

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Second Report 1950-51

REORGANISATION OF THE SECRETARIAT
AND
DEPARTMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



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* Resigned on 27th June, 1950.

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INTRODUCTION

I, THE Chairman of the Estimates Committee, having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this second report to Parliament on the Reorganisation of the Secretariat of the Government of India.

M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR.

NEW DELHI:

The 9th February, 1951.

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REORGANISATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

AS a result of the examination of the estimates and working of the Ministries of Industry and Supply, Commerce and Works, Mines and Power, the Committee in this report make certain general observations and recommendations with a view to increasing efficiency in the Secretariat as a whole and effecting economy in expenditure.

Amalgamation of Ministries, Departments or Offices doing allied work

2. There is an urgent need for amalgamating certain Ministries, Departments and Branches of various Ministries and Departments. The Committee fear that there is considerable overlapping and allied subjects are being dealt with at various places with the result that there is no coordination of work and unified control over the same kind of subjects and policies relating thereto. The Committee have recommended after the examination of the estimates of the Ministries, the transfer of certain subjects from the Commerce Ministry to Ministries of Finance and Transport; amalgamation of Ministries of Industry and Supply and Commerce; amalgamation of the Offices of the Chief Controllers of Imports and Exports; centralisation of statistical and economic advice work at one place; merging of the Estate Office with the C.P.W.D.; abolition of the separate offices of the Chief Controller of Salt and the Director of Industrial Statistics and Enforcement Directorate; amalgamation of Disposals and Supply Wings and so on. The Committee had not the time to examine the estimates of other Ministries and therefore cannot make specific recommendations in regard to the remaining Ministries, but from the experience of the work already done, the Committee feel strongly that urgent and effective action should be taken to re-organise the work of the Secretariat on better and more methodical lines. The Committee understand that the Re-organisation Wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs have already taken up this work, but it is essential that the work is expedited and decisions taken soon. It is also necessary that decisions should be taken at a higher level so that they are carried out without any delay.

Abolition of the posts of Additional and Joint Secretary and the like-

3. There are at present a number of higher supervisory posts in the Secretariat which in the opinion of the Committee are not necessary. Such posts are that of Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Director General and the like. The Committee have seen the observation of Honourable Shri Gopaldaswami Ayyangar in his Report on the Re-organisation of the Machinery of the Government and agree with him that "the post of Additional Secretary is unnecessary and should be abolished and that the interposition of an officer between a Secretary and a Deputy Secretary is an unsatisfactory arrangement even when it is made for the purpose for which it should normally be made". Steps should therefore be taken to abolish such posts and if under exceptional circumstances it is necessary to appoint a Joint Secretary, he should be given independent

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charge of work and made finally responsible for it. He should not be as an Assistant to Secretary on a supervisory job. Before the War, such posts were created very rarely. During the War, however, on account of dilution of manpower, the practice of creating these supervisory posts came into existence and they are almost out of number now. We find that many of these senior officers are being wasted on comparatively minor jobs of lesser responsibility. The position has now almost become such that what the Deputy Secretary used to do in the pre-war days, is now being handled by a Joint Secretary and even in some cases by the Secretary. Similarly the work done by an Under Secretary in the olden days is now being handled by a Deputy Secretary and so on. In the opinion of the Committee, this is due to the fact that there have been unduly quick promotions with the result that an officer who was doing a particular work as Deputy Secretary is doing the same work as Joint Secretary in many cases. The Committee consider that a Deputy Secretary should take all the responsibility in respect of the work done in the Branches or Divisions under his control. The aspiration in the Secretariat regarding promotions seems to have gone high. Previously an officer had to render certain number of years of service before being promoted to a higher post. Now it is not uncommon to promote an officer as soon as he has completed a year or so in a particular post because the creation of higher posts is unrestricted. The Committee, therefore, urge that the whole matter should be thoroughly investigated and firm policy laid down in regard to the creation of posts of Joint Secretaries or equivalent rank and above. Incidentally it is being frequently said that there is shortage of trained and experienced manpower, and various causes are given for this. It is however forgotten that a potential cause of these shortages is the continued employment of officers in superfluous and unnecessary jobs. There is no doubt that if the creation of these higher posts is restricted, a large number of senior officers would become available for more pressing duties both at the Centre and in the States.

