

THE BRITISH SERVICE.

A Brief Account of a Subject of Great Present Interest to Canada: Regulation by Commission in Full Operation.

In the year 1885 commissioners were appointed for the purpose of testing the fitness of candidates for the British Civil Service. Previous to that time appointments were made by nomination, the candidate being required to pass an examination somewhat similar to that which qualifies entrants to the Canadian service at the present time. The principle of open competition was not formally adopted until the year 1870.

Under the regulations now in force the commissioners practically control all appointments and promotions in the service and there can be no question as to the difficult character of the examinations for appointment. It is interesting to note, however, that all appointments are not open to public competition. The exemptions are (a) Situations filled by limited competitions among candidates nominated by the heads of the departments in which vacancies exist; (b) Situations filled by nominations subject to a qualifying examination only; and (c) Situations which the chief of a department deems it requisite to fill by the appointment of a person whose qualifications are wholly or in part professional or otherwise peculiar and not ordinarily to be acquired in the Civil Service. To obtain any of these appointments some influence, direct or indirect, is indispensable. In many of the offices where clerkships are open for competition, appointments to subordinate positions, such as messengerships, are made by nomination.

Classification.

The clerical establishments are divided into two main classes known as Class I and the Second Division.

In addition to these there are the Assistant Clerks or Abstractors, Boy Clerks and Women Clerks.

Clerks of the First Class fill the most important offices and their opportunities for advancement are very great. Their duties are in part, and in some instances wholly, of an administrative nature, and secretaryships, assistant secretaryships and other high staff posts are within the reach of those who by long and meritorious services show their fitness for them. As an instance of this it may be noted that a candidate successful in 1880 is now Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Home Department with a salary of £2,000 a year. Heretofore vacancies in the First Class have, for the greater part, been filled by open competition. Some of the inferior appointments in this division have, however been made by promotions from the Second Division and as there is an increasing tendency in this direction, it seems probable that in the future the number of appointments to this class to be made from the outside world cannot be very great.

The more important clerical work of many of the departments is performed entirely by clerks of the Second Division, and they have to a considerable extent taken the places formerly held by Clerks of the First Class. In many instances they perform duties of a very responsible nature. The scale of salaries for the Second Division is as follows:

£ 70	increasing by £ 7 10s. annually to	£130
£130	“ “ £10	“ “ £200
£200	“ “ £10	“ “ £300

Certain staff appointments, with salaries higher than those indicated above, are reserved for clerks of this Division. The salaries range from £300 to £500.

The increments of salary are not allowed without an annual certificate from the immediate superior of each clerk, countersigned by the Head of the Department, or such officer as he may designate for that purpose, to