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## EDUCATION AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The Dominion Parliament has had under consideration for some time the best means of improving the Civil Service. In so far, as this is a question of public policy, we do not care to offer any decided opinion on the matter; but even, with reference to this view of the question, we must confess our inability to comprehend why the test of education should not be resorted to as the most likely, on the whole, to secure competent public servants in the various departments of State. Were the experiment still untried everywhere else we could feel no surprise in seeing our legislators, most of them educated men themselves, ready to make it here; but it is no new idea, and this method of recruiting the ranks of the Civil Service may now be said to have stood a rigid and thoroughly satisfactory test. It is, however, with another aspect of the proposed reform that we intend to deal just now. The Civil Services of the Dominion, and of the various Provinces, embrace a very large number of employees. At present the mode of appointing these may fairly be spoken of as nondescript. Education

at all events, has little or nothing to do with it. What we would like to see is a premium placed on education in connection with these appointments, and of all the methods of applying the educational test the most satisfactory is, probably, the one adopted now in England—a competitive examination. This has been for some time in use in connection with the entrance to the Military College, at Kingston, with, so far as we know, beneficial results. There does not seem to be any obstacle, except political ones, in the way of either the Dominion Government or any of the local Governments laying down a programme upon which all candidates for positions in the Civil Service would have to be examined. The list of those who succeeded in passing could then be arranged in the order of merit, the chance of receiving an appointment being determined exactly by the candidate's position on the list.

It is easy to see what an impetus such a system would impart to our middle class educational institutions, including our high schools in Ontario and the academies and schools corresponding to them in the other provinces. As the number of appointments made annually must always be very considerable they would soon come to be considered as of no small value, and the competition for the highest places would be extremely keen. Both pupils and teachers would take an interest in the examination and lend all their energies to the work of preparation, the great advantage being that, in all cases, the pupils not intending to compete would be induced or compelled to work with greater diligence in order to keep abreast of those who were preparing for examination. We have already called attention to the good that might be done if our leading bankers and merchants were to recognise in some way a liberal education as an additional qualification in those seeking to enter their service. If they could be induced to move in the matter and the Dominion and Provincial Governments could, at the same time, be induced to put the whole Civil Service on a competitive basis, it is safe to say that a revolution in middle class or secondary education would be speedily effected. Such a consideration is not beneath the dignity of those who have to decide the matter for the public; and for more reasons than one we should like to have their attention pointedly called to an aspect of the question which is too apt to be overlooked. If a competitive examination is the best means of obtaining satisfactory employees for the State, it would surely be no drawback, in the way of adopting it, that it was likely to prove, at the same time, a means of advancing the cause of education.

There are few countries so favourably situated for introducing such a reform as the Province of Ontario. We have already instituted an examination for which we have, as yet, found far too little practical use—the Intermediate High School examination. Apart from the fact that it plays an important part in the distribution of the High School grant, it is now regarded as worthy of a certain amount of recognition in connection with the examination of teachers, and at least one university has accepted it *pro tanto* in lieu of its matriculation. Other uses of the same kind will yet be found for it, but not all of them together would have as much effect in popularizing it as would its recognition by the Legislature as the basis of appointments to the Civil Service. If it were once understood that no ap-