

This, surely, is the best evidence of the enduring acceptance in Canada of the principles embodied in the present Civil Service Act. The separation of the Service from party politics is a proud and valuable tradition which we should prize and cherish. It will be maintained safe and sound provided that we remain on guard, that our law and practice continue anchored in the merit system.

There have been a good many changes in the Civil Service in the past forty years. The most striking, of course, is the immense increase in its size. This is not infrequently cited as evidence of the extravagances and inefficiency of government undertakings. And this on the basis of elementary and totally misleading arithmetical calculations - usually based on comparative population figures. The inference, however, is quite unsound. The primary reason for the large increase in government employment over the past generation is that the Canadian people, like the people of other countries, have demanded from their governments a wide range of services and benefits which in previous generations were regarded as the responsibility of the individual, or of private or public charity, or of Providence. This in turn has led directly and inevitably to the employment of the thousands, and thousands, of men and women who have entered state employment since the '30s. This is by no means wholly due to the new social services, but to other things as well in immense variety - research and development of all kinds, assistance for commerce, agriculture, fisheries, - and much more. All of which entails more civil servants. We have come a long way from the days when all that was expected of government was to maintain internal order, to defend the frontiers, and to deliver the mail. Adlai Stevenson once remarked to an American audience "your public servants serve you right". They do in this country too; and, by and large, we get just about as many as we deserve.

This first trend in our Civil Service - expansion - has been accompanied by a second perhaps even more significant - the increased importance and influence of senior civil servants.

The very volume of public business has compelled Ministers to cast more and more of the burden on their officials. The Minister's limited time has to be divided between his political and his administrative duties. Whatever the number and quality of his staff the tax upon his own physical and intellectual resources remains enormous. As a direct consequence - in order to carry on - the Minister has often no alternative but to entrust all but major policy matters to his subordinates.

Because of this - because of these larger responsibilities thrust upon officials by necessity - it has become essential in the national interest that we should have a Civil Service of high capacity and complete integrity.