirteen, three had tertiary education qualifications, as solicitor, accountant, and economist respectively. Only one was a graduate. According to all the criteria (age at time of entry, method of recruitment, tertiary education, performance in entry examination, age of first classification), this was a much more varied group than the senior audit inspectors or the public service inspectors in Queensland. There were clearly some very promising performers here. For instance, one private secretary was a qualified economist, was seventh in the entrance examination, and was aged twenty at his first classification. Not all the group were like that. However, on the whole they were classified at relatively early ages, if we exclude three special cases: the secretary to the A.L.P. leader, the ex-secretary of the Fish Board, and another with experience in the Railways Department. Apart from the instance of very early classification just mentioned, three others were classified at twenty-four years of age. While this was, then, a varied group, it was, on the whole, different in terms of the standards we have adopted from the present top and the public service inspector groups, and was comparable with the senior audit inspector group.

In breadth of experience, the ministerial secretaries score better than all three of the groups referred to above. There was a significant degree of "outside" experience, and also a good deal of inter-departmental service. Examples of experience outside the Public Service proper have already been given. Apart from these, one private secretary had previously been a judge's associate, three had served in two departments, four in three, one in four, one in five, and one in six.

However, in terms of age of appointment to present position, this was in no sense a homogeneous group. There was the case of the secretary to the A.L.P. leader. Then there were others who had been private secretary to one ministerial person, or continuously to the ministers in one department for some considerable time. For example, there is the case of the public servant who first became private secretary at the age of thirty-five, served various ministers for seventeen years, and in 1959 was sixty-two years of age. His experience included eight years as associate to a supreme court judge. Another first became private secretary at the age of thirty-five, served six ministers for sixteen years, and was then fifty-one. A third was first appointed as private secretary at thirty-two, served two ministers for eleven years, and was then aged forty-three. There was an interesting case of an official who was aged

³³Excluding the official secretary to the Premier, but including the cabinet secretary and the two secretaries of the leaders of the opposition parties.

twenty-four when first appointed as private secretary, served for one year, and resumed eight years later as private secretary to a different minister. In 1959 he was thirty-five years of age.

Some private secretaries clearly stick to that particular job. Some remain with the minister even though his portfolio changes, and some remain with the department notwithstanding changes at the ministerial level, or even a change of government. The ex-secretary to the former leader of the opposition later became private secretary to the Premier and then secretary to the cabinet with a change in government. The ex-assistant secretary to the Premier of that day became secretary to the leader of the Q.L.P. after the change in government. There are contrary cases of a secretary to a minister under one government becoming secretary to the succeeding minister of the new government in the same department.

This may be contrasted with the "flier", the bright young man chosen to be private secretary because of his promise. He may well move to very senior appointments in the Public Service. If we exclude the special A.L.P. case, and those who seem to be occupying private secretaries' positions for a large part of a public service career, the others are predominantly a group of "fliers". The ex-secretary of the leader of the opposition occupied that position at the age of thirty-one and became secretary to the cabinet when aged thirty-three. Others were first appointed as private secretary at the ages of twenty-four, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two, and forty. Here, then, is a group who may either stay as private secretaries or move to the very top positions in the Public Service. On the whole they were a very young group in comparison with the 1959 top of the Service, and also in comparison with the alternative sources to that top, the senior audit and public service inspectors.

It should be noted that in Queensland there is a specific classification for ministerial private secretary positions which in 1959 was £1,600 p.a. In New South Wales the situation is that an officer seconded to a position of this sort will receive allowances to make up the gap between his actual departmental classification and some specific private secretary award rate. He will, however, remain on the establishment of his department and will receive notional promotions there as vacancies occur. He can, therefore, at any time revert without loss of status to a departmental position.

Comparing private secretaries in Queensland first of all with the other sources in that state, we might say that on the whole the audit inspectors and private secretaries together are more likely material for top promotion than the present public service inspector group. Perhaps this is even more true of the private secretary than the senior audit inspector group. However, generalization about probable movements amongst such small groups is clearly dangerous. The very good 1930's entrants, now in their forties, are significantly present, especially amongst the senior audit inspectors, but perhaps also in other jobs in the Public Service. Their presence, however, is not so marked amongst the private secretaries who are, on the whole, either younger or older than that age group. It is clear that the promotion practices of the past are going to create severe difficulties in the present and immediate future, and none of these groups may be able to supply sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the Service as a whole.