Tenure service of senior officers at the Centre

4. Before the war there used to be a standing practice that officers were deputed from the States to the Centre for a limited period of tenure and after the completion of this tenure period they were returned to their respective States. The obvious advantages of this practice are that the officers carry a background of the policies and ideas at the Centre to the States and bring the wealth of experience of local conditions and executive work to bear upon their work at the Centre. The Committee recommend that this practice should be restarted immediately especially in view of the present unsettled conditions in the country. The Committee view with great concern the present system by which an officer once brought from a State to the Centre is never released and as it were 'absorbed' permanently in the Central Service. This has prevented the diffusion of ideas and experience from Centre to States and *vice versa*. The officers have also stagnated and tend to show signs of rigidity of outlook and fixed mentality. The Committee hope something will be done to put right this necessary and desirable change in the present system.

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Maximum salary under Government

5. It has been admitted that the maximum salary of an official under the Government of India should be Rs. 3,000. On account of the assurances that were given at the time of transfer of power certain officers are at present drawing salaries above Rs. 3,000. While the Committee do not want to go into the detailed and legal aspects of the matter, they feel that in the interest of the country as a whole and in view of the present financial situation, the officers might be induced to surrender voluntarily all excesses over Rs. 3,000. This will create the necessary psychological atmosphere in the minds of the public at large that the officers who hold the highest posts in the Government are willing to contribute their bit to the general welfare of the country. The Committee appreciate that a step towards this direction was taken last year and the officers willingly surrendered part of their salary, but in order to bring it up to the level of the recommendations of the Pay Commission which Government have accepted, it is desirable that a further reduction is effected.

Ministerial staff

6. In the Secretariat of the Government of India there are at present two categories of Ministerial staff immediately below the grade of Superintendent, viz. the clerk and the Assistant. The scale of pay of the former is Rs. 55—130 and of the latter is Rs. 160—450. The clerks are required to perform routine duties such as typing, despatching, diarising, etc. and all work relating to noting, drafting and preparation of cases is done by the Assistants. Much of the clerical work on cases involving routine disposals is also now done by the Assistants. In the opinion of the Committee it is a waste to employ highly paid Assistants on ordinary routine duties. It is essential that while pay should be commensurate with the responsibilities and duties attaching to the post, the duties expected of a Government servant should also be commensurate with the pay that he is receiving.

7. Before the war there were less than 500 Assistants in the whole of the Government of India and they were recruited as a result of the competitive examinations held by the Federal Public Service Commission. They were also given rigorous training in Secretariat work and procedure to enable them to discharge their duties efficiently. During the war the system of recruitment was modified and the Ministries and Departments were permitted to recruit direct from the open market without any competitive examinations. During the war routine work in the Departments and Ministries increased to a considerable extent with the result that these less important duties were also entrusted to the Assistants. After the war the same position has continued and the Assistants of today are not doing the same amount and quality of work as in the pre-war days. This class of government servants which forms the real backbone of the Government of India has suffered considerable dilution. Today the position is that the number of Assistants has risen to more than five times the number in the pre-war days and the quality of work has greatly deteriorated. Various officers of the

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Ministries who appeared before us admitted that the standard of an Assistant had fallen and he was not turning out the same quality of work as used to be done previously. The Committee feel strongly that effective measures should be taken to re-introduce the previous system of recruitment and promotion to these posts. The Committee also consider that a thorough review of the duties of Assistants in each Ministry should be undertaken forthwith and all routine work which can be handled by a person of a grade lower than that of an Assistant should not be entrusted to them. For this purpose the Committee recommend that the grade of Second Division Clerks be re-introduced and these less important duties entrusted to them.

