

CIVIL SERVICES, HISTORY AND PROBLEMS

(*The Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri Lectures, 1954-55*)

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FOREWORD

I desire to place on record my gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate of the Madras University for the invitation they extended to me to deliver the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri Endowment lectures for 1955. One of the conditions of the Endowment is that the subject chosen should be related to Political Science with special reference to India. Recalling an interesting discussion I had with Mr. Sastri in 1930 in England when we were both there in connection with the Round Table Conference when he impressed on me the importance of a trained and honest Civil Service in a modern democratic government I chose as my subject the problem which he had himself thus indicated.

The first two lectures deal with the development of the Civil Services in different countries. I thought it necessary to deal with the problem historically in view of the general belief in India that the bureaucratic structure is something Western which has been imposed on us and it should therefore be viewed with suspicion and distrust as a survival of the British rule in India. While it is true that the organisation of the present Civil Services dates from the British period, it is equally an undeniable fact that direct administration by the Civil Services is more in conformity with Indian tradition than with the British. Further, it was also necessary to emphasise the indissoluble connection between the administering state and the Civil Services, as may be seen from the history of all communities to which I have made brief allusion in the first lecture.

The third lecture deals exclusively with the problems of the Civil Services today in India. It is not

necessary for me to emphasise how important it is that the problems relating to the Civil Services should receive continuous attention not only of those responsible for the political direction of the country, but of the general public whose affairs are the subject of the daily activities of the civil servants. I have but indicated a few lines of enquiry, and suggested remedies for some of the more obvious weaknesses. My purpose was only to call attention to this all important problem, which neither the politician nor the civil servant can overlook, and to which the public in a democratic country cannot afford to be indifferent.

I have also much pleasure in placing on record my thanks to Mr. C. K. Srinivasan for his general assistance as also for helping me to see the book through the press.

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LECTURE I

THE STATE AND THE CIVIL SERVICES

The most outstanding fact in the development of government during recent times, especially from the beginning of the 20th century, is the growth of bureaucratic power; that is the power of organised civil services in the government and therefore in the political life of all modern states. A few figures will indicate the magnitude of the change. In England in 1855, the number of so called civil servants including postmen, letter carriers, office keepers, messengers, who are the English equivalents of *chaprasis* and porters, was only 17,815.¹ Today including the same categories they number over seven hundred thousand. In 1900, the Federal Government of the United States employed 2,00,000 persons: today the number is over 2 millions. Fifty years ago the total federal expenditure on civil services was 100 million dollars: today the figure is six thousand five hundred millions. In England at the present time the annual salary Bill of the civil services is over 245 million pounds. The British Imperial Calender and Civil Service List enumerates 600 departments and sub-departments. In other countries the position is similar. In the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries the proportion of the civil services to the population is higher. In India, which was still recently a completely bureaucratic administration, the number of people employed in running the machinery of government is perhaps larger than in any country outside Russia and China. After

1. Wyn Griffith: *The British Civil Service, 1854-1954*, p. 2.

our independence this has increased abnormally as every one knows. In fact today it may be stated as a political axiom that the all-embracing character of government, no less in Communist than in capitalist countries, necessitates an ever-expanding administrative service, capable at the highest level of advising on broad policies as well as of working out the mechanism of effectuating those policies and at the lower level trained to execute complicated schemes that touch the lives of every citizen. The modern state concerns itself with almost everything, with birth, marriage and death, health, education and living conditions, travel and every other aspect of the life of the individual. It takes what seems to most of us an undue and unwelcome interest in the incomes of people. Large areas of economic life it has appropriated to itself. In respect of what remains outside its direct authority it interferes by the issue of licenses, by controls exercised through factory laws, tribunals for industrial disputes and numerous other regulations. There is nothing in fact that the modern state does not interfere with. Now it has to be remembered that the power of the state though it may emanate from the people themselves can be put into effect only by an organised system of civil officials. It is this system we describe by the name of Civil Services.

