

candidates whether they can come within these regulations. They have been of great protection to us.

Q. Do you find that the junior employés are generally of such a class as to be fit for promotion, or have you ever been compelled to take in outsiders from the fact that your juniors were not fit to be promoted to these stations?—In some cases, juniors have been appointed who were quite unfit for the life; they had not the education; they had not the aptitude; sometimes they had not the constitution. They very soon discovered their mistake, and as a rule drop out from the ranks. Those who remain, unless they change in some respects, will never be very brilliant officers. It is desirable in the interest of the individuals themselves as well as in the interest of the Service, to point out to them that they should not enter unless they are fit. I always endeavour to do so, so that we may get the right class of men, and so that men who are not likely ever to be accomplished engineers, may not waste their lives when they may be better employed in some other walk of life.

Q. The appointments you refer to come about entirely by political influence?—Yes; I would not have appointed them, but there are very few now.

Q. You consider that your present regulations will limit the number of such men that enter?—Yes; very much.

Q. Would not the institution of such a Board of Examiners as you have spoken of further tend to accomplish the same object?—Yes, it would.

Q. Would it be possible in your Department to choose men on the basis of a professional examination after their character and health and other qualifications had been certified to?—Undoubtedly.

Q. Would you consider that professional acquirements should be the proper ground of selection?—Undoubtedly; I must say, however in some individual cases an examination would not bring out the best men. Men may be very valuable indeed, who could not pass an examination; they may be very nervous, and their self-possession may forsake them at an examination, and yet they may be most valuable men. Again, a man may shine at an examination, and yet be deficient in other respects.

Q. It is desirable to have a good constitution?—Yes.

Q. Would a medical examination be requisite?—I don't think that is necessary.

Q. You say an examination would not be a test on all these points. Supposing you examined a dozen men on their educational capacities, would you not be more likely to find out their other qualities than under a system of appointment?—Perhaps so; I propose to promote not by seniority alone, but by merit. I could name men who could not pass a first class examination, but who would be more valuable than others who appeared to be very brilliant men at an examination.

Q. But I am speaking of first appointments. These qualities you say, could not be tested by an examination; could they be tested by any other means except by actual trial?—No actual trial would be necessary.

Q. Would not a professional examination combined with probationary appointment of actual trial be the best means?—Yes; I think an examination of candidates to begin with very desirable, and in addition to be employed on probation simply for a year, or perhaps less or more.

Q. I mean a competitive professional examination—that those who stood the highest should have the first chance of appointment?—I am not sure about that.

Q. Competitive examinations at all events would remove the political patronage?—Oh, certainly.

Q. Would you not consider that in itself an advantage even if the class of men were not improved?—I think all candidates should be capable of passing certain examinations. But I don't know that those who pass those examinations best should take a higher rank than any others.

Q. Do you not think that the abolition of political patronage by using competition as a test of selection would be an advantage in itself, even if the class of men were not greatly improved?—I dare say it would. I think officers serving the Government should be noncombative as to politics. I would go so far as to deprive them of the franchise. They would not then be required to consider for whom they