

of the association that one of the commissioners should be chosen for his knowledge of the work of the civil service. The association has not made much of the point, and for our own part we would desire to see the choice based first and all the time on the character of the men. It is not too much to say that in no other office in the gift of the government, with the exception perhaps of the post of Auditor-General, will so much depend, in the initial stages particularly, on the personal force of the occupants. Many are able to remember the excellent organization that was perfected by the late Auditor-General on the elevation of the office in 1878 to a place independent of interference save at the hands of Parliament itself. It is to a greater task that the new commissioners of the civil service will be called. Custom, it may be counted upon, will die hard; and it will be no easy matter to smooth the path for a non-partisan administration of the service. In such a case, and in the face of the time-worn methods which it is only natural should characterize the service at points under present conditions, it is of the highest importance that the commissioners should bring to their responsible position a disposition removed as the poles from conventionalism and prejudice. A mind entirely open, a capacity for organization trained to the highest degree, a sense of justice and power of discrimination of the finest, these with untiring energy and unwavering courage, are the qualities which would make up the ideal commissioner. Such men do not grow everywhere, but they are to be found if the search is earnest. Without them the expected reforms will lag sadly behind the demands of public sentiment and the letter and the spirit of the new law.

One Aspect of Reform.

A correspondent, with flattering opinion of our powers, has suggested a dissertation upon the higher aspects of reform as foreshadowed by the legislation so soon to take effect. He

would like to see the broad issues restated, on the eve of the new regime, now that we are apt to have become enmeshed in considerations that after all are of detail. In truth, this is beyond us, much as we would like to distinguish in so important a matter the forest from the trees. Besides we have only a few days to wait and we will be dealing with facts instead of theories—always the more satisfactory.

Of one thing we may be sure: the new Act will work out in a number of ways which no amount of ingenuity could now anticipate. If some of these prove deleterious, others will prove of benefit. It is as logical to expect the best as the worst, and more agreeable. Certainly, the capacity for great good is there. To take an illustration: It would probably be admitted by the government that many of the clerks in the higher offices are paid salaries that fall below the standard of the outside world. The raising of the Deputy Ministers is a plain indication of this feeling. It is true, however, that no such state of mind prevails as to the lower classes. It is repeatedly maintained that a veritable army of applicants is at the gates on every rumour of a vacancy, no matter how low the salary attached. But if this is the case, it is by no means the whole of it. Probably every Deputy Minister in the service could assure the government from his experience that if certain applicants show little concern as to the lowness of the salary at which they enter, it is for a reason. There has been an all but universal feeling among such applicants that in the wilderness of classes which in the past made up the service a clerk by hook or crook might elbow to any place. The force that could get a man in might be expected to advance him after entrance. Take away this indefinite, and in cases unwarranted, expectation, and how many men of ability would you find seeking an entrance to the service at \$500 a year? The proof is in the ceaseless