8. The Committee understand that up to 1938 there used to be three classes of Ministerial staff in the Secretariat, viz. Assistant, Second and Third Division Clerks and the cadre of Second Division was abolished only in 1938 on the recommendation of the Maxwell Committee on the reorganisation of the Secretariat. The work which was previously handled by the Second Division Clerks is now being attended to by Assistants and the number of posts in the cadre of Assistants has consequently been increased. The Committee consider that all the routine or semi-routine type of work which is now being handled by the Assistants should more appropriately be done by the Second Division Clerks, which grade it is thought desirable to be re-introduced. This will enable the Assistants to concentrate on more important casework. Consequent on the re-introduction of the posts of Second Division Clerks such posts of Assistants, as are now created for routine or semi routine type of work, should be down-graded accordingly. The Committee feel that this re-organisation of the Ministerial posts in the Secretariat will not only result in economy of expenditure and efficiency but will also lead to better utilisation of manpower. Further, there is at present no intermediate grade between clerks and Assistants in which really deserving clerks who may be very much above average in their own grade but may not attain the standard of an Assistant can be fitted in. It should also be remembered that in the routine clerical grades there are at present a large number of men who have both ability and capacity but whose chances for promotion to higher posts are very few. They do not therefore always show enough zeal or incentive in their work. The result is that there is inefficiency and low morale among these ranks. It is also of the highest importance that in order that each man in the Secretariat should be efficient, he should be reasonably contented; otherwise the work of the Government is bound to suffer a good deal. There should therefore be adequate provision for prospects of future promotion for really competent and deserving men in all ranks so that each man in the chain may put in his best.

Messenger service system

9. The Committee are not satisfied at the way in which Class IV servants are recruited in the various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India. In the report on the Ministries of Industry and Supply and Commerce the Committee have observed that armies of peons should be reduced. The Committee feel that

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as the question is common to all Ministries it is desirable that Government should quickly arrive at a decision which should be applicable to all. The Economy Committee in their report suggested that there should be a system of messenger service instead of the present system of employing peons for each individual officer and unit of an office. The Committee feel that this messenger system should be introduced immediately and considerable reduction of superfluous manpower effected. With the introduction of messenger system it is visualised that one messenger would be responsible for looking after the work of several officers or several units of office. At present an officer has a peon to himself while some have two or three and similarly each Branch in the office has one or two peons attached to it. This system to the mind of the Committee is not satisfactory. A set of rooms, say five to six, should be allotted to a messenger and at stated intervals he should visit those rooms and bring out or bring in the papers as the case may be. One or two peons may be on circulation duty so that papers from one post to another post are carried by that peon. If this system is introduced, it will not only reduce the heavy wage bill of peons but will also increase efficiency in work. At present peons sleep, chat, and sit idly in the various corridors and work leisurely. In the messenger system they will not sit quiet and will be moving about on work. The Committee therefore recommend that this system be given a trial and introduced forthwith, so that unnecessary expenditure and manpower is reduced. In this connection the Committee would also like to observe that the practice of employing illiterate peons, daftries and record sorters should be abolished. For the salaries attached to these posts it is visualised that literate persons would be available and willing to man these jobs. The employment of reasonably literate persons would also be conducive to efficiency and economy. The Committee therefore recommend that standards of educational qualifications should be laid down for each such post and men recruited accordingly.

Stenographers and steno-typists

10. At present each officer has got a stenographer to himself. While the Committee do not object to the employment of stenographers, as in their opinion it is conducive to efficiency and quick disposal of work, they strongly feel that such stenographers should not merely be appointed as ornaments to officers. It has happened that stenographers have been put on typing manuscript drafts or other duties unconnected with their stenographic work. This is really unsatisfactory and the Committee feel that there should be a proper check on the employment of stenographers. If an officer has a full day's work for a stenographer surely he should be provided with one. But where officers merely want them for typing work or for occasional dictation work a pool of stenographers or steno-typists should be created at the scale of one steno-typist or stenographer for two or three officers instead of attaching them individually to officers. Such a pool of steno-typists or stenographers should be placed under a Head Stenographer so that he evenly distributes the work among them and ensures that each one has proper work load and is available when his services are required. The appointment of a Head Stenographer is also necessary because

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doubts have been expressed before the Committee that if a pool of stenographers is created it may lead to difficulties and confusion inasmuch as each one of them may shirk work by pretending that he had been busy elsewhere and thus the officers may be put to inconvenience and work might suffer.

