

tolerate that their administration and their acts should be interfered with by a body that is not responsible to the powers they represent—and we represent that ideal which so many of you mentioned of a permanent or life tenure of office, like that of our judgeships. There are some objections to that, but that is not what we wish to discuss. The point is, here is your executive. Now we have to say: How can we justify ourselves so that when a minister says to me that he could not consent to my dictating a man to him and asks me: Are you above the Government?—and, of course, nothing on earth is above a British Government—are you above the Government that you can dictate to us? And I say, Oh, no, you are perfectly able, far better able than we are, to select the best man, but will you be allowed to do so? You know very well you have got to keep yourself in power; you have got to curry favour; you have got to consent to certain things, and you cannot exercise your free will in selecting the best men. We are here, and as I understand our function, it is to assist you, to step between you and those people who are forcing you; to enable you to say: We did not put this man in; we did not turn your man out; we did not pass him by; it was the Commission who made that selection and they were appointed for that purpose, and if you want to abuse anybody, go and chase the Commission. I have to say to them: It is your privilege to tell these people to go and chase us, and we will be just as willing as you like, and will not come back and say: Oh, now, here is a difficult situation, how would you advise us to deal with it? Do you think we should favour this element or the other?—because the moment we come to you as Ministers or as Prime Minister we are compromising you; you can no longer say to these people who are pursuing you: We know nothing about it, go and chase the Commission. I say to them: If we have done anything wrong tell these people you will hold an investigation and also tell them you know nothing about it and have not been consulted. That being so, the question is simply how nearly can a Commission in the selection of people duplicate the selection by a thoroughly responsible democratic body, and minimize the partisan, one-sided, unfair pressure. Now I say, working that out, for the lower grades where it is simply a question of introducing these people on the basis of their general intelligence, a general comprehensive written examination or series of examinations, graded according to the difficulties of the positions, shall be set. But the moment you come to the higher grades, the technical experts, the executive experts, all men requiring, in addition to their general education a general training and a reasonable or even a very large amount of experience, you can no longer test those people wholly on a written examination. If you employ an examination it must be a combination of the written examination, plus the working out, because I say that is the only way in which men are actually selected for the great things in the great corporations and all other institutions, once you get above a certain level. In the case of a technical position there are two ways of going in, either by technical examination or by nomination. We say: We do not care much which way you take it. They have the right to select an expert and then refer him to the Commission and the Commission are to issue a certificate, fortunately the Act says with or without a written or special examination. Examinations are therefore defined as any adequate test to determine a man's ability, so in the case of all experts, when we advertise a position we say "must be graduates of some recognized institution in such and such line"; expert graduates and specialists in chemistry, engineering, etc., must have their degrees. Then we do not hold any written examinations. Then we say of those twenty or thirty candidates who may present themselves for two positions, how are we to decide between them? On the record they