

12. Candidates for the Civil Service in Belgium have to obtain certificates of birth and diplomas or documents showing previous studies, and they are required to possess the knowledge of two languages besides their own—the examinations are in writing, and are very analagous to those which candidates have to pass before entering the Civil Service in Great Britain.

13. In the United States an agitation for a reform in the system of appointment and promotion in the Civil Service, has for several years been carried on; and attempts with hitherto imperfect results have been made to effect an improvement. There can be very little doubt that though political exigencies and the power of party tradition have hitherto prevented any valuable and permanent improvement in the Civil Service of the United States, the wisest and best among the statesmen and citizens of that country have long been impressed with the necessity for reform, and we ascertained that in the New York Post Offices the principle of competitive examinations have been established with the most satisfactory results.

14. Although at the outset we were not entirely free from doubt as to whether public opinion fully appreciated the importance of the enquiry referred to us, a further consideration of the subject led us to the conclusion that while this particular question may have been overshadowed by the more pressing and exciting political topics of the day, there was nevertheless a feeling in the public mind that the interests of the public service had been subordinated to a greater or less extent to the purposes of political parties, and that in the Service itself there has been a gathering feeling of dissatisfaction due to the uncertainty and irregularity of promotions and appointments, resulting from the frequent introduction from the outside of men who have been appointed to important and lucrative positions over the heads of old and faithful and competent servants, which must greatly tend to lessen its efficiency.

15. While there exists in the public mind a very general belief that the Civil Service is defective and inefficient, and that the true remedy is the abolition of political patronage and personal favoritism in making appointments to public offices; there is on the other hand an impression that it is difficult and almost impracticable to apply the remedy and that those who possess the power of patronage will continue to exercise it at the sacrifice of an efficient and economical administration of public affairs. We believe this impression to be in the main erroneous, and that public men, realizing how much the prosperity and welfare of the country depends on a pure and efficient Civil Service, will not hesitate to abandon a patronage which is found to be injurious to the best interests of the country and which is generally admitted to be a source of weakness and annoyance to themselves, as well as demoralizing to the constituencies.

16. With these, among other, considerations before them the Commission began its labors. In the Order in Council appointing the Commission and defining its duties, certain statements are made, with a degree of emphasis and precision, which gives them almost the appearance of established official propositions. It was stated—

- 1st. That many changes in the character as well as the extent of the Service required in each Department had developed themselves.
- 2nd. That the duties of some Departments and of some branches of each Department, and of certain officers in each Department had been varied, diminished or increased.