System of disposing of files and papers by officers

11. The method of disposal of work in the Secretariat at present is that as soon as a receipt comes it is handed over to the lowest man in the office, a clerk or an Assistant. He is required to put up papers and references on the subject and a note setting out the position as also the points requiring decisions and his views on each such point. The file then goes to the Superintendent who merely checks whether the references have been put up, that the note states the position clearly, initials it in token of his having seen the papers and submits it to the next officer who is an Assistant Secretary or an Under Secretary. The Assistant Secretary or the Under Secretary in the majority of cases signs the office note and sends it to the Deputy Secretary. The Deputy Secretary again in most of the cases agrees with the office note below and either disposes it of at his level or sends it up to the Joint Secretary. In the latter case the Joint Secretary either finishes it at his own level or sends it to the Secretary and thereafter it goes to the Deputy Minister or Minister as the case may be. After the file has been finished at the stage of Deputy Secretary, Joint Secretary, Secretary or the Minister it again travels backward through all these channels down to the Assistant. The Assistant or clerk then puts up a draft on the lines of orders passed by the higher officers and again the file travels backward and forward through the various channels described above, and after it has gone through all these persons a reply issues. In most of the cases, before a paper is finally disposed of, there are inter-branch consultations or inter-departmental consultations or inter-ministerial consultations. The treatment of each paper in each Ministry or Department is just on these lines, irrespective of the consideration at what level the file has been seen in the Ministry from where the file or paper is received. The rule always in the Secretariat is: "Send the paper or file to the lower man; he would examine it and then put it up." It is obvious that this system is so archaic, procrastinating and extravagant that it is altogether unsuitable to our present day conditions. A layman is baffled at the wisdom underlying this procedure and is not satisfied that there is no way out of it. Unless these wasteful methods are removed the inefficiency in the Secretariat is bound to increase day by day and the present skein of tangled confusion in the Secretariat would never be solved. Unless our administrative machinery is competent in discharging its functions at the maximum speed and minimum of cost it is difficult to solve our many ills that confront us and stare us in the face. It is really surprising how the lowest man in the chain, who invariably is a clerk or an Assistant, is entrusted with the disposal of majority of cases and the higher officers are merely paid to supervise or sign their work. The Committee feel that this method of disposing of work in the Secretariat needs immediate revision. The Committee

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suggest that a Ministry or Department should be divided among a number of divisions each under a Deputy Secretary or an officer of equivalent rank. All the incoming 'dak' in the Ministry should be received by an officer appointed for the purpose. He should mark all of them at once to each head of the division. The Head of the Division should dispose of the important receipts himself and give directions for others. The junior officer must dispose of the less important receipts himself and send down the routine ones to his junior say Superintendent or Assistant. If this system is followed it would mean that each receipt would be tackled at an appropriate level by one or two officers. The routine work would be disposed of at the level of Superintendent who should be given powers to dispose of it directly without reference to higher officers. The Committee feel confident that if this system is given a fair trial there would be considerable saving of manpower and money and increase in the efficient disposal of work in each Ministry. The intention is that each officer in the chain should dispose of as much work as possible himself and not merely supervise or approve the work of his juniors. There is also another advantage in following this system. As the papers are dealt with at different levels the matters contained in them will receive appropriate consideration and a broad outlook which an officer of the higher position necessarily possesses. On the other hand if a paper goes to the bottom-most man, he is naturally inclined to take a narrow view of the matter because his knowledge is limited and he is not at all times aware of the policy that is taking shape at the top. At the same time in many cases it happens that the work of the lower officers is wasted because they are not aware of the policy decisions or discussion at the top and the same ground has to be covered again by the senior officers. It is therefore very necessary that papers must be disposed of by the officer or person who is aware of the background and is in the know of the matters concerning that paper. The Committee would say in this connection that in all important business concerns this system is in vogue and there can be no doubt that they are run on efficient and economical lines.

Consideration of proposals received from subordinate offices in the Ministries

12. At present it happens that proposals which are received from heads of the subordinate offices or other Ministries are subjected to scrutiny by an Assistant in the receiving Ministry. The Committee consider it a waste of effort and lack of courtesy. It is obvious that when a proposal is made by the Head of a subordinate office or by a Ministry where it has received the attention of the Head of that Department or Secretary of that Ministry the corresponding or the next higher officer in the Ministry receiving the proposal should normally examine it and express his opinion over it. Generally what happens is that the Assistant criticises or notes on such proposals in the first instance. This is very unsatisfactory and calls for a radical change. The proposals made by officers of a subordinate department or a Ministry must be attended to by officers of equivalent or higher rank in the receiving Ministry and should be disposed of without their being sent through the mill of Assistant to Secretary forwards and backwards.