The dictionary defines civil service as a collective term for the non-war-like branches of the administrative services of the state. There are many ambiguities in this definition. For example, are people employed in the service of the state on daily wages in the Public Works Department a part of the civil service? The Royal Commission of 1931 describes the Civil Services as "those servants of the Crown, other than holders of political or judicial offices, who are employed in a civil capacity and are paid wholly and directly out of monies

voted by Parliament." Though this is the official definition in England, for the purposes of these lectures, it is far too wide, as it would include in the civil services, not merely ancillary establishments, but personnel of technical departments like Engineering, Public Health, Forestry, Agriculture, etc. It is not the relationship of these very necessary services to the State that we are concerned with. Further, by accepted usage in India the term civil service is limited to the administrative section of public service. It is well to recall that the word itself originated in relation to India. It first occurs in contradistinction to armed forces.

However defined and limited, there is no doubt that in the modern state the Civil Services constitute the essential basis of government and its executive machinery to such an extent that a distinguished academician while delivering his inaugural address to the University of Oxford has not hesitated to describe the political system in that country as a Parliamentary Bureaucracy. How surprised the great constitutionalists of the past, Bagehot, Anson and Dicey would have been at this description I need not say. Bagehot's classic description of the constitution of England ignores the existence of the bureaucracy. Neither to Dicey nor to Anson does the existence of the civil service present a major political problem. But today, without shocking his academic audience Professor Wheare could almost casually describe the very system of British government as a Parliamentary Bureaucracy. It is obvious that the problem has attained a major significance and deserves study not merely from the organisational point of view, but basically in its constitutional and political aspects.

Bureaucracy is not an organisation of European origin. In fact Europe, for reasons which we shall dis-

cuss later was the last area where it developed. It originated in what Wittfogel and his school of historians call the water works civilisations which developed in the great river valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Ganges and the Yangtse.

The first form of organised society, entitled to be called state, originated in areas where organised cultivation and settlement were possible owing to a perennial supply of water through rivers. Whether such a civilisation grew up first in the river valleys of India, Egypt, Sumer or China it is difficult to say, for when our historical vision opens in the middle of the third millennium organised states are seen existing in all these areas. They had one common characteristic. Their life depended either on the control of inundation as in Egypt and in China, or of irrigation as in the Euphrates Valley and in India. These states were therefore dependent on large scale water works involving in their turn the maintenance of an army of officials.

Egypt is what the Nile has made of it. Only by its control and utilisation could the country exist, for on both sides of the river are deserts—vast seas of sand and rock where nothing would grow. All authorities are agreed that the Nile created and continues to create through annual inundation the soil of Egypt. Alike by the regularity of its rise and fall and by the irregularities of its overflow it created the necessity of organised and planned labour under a common authority. This is how the great Egyptian bureaucracy came into existence. Land revenue had to be collected, grain had to be stored, and distributed in times of scarcity, accounts of public expenditure kept carefully. The scribes—the officials who were entrusted with this work—became, after the priesthood the most important section of people in Egypt.

For over a thousand five hundred years Egypt, under successive dynasties, maintained a most efficient administration. Under powerful Pharaohs it extended its territories to the East up to the Tigris and to the north up to Asia Minor. Changes in dynasties affected it but little, as the civil services were able to carry on the administration.

One significant fact may be mentioned in this connection. Egyptian bureaucracy was able to develop into an immense imperial organisation and not only maintain its continuity in Egypt but through Rome, project itself into European life because of a revolutionary change in the material used for communication. In the early period of Egyptian history polished stone was the material for writing. But the discovery of papyrus, and its cheapness and availability made it possible for Egyptians to expand their services. The successor to papyrus is paper. Just imagine to what impotence the secretariats of the world be reduced if through some supernatural intervention, the supply of writing paper suddenly ceased. Civil service is based on written work: communication of orders, report of the execution of orders—to mention only two elementary factors. The discovery of the papyrus material was therefore a revolutionary development in the growth of the civil services in Egypt enabling the Pharaohs to administer a far-flung territory.