A group in New South Wales which may well provide as much promotion potential as any of those we have examined is the Budget Branch of the Treasury. This branch presents some interesting features. First of all, the method of recruitment used is different from that of the inspectorate of the Public Service Board. For the Budget Branch recruitment is solely by advertisement throughout the Service, with accountancy or economics qualifications specified. Furthermore, the status of the branch is very high, so that the number of applications for the advertised positions is likely to be extreme: up to a hundred applications for two posts, for

example. This is partly a matter of prestige, and partly a matter of good classification. Secondly, entry is generally at assistant inspector level; hence appointees to the Budget Branch are likely to be somewhat younger than is the case for the Public Service Board. Thirdly, the top of the branch is very young indeed. The age position at the time our survey was made was as follows:

		Age at Appointment to Present Position	Age at 31 December 1959
Officer in charge	..	33	38
Second Officer	..	34	37
Inspectors	50	51
		46	59
		36	39
		35	37
		35	47
		33	35
		32	39
		31	37
		28	34
Assistant Inspectors	..	41	43
		37	41
		32	33
		27	29

In addition to early appointment and a marked youthfulness, especially at the head of the branch, there is a tradition of movement from the Budget Branch to top positions in the Treasury; though perhaps there is not so much movement out of the branch to other departments. This may partly be due to the very good promotion prospects within the Treasury itself. There were fifteen officers in the Budget Branch, and approximately seven positions classified above them in the Treasury to which they could and are fairly likely to go. There had been some movement out of the branch to other departments: two had moved to positions as public service inspector; one had gone to the Premier's Department. There had also been other movements, as to the Transport Department, but on the whole these inter-departmental movements were comparatively rare. This is in clear contrast with the public service inspectorate, although some recent transfers from the Budget Branch suggest that the contrast may be becoming less marked.

Like the public service inspectorate, however, the Budget Branch is highly qualified. The officer in charge was an honours economics graduate, the second in charge an accountant. Amongst the inspectors there were four economics degrees, one diploma in commerce, and three accountancy certificates. Only one was without tertiary qualifications, but he was older than the other inspectors and was a special case as an agricultural specialist. The assistant inspectors consisted of one economics graduate with accountancy qualifications, two with economics degrees, and one with an accountancy certificate.

As a group, members of the Budget Branch had had a good deal of inter-departmental experience. There were three with experience in the Treasury itself, seven in two departments, one in three, three in four, and one in five. In addition, six officers of the branch had been seconded to other organizations (Public Service Board, Premier's Department, Public Works Department, and the Public Service of Papua and New Guinea) for periods of more than twelve months, so that none had experience confined to the Treasury itself. Even though there has been only limited movement from the Budget Branch to other departments—and this is a situation which we have

reason to believe will change in the course of time—we may say that the branch provides a very fine cadre for top appointments within the Treasury itself, with youth, a high level of qualification, and a high degree of inter-departmental experience before this appointment.

VIII

This study began with at least one conceptual assumption: the distinction between promotion and advancement. Certain other concepts may now be advanced. These concern, among other aspects of the route to top positions: prestige and structure; irrationality and tension; promotion as co-optation; the normal or ideal, and the atypical career; early movement and promotion; the limitation of service-wide generalizing factors in this context; and types of top movement other than promotion.

One of the main suggestions is that any public service deploys a distinctive ideology of promotion, especially to membership of the elite. This ideology, propagated and expressed in part by myth, is a major criterion of bureaucratic typology. Thus, comparing these two services here, we saw various ways to the top—some unacknowledged, some celebrated. Where the way (in terms of precedents, role, classification, office, or qualification) is overt, the result is prestige. The fuller the combination of these factors, the higher the prestige. Hence, in Queensland, a higher degree of prestige has attached itself to the audit inspectorate, and much less prestige to the public service inspectorate. On the other hand, prestige as such may not attach itself to ministerial private secretary positions, yet these positions may still give other sorts of advantages in relation to promotion. In New South Wales, both the public service inspectorate and positions in the Budget Branch have prestige, but the public service inspectorate may have more total prestige—i.e. in the Service as a whole—than the Budget Branch.

