

thought they deserved appointments at once because they had known me when I was a baby or because they were intimate with those who were friendly, or because at one time or another chance had given the opportunity for a most agreeable acquaintance. While, of course, in my position I have very little to do with appointments in the classified list, I did have this much to do with them—to announce that I would not recommend to any one whom I appointed as the head of a department the appointment of any subordinate to office, but would hold the head of the department accountable for his discharge of his duty. The pressure of improper influence, the pressure upon a man's sense of good fellowship, the efforts to come close to a man on the side of ordinary human generosity, to appeal to him in the name, the sacred name of friendship,—these efforts are so various and multitudinous that we have long ago concluded,—and it needs no debate,—that we must have the determination of capacity in appointment to subordinate positions by some other method than the unrestrained will of the appointing officer.

Competitive Examinations.

“Now, we have got it embodied in the Constitution of the state, we have it written by the people of the state, that appointments in the various civil divisions of the state shall be according to merit and fitness,—so far as practicable to be determined by examinations, and those examinations so far as practicable to be competitive. And there is no clause in the Constitution since those great clauses embodying our fundamental rights were written which is of greater importance to the maintenance of high standards of administration than that clause, the full scope and meaning of which have not yet been fully determined by the courts but are destined to be in time. And so to night it gives me particular pleasure to say that from the viewpoint of office we have nothing more important in relation to the administration of government than a system — the best that has yet been devised — of securing men of the needed capacity by competitive examinations wherever such examinations are practicable. I believe in that, I thoroughly endorse it, and I hope to see it extended throughout the states of the Union.

“I have said that we have a great many who are eager to give their service to the public. That is true, and we can sift out of that large class the men who are worthy of that service only by a competitive test. Now, I do not attach undue importance to examination papers. I once was a teacher and I know well enough the qualifications which do not appear in answer to questions; but as compared with the system of making public office a partisan encampment by which the people at large can be charged by reserve forces in time of emergency, or

the system by which those holding important office are distracted and worn down by the importunities of friends and of those who believe themselves to hold them under some obligation, the system of competitive examination is so far in advance that there is no debate among reasonable men upon the question.

Responsibilities of Public Service.

“The activities of the state are constantly extending. The number of those who must be drafted into the service of the state is continually increasing. We may talk of our schemes of legislation for this or that supposed improvement in the law. One of the first things we need is to show the adequacy of our existing institutions, and the full scope and effect of our existing laws by having men administer them as they would administer a sacred trust in private life. We want in office, therefore, men who are not simply just over the line of availability, but the best men that can be obtained; sorted out by the best means; held to the highest standards of efficiency; made to feel that it is the highest honor to serve the state; that it is just as sacredly a place of honorable obligation as to go to the front in defense of the country in time of war. Indeed, there may be a severer test of character in the room where, unobserved, a paid official of the government performs the work for which he gets his stipend, than in the rush, hurrah and enthusiasm of the charge upon the fields of battle.

I have said that we must not only have capacity and disinterestedness but we must have accountability. Therefore, from such observation as I have been able to make, I have very little confidence in schemes which tend to restrict the responsibility of the officer who holds the power of appointment or removal. I would have him be compelled, wherever it is practicable, to choose disinterested men from those who according to the best tests have shown their capacity for the place. I would have those men held to disinterested service and inspired by the fidelity of their chief, and I would have that chief in a position to call every one to account and himself accountable for the efficiency of his department.”

“Isn't he done with that speech yet?”

“Yes, he's been done for twenty minutes, but heaven only knows when he'll stop talking.”—Cleveland Leader.

“What's this?” demanded the Customs officer of a certain British Colony, pointing to a package at the bottom of a trunk.

“That's a foreign book entitled 'Politeness,'” answered the man who had just landed.

“I'm afraid I must charge you a duty on it,” rejoined the inspector. “It competes with a small struggling industry in this country.”—Strand.