

The establishment of an educational qualification was no doubt an improvement upon prevailing conditions, and during the earlier years of its existence the board rendered a service to ministers of the crown in intervening between them and applicants for office. The relief thus afforded, however, was but temporary. The examinations were easy. They were not competitive, and with the lapse of time the list of qualified aspirants grew apace, until almost every person became eligible, and things were as before.

Still, successive governments shrank from effecting any organic change, and, beyond occasionally amending the Civil Service Act and appointing fresh commissions of inquiry every ten or twelve years, did nothing. One of these bodies, created in 1892, renewed the recommendations of its predecessor for the appointment of a permanent commission to regulate the service, but with no material result. Indeed, things kept getting worse, for the periodical amendments made to the act were for the most part designed to meet particular circumstances as they arose, and, so long as the special occasion was served thereby, slight regard appears to have been paid to the effect of the amendments upon the symmetry of the act as a whole. So incongruities multiplied. At length, forty years after the first steps had been taken to improve the service, the government resolved upon a radical reform. In 1907 it entrusted to another royal commission the task of instituting a thorough inquiry into the working of the whole system. The commissioners went fully into the question, and in a report which caused some stir at the time, discussed the subject from many points of view. They unsparingly condemned the exercise of political influence in the matter of appointments; found fault with the existing classification; pointed out that the salaries were inadequate; and advocated the restoration of the superannuation system, with added provision for the support of the widows and orphans of deceased civil servants. Placing a wide interpretation upon their instructions, they went on to criticize the administration of the public departments in regard to matters of policy.

Their exhaustive report appeared in the early part of