

as are likely to enhance their value as public servants, and, as referred to elsewhere in this report, the results in this direction have been very gratifying.

Remarks made by the Right Hon. Viscount Haldane of Cloan, O.M., speaking on the above subject, are of interest.

What does an ideal Civil Service demand? Its function is to provide the permanent element to which the Ministers responsible for the Departments can turn for advice and to carry into effect the policy so settled. It provides the factors necessary for continuity in administration by Cabinets which change periodically. It is obvious that it is of the greatest importance to the well-being of the State that the organization of the Civil Service should be of the highest excellence attainable. Economy, by the avoidance of overlapping and waste, depends on it. Efficiency will be proportioned to its knowledge, its moral qualities, and its general excellence. These qualities must therefore be sought after in the first instance, and the Civil servants must keep them set before their eyes.

The real purpose must be the defined one of rendering the highest amount practicable of service to the State, and service of the highest quality. But this is not so easy a principle to carry out as it looks. It implies distinction between individuals based on capacity and selection for fitness. Now there come in at this point the two difficult questions of entrance to the Service and of promotion in it. The vast majority of men and women feel that they have the right to be treated on a footing of complete equality with their neighbours. This is so far an absolutely true view. But then the question comes in what this right of equal opportunity means. It does not mean the equal title of the unfit with the fit to be given employment which is only suited for the fit. The Service exists for the public, and not the public for the Service. If a man or a woman is not as well qualified as others for a particular post no title to that post ought to be based on any abstract notion of equality. But then the task of discriminating becomes a very delicate one. Take entrance to the Civil Service; for the most part, this depends on the result of an examination. I have had to give much consideration to the value of the pure examination test in connection with the general subject of education. I have come to the conclusion that the pure examination test is far from being a perfect one. Success may result from qualities which neither import the more thorough kind of knowledge nor guarantee fitness for the kind of employment sought after. But everything is relative in this finite world, and the examination test, even as it is, is surely much better than selection by the personal influence and wire-pulling which has too often constituted the only avenue in the old days. A more perfect test still would be one based not only on answers to questions put by examiners who had had no opportunity of watching the candidate in his career at school or college and so getting the measure of his personality. Selection based on full record would be more reliable. Such a test we are in course of slowly substituting in schools and universities as that of real education. By degrees I think we shall come to it, as Lord Cromer sought to do in the case of the Egyptian Civil Service, in our home Service also. But until such a system has been evolved we are at least much better off with the external examination than we used to be under the unreformed system.

In the recommendations which were made in 1914, in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, much stress was laid on the improvement of our general educational system as being of high importance if the quality of the Civil Service was itself to be improved. All the evidence points to the truth of this principle. The Service ought to be a highly educated one, and this can only be so if those who come into it are sufficiently educated. The width of mind and the larger outlook which real education brings are wanted in few domains more than here. But there are those who, while possessing great natural aptitude, have unfortunately been unable to obtain such an education. They come into the Service in the lower ranks, and yet by study and the self-development of their individualities they may become very fit to occupy higher posts. For this sort of case provision will have to be made in the future. Such exceptional minds ought to have chances of being put to full use by the State. Otherwise not only will much valuable service be lost to it, but there will be a sense of injustice at a barrier created by what is, after all, due to the accidents of birth and circumstance. With a more fully developed educational system throughout the country this problem ought to shrink in its dimensions.

I cannot express too strongly my sense of the importance of high forms of education throughout the Service. That importance is already recognized in the existence of the First Division, with the standards of knowledge which it requires. I have myself often observed the advantage which the years spent at the university give. Not in all cases, for the best student there may possess little aptitude for business and practical affairs. But in the majority of cases there is a great difference between highly educated men and women and those who are not so educated. The outlook, power, and quickness in comprehension, the gift of dealing with people, the readiness to take the initiative and to assume responsibility, are all, in the main, more highly developed when the business to be transacted is seen by the Civil servant against a background of other knowledge, of the type through which the mind has become enlarged. It is only the exceptionally gifted who possess a substitute for this background. Care should be taken that those who are individuals exceptionally qualified have a full chance of making their way to the highest positions; but the avenue must be carefully guarded. There is no right, arising out of mere seniority, to travel upwards by this exceptional path. The pilgrim to the celestial city ought to possess the quality required for entry through the wicket-gate. If he joins the path later it may be all right, but unless close scrutiny is made it is likely that things may not go well. In the higher positions in the Civil Service a largeness of outlook is required which is rare apart from a comprehensive mental training, and by no means certainly present even after that training. I am no believer in the certainty of the result of education. What I hold to is that by far the best chance is given when there has been education of a high type as a preliminary.