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Division of work between Secretariat proper and subordinate offices

13. The idea of creating a Secretariat proper in Ministries and subordinate offices under them is that the Secretariat should confine itself to questions of policy and the subordinate offices should execute their work in accordance with those policies. During the war the practice has grown that the Secretariat officers have taken to more and more executive work and inevitably the taking of policy decisions have in some cases devolved on the executive departments. This needs a revision. The Secretariat officers should as a rule confine themselves to questions of policy and should devolve complete responsibilities upon heads of the subordinate offices to carry out the day to day administration in accordance with that policy. There should be minimum changes in the policy once announced and the subordinate officers should have a free hand in carrying out those policies. The system of taking the orders of superior officers in each and every case should be deprecated. Each officer should be given full measure of responsibility and he should be accountable for that. They should not have to submit for approval every action of theirs to their senior officers. This is one of the ways in which the Secretariat of the government can be run more efficiently and methodically.

Advisory posts

14. There are many advisory posts under the government such as Economic Adviser, Statistical Adviser, Financial Adviser and so on. A practice has grown in such offices that whenever a file or case is referred for advice it is sent down to the Assistant for noting. This in the opinion of the Committee, is unsatisfactory. An Assistant or clerk or even an Assistant Secretary is not supposed to possess the same knowledge and wide outlook as the appropriate Adviser. In the Finance Ministry it has become almost a routine now to send all cases to the lowest man and in addition to putting up references he is allowed to express his views and criticise proposals; this latter function is obviously outside the limits of his responsibility. In such cases surely a question arises why should such highly paid officers be appointed and why should not the work be done by the lower grade Assistants and Assistant Secretary. The idea of having Financial Advisers, Economic Advisers or any other Advisers is that they should themselves attend to the problem and give their views and should not be circumscribed by the opinion of Assistants. The system of working of these offices therefore needs an investigation. The argument that if the Advisers themselves were to do all the work it would lead to increase in their number and therefore more expense to government is not convincing. Even under the present system all the files go through them and it should not therefore be difficult under our revised arrangement to carry on the work with the same number of officers. In fact our suggestion would result in better organisation, quicker disposal of work and reduction in the lower grades. The Committee will no doubt consider and recommend the revised procedure of work in the Ministry of Finance when it examines the estimates of that Ministry. But in the meantime the Committee suggest that government may look into this matter and reorganise these offices on the basis of the broad lines indicated above.

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Secretariat instructions

15. The Committee understand that Secretariat instructions are in the process of being re-written in order to bring them in line with the present set-up under the Constitution. The Committee recommend that in this connection government may also consider the question of simplifying the present system of drafting, and noting on files and of making inter-departmental references. There is a tendency among officers to correct the language of drafts and notes with the idea of improving their diction and language. In this process the drafts and notes become unnecessarily long with elaborate introductions, literary passages and unnecessary references that can be omitted. It is desirable that this system is superseded by the more modern method whereby letters should be written in clear and direct style. Noting on files should be to the minimum and no attempt should be made to summarise the obvious papers and to repeat the same argument over and over again. There is therefore a great need for improving this aspect of the matter in order to improve the existing method of the working of Secretariat. There are also too many departmental references and too much noting between Branches and officers of the same Ministry. This is either due to the work being spread over a number of Ministerial officers whereby it is necessary that each one of them should have a look at the file or papers or is due to the incapacity of the officers to take decision at their level. Whatever the reason the system leads to abnormal delays and waste of time and labour which are not commensurate with the results achieved. It is of the utmost importance that Secretariat instructions should lay down clearly in what cases Departmental references are necessary and where in doubt, the order of the Head of the Department must always be taken before making a reference to another Ministry or Department.