If control of inundation created the Egyptian bureaucratic state it is irrigation that led to a similar development in the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys. That the civilisations of Babylonia—to use a convenient expression—were based on an extensive and complicated irrigation system is evidenced by the fact that after Hulagu Khan destroyed it, that famous region was unable

to regain its prosperity till our own times. Most ruinous of Hulagu's acts, was says Longrigg "the studied destruction of the dykes and head works whose ancient and perfect system has been the sole source of wealth . . . the silting and scouring of the rivers once let loose soon made the restoration of control the remote, perhaps hopeless problem today still unsolved."² The prevalence of large scale irrigation postulates the existence of an elaborate bureaucratic organisation. At what period in history the irrigation-state started in this area it is difficult to say but we have the statement of Sargon the Great himself about its existence in his time. In one of the most interesting personal documents left by a Ruler, brought to light by archaeology, Sargon says : "My mother was humble; I knew not my father. My town was Azupirani that is set on the bank of Euphrates. My humble mother conceived me; secretly brought me to birth : set me in an ark of bulrushes; made fast my door with pitch. She consigned me to the rivers, which did not overwhelm me. The river carried me along to Akki, the irrigator. Akki the irrigator brought me up as his son." As Sargon's reign is dated in the middle of the 3rd millennium, we can assume that a bureaucratic state was in existence at that early period in Babylonia.

If Egyptian officialdom developed to imperial proportions by the discovery of papyrus during the era of the 5th Dynasty (Circa 2680-2540) in Babylonia it was the invention of the clay tablet as writing medium that helped the growth of an administrative service. An immense quantity of these clay tablets has come down to us. It is the use of these clay tablets for writing purposes that helped to bring about the revolutionary

change from pictographs to more simplified symbols which later developed into systematic alphabets. From the mass of public documents available to us it is now possible to have a detailed picture of Sumerian administration. At about 1800 B.C. there lived Hammurabi, the great law giver, whose code constitutes one of the landmarks of legal history. The great American historian Breasted in his book *Ancient Times* has given us a picture of Hammurabi, so to say at his desk. The monarch is pictured as sitting in his office with his secretary at his side. "In short clear sentences the king begins dictating his brief letters, conveying his commands to local governors of the old Sumerian cities which he now rules. The secretary draws a reed stylus from a leathern holder at his girdle, and quickly covers the small clay tablet with its lines of wedge groups. The writer then sprinkles over the soft wet tablet a handful of dry powdered clay. This is to prevent the clay envelope which he now deftly wraps around the letter, from adhering to the written surface. On this soft envelope he writes the address and sends the letter out to be put into the furnace and baked."

Messengers constantly hand him similarly closed letters. The secretary would read aloud to him (the king) "letters from all over the kingdom. The king quickly dictates his replies. The flood has obstructed the Euphrates between Ur and Larsa, and of course a long string of boats have been tied up and are waiting. The king's reply orders the governor of Larsa to clear the channel at the earliest moment and make it navigable again" In another letter he orders tax remission but "warns the governors that all taxes otherwise falling due within the next month" are not affected by this decision. "Delinquent tax-gatherers are firmly reminded of their obligation and called upon to settle

without delay. Prompt punishment of an official guilty of bribery is authorised and we can see the king's face darken as he dictates the order for the arrest of three officials of the palace gate who had fallen under his displeasure. More than once the governor of Larsa is sharply reminded of the king's orders and bidden to see that they are carried out at once."

This detailed picture, every detail of which is taken from records, shows us a bureaucracy at work in 1800 B.C. The problems arising from flood, from failure of crops, tax remissions, corruption of officials as old as bureaucracy itself, laziness and inattention of local agents and the elaborateness of administration—all these stand out clearly.