Inevitably there are objective factors like size, function, and structure to be taken into account: the existence of a Budget Branch, the limited size of the Conservation and Development departments, for example. Indeed, one general structural point does seem to emerge strongly: the importance of choice between two types of machinery at the top. There is the administrative chief assisted by a senior specialist officer, or the technical specialist with, among others, an administrative assistant.

But the non-objective elements also need to be perceived. Part of the status structure is the attitude towards qualifications. This may be rational in part—that is, related to the function imposed by the office—but it also seems always to contain other qualities: conventional, unanalyzed, remanent, or conservative. Qualifications may be respected because of the biographies of particular officers, a sort of chicken and egg situation; past functions; the pressure of interests; or cultural assumptions. In the Public Service Board in New South Wales a qualification in law seems to have been highly regarded. Elsewhere, qualifications in economics are highly thought of both in New South Wales and in Queensland. In Queensland, it still seems that non-university tertiary qualifications in accountancy and secretarial practice are taken seriously, and that accountancy is also emphasized in preferring university commerce to economics courses. In certain sections of each Public Service (for example, in the Premier's Department in New South Wales), respect seems to be paid to other, and in some cases peculiar, qualifications for senior administrators, such as shorthand.

Two things should be noted about this. Most arguments about prestige factors (e.g. salary levels or qualifications) contain, as has been suggested, largely irrational elements. They are statements of preference, including the preferences of those at the top, which are likely to be most influential. Unless other checks are present, promotion always tends to be a co-optative process: "They think to justify the

warmth of their commendations by discovering in it a hundred virtues, whereas the real ground of their applause is inexplicable—it is sympathy.”³⁴ Some degree of conflict, therefore, may well be a proper corrective.

The second thing is that a part of prestige consists of a vision of qualities, e.g. of “leadership”. Doubtless there may be severe divisive factors here. The qualities wanted by the extant top for co-optation to it may not be at all what others, including the cadre groups, possess or approve of. Pressures for change will injure some and benefit other groups, and around this situation a great deal of individual and service tension occurs. There may also be tension between the Service and its whole setting or particular constituencies. Certainly what is demanded for top promotion should not be and is not always completely fixed. Here we may note that the last two appointments as President of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board in New South Wales have gone to administrators, whereas the earlier head of that organization was an engineer. A similar change occurred with the last appointment to the top of the New South Wales Electricity Commission. Of course, requirements for promotion to some top positions are fixed, sometimes by statute, sometimes by tradition. Some such traditions in Queensland seem to us less likely to be subject to change over time than is the case in New South Wales, but even so all are not completely firm. A few years ago, for instance, a lay administrator in Queensland was appointed in the face of very strong protests from the engineering profession, to head a technical organization. This administrator would now be generally regarded as having been outstandingly successful.

When discussing public administration in Australia, it is sometimes convenient to treat the state public services collectively, and to distinguish between them on the one hand and the Commonwealth Public Service on the other. However, even in the limited field covered by this paper, it is apparent that there are wide differences in attitude and practice between New South Wales and Queensland—quite apart from differences within each Service. Unless one is very cautious, therefore, it may often be misleading to speak in general terms about administration at the state level.

Tension is likely to increase in the future. There are signs of change in the top attitudes, particularly in Queensland, not yet fully appreciated. The likely tension will not be diminished by the rigidity of ideology, the heritage of past practice (e.g. promotion blocks or gaps), or the problems peculiar to small services.