Financial control

16. Although we have not yet examined the Ministry of Finance, from our experience of the examination of the estimates of the three Ministries, we are inclined to think that the control of the Ministry of Finance is more rigid on minor items of expenditure and perhaps lax on major items. This system of financial control in the opinion of the Committee is unsound. The Committee feel that the question of financial control on minor and major items of expenditure requires re-examination. The present rules under which the Heads of Ministries or Departments have been vested with certain financial powers are in their opinion inadequate. There have been instances in which proposals involving some minor expenditure have remained under discussion between the Ministry of Finance and the administrative Ministry for weeks and months together without any settlement, while in regard to proposals involving huge expenditure there have been fewer discussions and quicker agreements between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry concerned. The Committee consider that in order to avoid unnecessary delay in the day-to-day performance of the normal functions of a Ministry, greater financial powers in the field of minor items of expenditure should be devolved on the Heads of Ministries and Departments. While the Committee do not intend to suggest in detail the lines on which such division of powers between the

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Ministry of Finance and the Administrative Ministry should take place, the underlying principle broadly should be that the itemised control should be delegated to the Heads of Ministries and the Ministry of Finance should be left free to devote more attention and thought to major proposals involving bulk expenditure. This will not only relieve congestion of work and obviate delays in the disposal of government work, but will also give the necessary fillip to economy and the working of the machinery of Government. At present one common complaint is that such and such a scheme is held up because of financial sanction on a comparatively smaller item, and the pace of the activities in a Ministry or Department is retarded if formal sanctions from the Ministry of Finance have to be obtained in the case of each and every item however small. The Committee consider that the whole matter requires a thorough re-examination and the functions of the Ministry of Finance should be specified in more definite terms than they are at present with a view to ensuring that there are no unnecessary inter-departmental consultations and that the responsibility is properly distributed and shared by both the spending Ministries and the Ministry of Finance. The Committee urge in this connection that where a proposal is agreed to or disagreed by the Ministry of Finance as a result of verbal discussion between them and the Ministries sponsoring the proposals, the detailed reasons for their advice should be recorded in writing in all cases to enable proper appreciation of the whole matter being made at a later date, if any need arises.

Fixation of salaries of officers in relation to their previous status

17. The Committee have come across some instances in which officers have been appointed under the Central Government on salaries which were disproportionate to their previous salaries in business or under State Governments. The Committee think that this matter should be looked into by the Ministry of Finance carefully and appropriate rules laid down so that there is no abuse of power and waste of public money involved in such appointments.

Selection of officers for technical appointments

18. It has come to the notice of the Committee that the field of selection of certain technical appointments such as Engineers is restricted to a certain category of persons only. As an instance, the Chief Engineer of C.W.I.N.C. is selected from one of the existing or retired Chief Engineers of States or Central Government. It is obvious that an officer of this category is seldom found and then a plea is advanced that competent persons are not available. It goes without saying that, when the field of selection is so limited, a competent person will be found with great difficulty. The Committee cannot understand why the field of selection is limited in such cases and why the selection is not wide enough to cover other categories of officers also. It is true that some tests should be laid down; but these tests should not be so hard that it will be difficult to find any one to satisfy the test. If a person has not risen to the rank of a Chief Engineer it does not mean that he has not got the capacity and ability of a Chief Engineer. It is therefore urged that in making such appointments the selection should be rather broad based and should cover

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a wider field from which better choice can be made. This applies to other posts of technical character also and it is hoped government will give serious consideration to this matter.

The Committee also feel that a list of all the technically qualified personnel should be prepared and added to from time to time so that the list may be consulted when making appointments to the various posts.

Methods of working of offices and amenities for staff

19. In each Ministry a senior officer should be made responsible to see that wasteful methods of working in the Ministry are avoided. He should keep a constant watch over the working of the Ministry and review it periodically. A practice once started may be good for a time but may become out of date and lose its utility in the changed circumstances. Therefore, a vigilant watch is necessary so that improvements are effected simultaneously with the changed circumstances. It should also be his duty to see that the office is kept neat and clean and that the staff possesses good manners and etiquette. There should be cheaper arrangements for providing refreshments to the staff and various amenities in the nature of Library, etc. should be provided to the staff working in a Ministry. This will enable them to develop better relations among themselves and with the officers. At present they are far apart and the gulf should be bridged.