Hammurabi's administrative system seems to have broken down after a few generations under the pressure of the Kassites, Aryan nomads—as no doubt happened in India also at almost the same time. But in about 1380 B.C. under the Hittite King, Suppiluliumas, a re-organisation of the services took place. He organised an imperial civil service whose members took an oath of allegiance and were employed in a graded hierarchy. Along the Assyrians also the same tendency was noticeable under Shalmanesar. The system was perfected by the great Achaemenian King Darius, who divided his empire, extending from the Nile to the Sutlej under Satrapies, connected them with roads and established a postal system. The Satrapies had each a governor and a secretary of state, who was the head of a vast body of civil servants administering the country in the Great King's name. This bureaucracy was truly international, in keeping with the international character of Darius' empire.

The growth of the bureaucratic tradition in India, where it has been unbroken as in the case of China will be treated separately. The only point which I may mention here is that while an efficient and organised civil service may be presumed to have existed under the Harappans, nothing specific can be said about it until the script of the Mohenjo Daro seals are deciphered and the history of the Harappan state reconstructed. The history of the civil services in India can therefore be described from the time of the Mauryas.

It is when one comes to China that we see the bureaucracy in its fully organised form, with its philosophy worked out, its functions defined and its recruitment and control determined by law, and integration into government and society carried out. From the time of Emperor Yu (2200 B.C.) to 1905, China had an organised civil service, though it became an imperial service based on examinations with allocation of offices according to merit only from the time of the Han dynasty (201 B.C. to 220 A.D.) From the beginning of the Christian era till the examination system was abolished by a decree of the Dowager Empress under pressure from the Powers in the interests of missionary education, China was governed by an unique organisation of officials, who whatever the dynasty in power, upheld the tradition of Chinese life and civilisation and administered the country with reasonable wisdom of efficiency.

This peculiar body (the Chinese corps of mandarins) says a distinguished English writer, Mr. Wint, is "the central wonder of Chinese organisation, far more impressive than the Grand Canal or the Tartar Wall. In the period when the old feudal order was collapsing and imperial power was becoming supreme, the Emperors turned for the administration of their dominions not to

the military, nor to the descendents of the feudal class but to the scholars and teachers, a class which from early times had enjoyed great prestige. These, once admitted into the government, organised themselves into a kind of corporation the members of which were recruited by examination in the literary classics : and the result was to make paramount in the state not wealth, nor birth nor military ability, nor courtliness but intellect, and more over the special type of intellect which is predominantly literary."

"The Chinese Civil Service", he adds, "attained an almost impregnable position in political and social life. At first it had, in parts of the country to compete with the old feudal type of administration; but presently this became extinct. Thence forward the mandarins held all the key offices. Fortified by the immense prestige of the Confucian culture of which they were themselves the most distinguished exponents, guided by ideas which were acceptable to the bulk of the Chinese people and which resulted in a system of government, humane, conservative, easy-going and enlightened, sustained by traditions and training which were the result of experience in public affairs, they held their position almost without challenge. Popular tumult, aspiration of a merchant class, the impatience of the military never availed to shake their authority. They survived even the Tartar and Manchu conquests for as the custodians of the machine of government they were no less useful or even indispensable to a barbarian emperor than to a Chinese born son of heaven."

That the Chinese state from the earliest time was a water-works state, basing itself both on the control of rivers and of irrigation may clearly be seen from *Shu King*. The traditions embodied in this classic which

deals with the history of China from B.C. 2355 to 719 of the same era are of exceptional interest to the historian. Yu the Great who controlled the inundations was for that reason made emperor. He partitioned the land, and following the mountains, felled the timber and fixed the borders of the high hills and great rivers. He is said to have directed the course of the Hang and Wei rivers and rendered the great plain workable. "The Nine Rivers having been directed in their course and the Luy Hia district having been inundated, the Yung and the Tseu were united." Many similar achievements of the Great Yu are recorded.