In understanding small services especially, but others also, individual cases matter. They will undoubtedly, as precedents, have constituted one of the factors creating the prestige structure. Promotion as co-optation is highly selective. The very limitation of numbers at this level emphasizes the significance of the single instance. Many careers which throw further light on this aspect could be studied. One example would be the career of the permanent head of the New South Wales Treasury, at the time our survey was made. This officer entered the Public Service as a school teacher, but subsequently became a psychologist in the Department of Labour and Industry. During the war, he served with the Manpower Directorate, which was headed by the Chairman of the Public Service Board who had been seconded to that position. The work he performed with the manpower organization therefore brought him closely under notice and was apparently an important factor in gaining him appointment as officer in charge of the Budget Branch of the Treasury. From that post he moved to Assistant Under Secretary and subsequently Under Secretary of the Department. It is also interesting to note that this officer and his

³⁴Thomas Mann, “Death in Venice”, *Stories of a Lifetime* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961), II, 14.

predecessor both subsequently moved from the Treasury to positions at the head of public corporations; in the one case the Electricity Commission, in the other the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board. Both had acted as the second in charge of these organizations on a part-time basis while serving in the Treasury. Another case worthy of closer examination would be that of the present (1963) Chairman of the Public Service Board. It may well be that most of this career, in particular, might be regarded as the typical career for the bright officer of the Service: early promotions; movement to the Public Service Board's staff; promotion within the Board's organization to senior inspector; movement from the Board to assistant under secretary; promotion to under secretary; followed, in this instance, after a period of "sideways movement", by appointment to the top position in the Public Service.

It should be noted, too, that some of the movement that actually occurs at the top cannot be simply understood as promotion. There is a good deal of movement that is more subtle than that. This, of course, applies to all public services: a secretary of a Prime Minister's Department accepts movement to a position as Official Secretary to a High Commissioner; a permanent head of a department in the United Kingdom accepts a post as High Commissioner in a Commonwealth territory; or the Under Secretary of the Premier and Chief Secretary's Department in Queensland moves to London as Agent-General. In New South Wales, too, there are several cases of movement from permanent head of a department to control of a public corporation; or, again, movement back from that to the Public Service "proper". Part of this is very significant in showing what are regarded as positions of greater and what of lesser prestige. Partly it is a matter of a search for a greater reward, or more ease. In some instances the movement may represent a withdrawal from a situation of strain. In such cases the withdrawal could be permanent or temporary. A good deal of further study is needed on this whole question of movement at the top of the Public Service, quite apart from the mere matter of promotion itself.

There are, then, various ways in which any particular administrative elite may be understood: the prestige structure which surrounds the overt route to the top, the degree to which it is recruited in a co-optative form, and the tensions which this produces. The typical or ideal career may be one of the ways of giving point to the analysis. Moreover, individual careers must be examined, before the colour of a service, as it were, can be appreciated. If a service can have one head of a major organization appointed from outside, another who is a lay administrator where a specialist might have been expected, another who was extremely young, and yet another whose attachment to a particular minister appeared to have been very important, then all this must be taken into the account of the whole, even if specialization or seniority or the closed service do frequently prevail. The overall Queensland picture in 1959 did not seem to emphasize youth or, unduly, tertiary qualification. The differences from New South Wales, and the exceptions in Queensland, may, however, be as important as the overall picture.

The generalizing factors that are significant elsewhere in a service (appeals and seniority) may matter much less in this context. This is so even though neither of these Services, and especially the Queensland Service, could be said to exploit the research officer type of position, as the Commonwealth does to add new elite cadres without apparently upsetting the accepted myths. The generalizing factors matter to advancement but not to top promotion. In any case, the meaning of seniority is quite different in each Service, as are other fashions. Both Services prefer some inter-departmental movement, but not too much, and early rather than late; again there are differences between the Services, and exceptions, but the ambitious young officer would do well to be sensitive to this aspect of the promotion ideology. What can he expect will lead to this early movement, or, still more important, to the first promotion (in the sense defined earlier in the paper) itself? One interesting thing is that

each of these very different Services may seem to have detected in their early twenties many of those who will become the elite: this is just the sort of age of entry for the members of the United Kingdom or French administrative corps. A thorough explanation of what the methods are, and of this resulting phenomenon, is still not available, but it is a striking fact. Clearly, more study of actual comparative methods is needed.

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