Work-load of officers and staff

20. The work-load of each person in the office should be laid down clearly and responsibility fixed at each level and on each individual, and steps should be taken to provide appropriate punishments in the case of defaulters. In our report on the Ministry of Industry and Supply we have suggested that each Assistant must at least dispose of 15 receipts a day and that each Superintendent should be in charge of 10 Assistants and 5 clerks. An Under Secretary should have at least two Branches under his control, while a Deputy Secretary should be responsible for a division consisting of 3 or 4 Under Secretaries and the Branches under them. In each Ministry or Department there should be a system of circulating weekly or fortnightly a summary of the decisions that have been arrived at in the Ministry for information of all the other Ministries and Departments of the Government of India so that each one in the Secretariat is aware of what is happening in the other parts.

Telephones

21. As regards office telephones we think that an internal exchange should be opened for each Ministry so that the load on the main exchange is reduced and also the expenditure on the direct line telephones. This system is adopted in many advanced countries and it has the advantages that more telephones can be provided at lesser cost and there can be frequent consultations over the telephone among officers without much strain on the main exchange.

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The Committee has already recommended elsewhere that telephones at the residences of the officers should be installed only in such cases in which it is absolutely essential to provide such telephones. Each Department and Ministry should therefore re-examine the matter very carefully and discontinue all such telephones as do not fulfil this condition. Even where telephones are installed at residences Government should make a rule to pay only for a limited number of calls which should be arrived at by taking an average of the calls that can normally be made on official business on a telephone. If any calls are made over and above this basic number, the officer concerned should be required to pay 50 per cent of this additional charge. In case of all trunk-calls, whether made from an office telephone or a residential telephone, a register should be maintained by each officer in which he should record at once the particulars relating to the trunk-call, for example, the person and number called, the brief subject matter of the talk, duration of the call, etc. This register should be periodically examined by a senior officer of the Ministry to ensure that expenditure is met from the public fund only in the case of such trunk-calls which have been made purely on official business.

Telegrams and cablegrams

22. The system of issuing telegrams and cablegrams or making trunk-calls should be reduced to the minimum. The use of the inexpensive surface mail should be made as much as possible in order to reduce the unnecessary expenditure on these items.

Registering of incoming 'dak'

23. The registering of incoming 'dak' in the various Ministries and Departments also requires examination. The present system is defective inasmuch as each receipt is registered not only once or twice but three or four times during its travel from Branch to Branch within the Ministry. The same receipt is therefore counted several times and when the totals are made up the receipts become inflated and it is on this inflated number of receipts that the staff is sanctioned by the Ministry of Finance for the various Ministries. There should be a proper system of registering 'dak' only once in a Ministry and it should be registered either Centrally or Branchwise and the system of having receipts counted several times should be avoided by laying down proper rules in the matter. A rule should also be laid down that all the incoming 'dak' of a Ministry is disposed of by the officer concerned on the day of receipt. If he expects some delay in disposing of it finally he may inform the party concerned of the approximate time by which that party could expect a reply. For this purpose, standard forms may be devised so that no extra work is involved.

APPENDIX

Statement showing the summary of recommendations of the Estimates Committee relating to the Reorganisation of the Secretariat of the Government of India

Serial No.	Reference to para. No. of the Report	Summary of recommendations
1	2	In order to secure coordination of work and unified control over allied subjects and policies relating thereto urgent and effective action should be taken to re-organize the work of the Secretariat on better and more methodical lines. The work initiated in this regard by the Re-organization Wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs should be expedited and decisions taken soon.
2	3	The post of Additional Secretary is unnecessary and should be abolished. The posts of Joint Secretary, Deputy Director General and the like which are created for supervisory duties should also be done away with. If in exceptional circumstances it becomes necessary to appoint a Joint Secretary he should be given independent charge of work and made finally responsible for it.
3	4	The old system according to which officers deputed from States to the Centre had to return to their respective Governments after completion of a tenure period should be restarted.
4	5	Those officers who are drawing salaries above Rs. 3,000 might be induced to surrender voluntarily all excesses over Rs. 3,000.
5	8	Posts of Assistants created for routine or semi-routine type of work should be down-graded and the less important duties entrusted to Second Division clerks which cadre should be re-introduced.
6	9	Messenger system should be introduced at once and considerable reduction in the posts of class IV servants effected. Standards of educational qualifications should be laid down for the posts of messengers and men recruited accordingly.
7	10	For Junior officers a pool of stenographers or steno-typists should be created at the scale of one steno-typist or stenographer for every two or three officers.
8	11	The method of disposal of work in the Secretariat should be so revised that as many papers as are possible are disposed of by the officers themselves at each level.