The system that Yu established persisted though after a time the country broke up into smaller kingdoms. From the Han Dynasty however we have the mandarinates, an elaborate system of civil services based on three principles: First, eligibility to office is determined by a public examination. The purpose of the examination is to test general intellectual ability through the knowledge of classics, literature, style of writing, facility to write to set forms. Secondly, there were two sets of examinations, one for the superior services and the other for inferior. Those securing admission to the senior division were entitled to look forward to the highest offices of the empire by promotion on the basis of their merits and achievements, though of course something depended also on the favour of superior officers and of the emperor. The third principle was of the Censorate, or a continuing supervision by a commission of three of the highest officials, men of known virtue and integrity, who travelled all over the country on their tours of inspection. Even *Shu King*, previously alluded to, speaks of the appointment of censors, by the Emperor Shun (2285 B.C.). The emperor is reported to have spoken as follows: "I am distressed by slanderous

words and pernicious acts which alarm and disturb my people. I therefore appoint you to the office of Censor."

These three principles deserve greater consideration as they form the bases of modern civil services. Recruitment by examination is now a generally accepted principle, but it was not accepted so easily in England when the proposal was first made by the Northcote-Trevelyan Committee as we shall have occasions to see later. The extraordinary prestige that the mandarin came to possess and the almost universal ambition of the Chinese youth to have his try at examinations had the result of over-emphasising education in Confucian classics as the study of classics alone opened the door to an official career. But it is equally clear that the examination system provided the Chinese Empire with a cadre of officials of unusual general ability for a period of nearly 2000 years who were able to secure a community of thought, ideals and practice which imprinted on the largest aggregation of population in the world a national unity which nothing has been able to break. The national unity of the Chinese people is the achievement of the mandarin, whose own unity of purpose and ideals was secured by a common system of ideological education.

A further point may be remembered about this system of recruitment by examination in classics. The underlying idea was that a man with a general humanistic education would be competent to deal with human problems better than those whose qualifications were technical: a doctrine whose wide ramifications we shall have to discuss when we come to our own times. An administrator's work, in the view of the Chinese, depends upon judgement, commonsense, knowledge of past practice and procedure. These it was thought were

ensured by a sound training of general intelligence. The Chinese carried this principle to its logical conclusion. It was seldom that they entrusted military campaigns to soldiers: they were generally conducted by high civil servants. Every sphere of the Government of the Empire was dominated by the mandarins.

The second principle which is also of wider significance was that services involving initiative, direction and policy making should be separate from the clerical services or the sphere of those whose business is to assist. A subordinate service, also recruited by a lower examination, was the broad base on which the higher mandarinat was erected. The separation of these two services, one dealing with the higher branches of executive and administrative work, for which generally speaking a higher degree of intelligence and training was necessary, enabled the mandarinat to operate as a single body, with an *esprit de corps*, which alone transforms a body of officials into a bureaucracy. The result was that even when violent political convulsions such as a foreign conquest took place, the mandarinat carried on, maintaining the administrative integrity of China and upholding its social and cultural traditions.

The third principle was that of the Censorate. The censors were an independent commission, recruited from the most senior members of the civil service, known for their integrity and fearlessness, who were given the task of exposing corruption, inefficiency and important errors of policy. They toured all over the empire, inspected provincial and local administrations and reported direct to the throne. The influence of this extraordinary system could not be over estimated. There are numerous cases in Chinese history of censors courageously memorialising the Emperors even against the actions of imperial favourites. The most famous among these is

a document submitted by the Censor Yang Lien in 1624 which is a formidable indictment in sixteen counts against the emperor's chief adviser, Wei Cheng-hsien. The censorate was, at all times, an object of dread to the corrupt and the inefficient and was responsible for the maintenance of the reasonably high administrative standards which distinguished the mandarinat during its unusually long existence.

