No. 58/5 TRADITIONS AND TRENDS IN CANADA'S CIVIL SERVICE

An address by A.D.P. Heeney, Q.C., Chairman,
Civil Service Commission of Canada, at the
Empire Club, Toronto, January 30, 1958.

It seemed to me appropriate that I should speak to
this Empire Club about "traditions"--particularly so since
in the Public Service, as in other institutions of government,
we share with other countries of the Commonwealth the noble
heritage of Britain.....

It is now more than a hundred years since patronage
was abandoned as the basis of appointment and preferment in
the Civil Service of Great Britain. Before then, sporadic
attempts had been made to improve conditions of public employ-
ment. The recommendations of Lord Macaulay for India had
pointed the way. But it was the celebrated report of Trevelyan
and Northcote in 1853 that laid the foundation for the modern
British Service. Their report still stands as an eloquent and
succinct statement of the principles of what has come to be
known as "the merit system".

More than fifty years later, we in Canada established
the same principles in effective legislation and the fact that
we did so then was largely due to British example. Our Civil
Service reformers in the '90s and in the first two decades of
this century made generous employment of British experience in
devising their remedies for a situation in which public appoint-
ments were made for party advantage - in which, as a consequence,
inefficiency and waste characterized the conduct of much of the
nation's business. Here, as in much else, we Canadians owe much
to 19th century Britain.

It was not long after Confederation that the first of a
long series of enquiries by Royal Commissions and Select
Committees of Parliament investigated the operation of the
Dominion Civil Service. The proponents of radical change in the
prevailing regime of patronage were to be found on both sides of
the House. The more altruistic motive of improving public