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Serial No.	Reference to para. No. of the Report	Summary of recommendations
9	12	Proposals made by officers of a subordinate department or a Ministry must be attended to by officers of equivalent or higher rank in the receiving Ministry, and should be disposed of without their being sent through the mill of Assistant to Secretary forwards and backwards.
10	13	Secretariat officers should as a rule confine themselves to questions of policy and should devolve complete responsibility upon heads of the subordinate offices to carry out the day-to-day administration in accordance with that policy.
11	14	Financial Advisers, Economic Advisers, and other Advisers should themselves attend to the problems which they have to tackle and their advice should not be circumscribed by the opinion of Assistants.
12	15	The present system of drafting, and noting on files and of making inter-departmental references should be simplified. Secretariat instructions should lay down clearly in what cases Departmental references are necessary and where in doubt, the order of the Head of the Department must always be taken before making a reference to another Ministry or Department.
13	16	In order to avoid unnecessary delay in the day-to-day performance of the normal functions of a Ministry, greater financial powers in the field of minor items of expenditure should be devolved on the Heads of Ministries and Departments. The functions of the Ministry of Finance should be specified in more definite terms than they are at present with a view to ensuring that there are no unnecessary inter-departmental consultations and that the responsibility is properly distributed and shared by both the spending Ministries and the Ministry of Finance.
14	17	Appropriate rules should be laid down to ensure that no persons are appointed under the Central Government on salaries which are disproportionate to their previous salaries in business or under State Governments.
15	18	The field of selection for technical appointments should be broad based and widened so as to include larger categories of officers. Tests for recruitment of persons should be laid down but these tests should not be so hard that it will be difficult to find any one to satisfy the test.

Appendix

Serial No.	Reference to para. No. of the Report	Summary of recommendations
		<p>A list of all the technically qualified personnel should be prepared and added to from time to time so that the list may be consulted when making appointments to the various posts.</p>
16	19	<p>In each Ministry a senior officer should be made responsible to see that wasteful methods of working in the Ministry are avoided. Amenities in the nature of library, etc. should be provided to the staff working in a Ministry or Department.</p>
17	20	<p>The work-load of each person in the office should be laid down clearly and responsibility fixed at each level and on each individual, and steps should be taken to provide appropriate punishments in the case of the defaulters.</p> <p>In each Ministry or Department there should be a system of circulating weekly or fortnightly, a summary of the decisions that have been arrived at in the Ministry for information of all the other Ministries and Departments of the Government of India so that each one in the Secretariat is aware of what is happening in the other parts.</p>
18	21	<p>An internal telephone exchange should be opened for each Ministry so that the load on the main exchange and also the expenditure on the direct line telephones is reduced.</p> <p>Telephones at the residences of the officers should be installed only in such cases in which it is absolutely essential to provide such telephones.</p> <p>Where telephones are installed at residences, Government should make a rule to pay only for a limited number of calls which should be arrived at by taking an average of the calls that can normally be made on official business on a telephone. If any calls are made over and above this basic number, the officers concerned should be required to pay 50 per cent of this additional charge.</p> <p>In case of trunk-calls, whether made from an office telephone or a residential telephone a register should be maintained by each officer in which he should record the particulars relating to the trunk-call. This register should be inspected periodically by a senior officer of the Ministry to ensure that expenditure is met from the public fund only in the case of such trunk-calls which have been made purely on official business.</p>

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Serial No.	Reference to para. No. of the Report	Summary of recommendations
19	22	The system of issuing telegrams and cablegrams or making trunk-calls should be reduced to the minimum. The use of the inexpensive surface mail should be made use of.
20	23	There should be a proper system of registering 'dak' only once in a Ministry and it should be registered either Centrally or Branchwise and the system of having receipts counted several times should be avoided. A rule should be laid down that all the incoming 'dak' of a Ministry is disposed of by the officer concerned on the day of receipt.
