

A Royal Commission on the British Civil Service.

As already reported, the British government some weeks ago announced that it would appoint a Royal Commission on the civil service, and the action falling as it did about the same time as the appointment of a similar commission in Canada, lent to it an additional interest to civil servants in this country. Within the past fortnight the personnel of the commission has been named as below. It will be seen that the commission is not only a large one but that it includes some very distinguished names:

Lord MacDonnell (Chairman), the Duke of Devonshire, the Bishop of Southwark, Sir Henry Primrose, Sir Kenneth Muir-Mackenzie, Sir Donald Macalister, Sir Guy Granet, Mr. Harold Baker, M.P., Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., Mr. S. J. G. Hoare, M. P., Mr. R. D. Holt, M.P., Mr. P. Snowden, M.P., Mr. A. A. Booth, Mr. Arthur Boutwood, Mr. P. E. Matheson, Mr. A. E. Shipley, D.Sc., Mr. Graham Wallas, Miss Haldane, Mrs. Dean Streatfield. Mr. S. Armitage-Smith, of the Treasury (to whom correspondence may be addressed at Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S. W.), has been appointed Secretary.

The terms of reference, are as follows:—

To inquire into and report on the methods of making appointments to and promotions in the Civil Service, including the Diplomatic and Consular Services and the Legal Departments.

To investigate the working and efficiency of the system of competitive examinations for such appointments, and to make recommendations for any alterations or improvement in that system which may appear to be advisable.

To consider whether the existing scheme of organisation meets the requirements of the public service, and to suggest any modifications which may be needed therein.

The Civilian, London, gives the following sketch of the personnel of the commission:

Lord MacDonnell, of Swinford, was born in 1844, and entered the Civil Service in 1865; Acting Chief Commissioner in Burmah in 1889; Chief Commissioner of Central Provinces in 1891; Acting Lieut.-Governor Bengal, 1893; Member of Council of Viceroy of India, 1893-95; Lieut.-Governor N. W. Provinces and Chief Commissioner Oudh, 1895-1901. Though Lord MacDonnell's name is not a prominent one in the eyes of the general public, we venture to say that his appointment will give satisfaction. He is sufficiently aloof from both political parties to be considered a politician of the cross-bench mind. Since his return from India, a controversy has raged round Lord MacDonnell's head. He was appointed Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under a Unionist Government, and he had a large share in carrying through the policy of land purchase in Ireland, which everyone will admit has brought a measure of regeneration to the Irish landed system. But Lord MacDonnell's Irish experience has left him a convinced believer in some fundamental change in Irish government. His Unionist friends suspected him of heresy, and he has since left them in no doubt of his affection for Devolution. To-day he is a *bête noire* among enthusiastic adherents to the Union. Lord MacDonnell is in favour of an extension of Local Government that would almost, but not entirely, approximate to Home Rule on an Imperial basis. He believes in Home Rule without fiscal autonomy. He continued to be the Under-Secretary after the advent of the present government; but he retired in 1908.

The Duke of Devonshire was born in 1868, educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge was Finan-