Even when China faced the gravest crisis in its long history when it confronted an unfamiliar Europe armed with weapons she was not acquainted with and possessing an economic strength and military power, based on scientific and technical developments beyond anything that China had achieved, her mandarinat, though it failed through its conservatism to rise to the supreme task of reorganising the country, was able to throw up men of extraordinary talent who were able to hold their own with the ablest foreign statesmen and save what it was possible to save till a new mandarinat trained in another ideology and quoting other texts was able to rise up and meet the West on its own terms. The career of three great statesmen in the second half of the 19th century, the last giants of the mandarinat, when an enfeebled China had to deal with fundamental problems, both internal and external, arising from the aggression of the West would help us to realise the strength and weakness of the system. The three men on whom the duty of saving China fell were Tseng Kuo-fan, Tso Tseng-tang and Li Hung-chang, all men of ordinary families recruited normally to the service, who, as opportunities presented themselves, showed their quality and rose to the highest eminence.

Tseng Kuo-fan was an ordinary official who had gone home to Chengsha on leave when the Taiping rebels

reached that city. Though he was not on duty he immediately organised a local force to resist the rebels. This action of his brought him to the notice of the Imperial Government who entrusted him with the duty of raising an army and putting down the Taiping rebellion which after some initial difficulties he was able to do. Later, he was chosen for the most important Viceregal post, that of the great strategic northern province of Chihli and it was mainly because of his influence with the Empress that the relations with foreign governments were not allowed to deteriorate for a period of over twenty years. Though by tradition a conservative and a Confucian who believed in "propriety and rites", he recognised the necessity of industrialising the country and was responsible for the establishment of the iron works in Shanghai which later became the Kiangnan arsenal. Also it was due to his powerful support that the first group of Chinese students, a hundred in number, was sent to foreign countries for education.

The second personage whose career was no less remarkable was Tso Tseng-tang, who though a civilian official, became the most successful Chinese General in the 19th century. It was he who put down the Nieufei rebellion. A much greater military achievement was his reconquest and pacification of Sinkiang where a great Muslim rebellion with the support of foreign nations had thrown off the yoke of China. His method of warfare was primarily that of an administrator. He advanced by slow stages into enemy territory settling the area he occupied, re-establishing agriculture, building up granaries, etc. The fact that Sinkiang is now an integral part of China in spite of the efforts of both Britain and Czarist Russia to detach it and make it an independent Muslim state in Central Asia, is due to the

wisdom, statesmanship and military skill of this mandarin.

Of the most famous of this trio, Li Hung-chang, much need not be said. From 1870 to 1901, he was the dominant figure in the diplomatic and official stage of China. He also came first to notice by his independent and patriotic action in organising resistance to the Taipings. On receiving information of this, Tseng Kuo-fan took him under his protection. From that time to the negotiations in regard to the Boxer Protocol he was the leading statesman on the Chinese side who through three decades of tortuous diplomacy, saved China from being carved up by the imperialist powers.

If the mandarinatate called up unsuspected strength and initiative and was able to serve patriotically under the most difficult conditions, it should also be remembered, that like all bureaucracy it was essentially conservative and generally incapable of adjusting itself to radically changed situations. While the Japanese nobility was able to grasp quickly the true significance of the changes that were taking place and therefore set themselves to the task of organising the nation, the mandarins, in the pride of their Confucian knowledge, failed to take account of barbarian strength and foreign knowledge. For them, no wisdom existed outside China. The confidence of the bureaucracy in its own traditions stood in the way of their absorbing new ideas.

Another weakness of the Chinese system, based on the theory that classical studies give one wisdom and judgement and those were the essential qualities for an administrator, was their contempt for industrial, commercial and financial affairs. The official Chinese attitude to commerce was that it was no concern of the state, whose duty was only to inculcate righteousness and proprieties. Commerce was the business of the

lesser breed. Industry and finance were equally no concern of the state. This attitude stood in the way of a proper adjustment of China's relations with the West in the 19th century.

In spite of these weaknesses and a spirit of unbending resistance to all changes which it considered to be against the traditional civilisation of China, the mandarin state shows up well as the supreme example of a bureaucracy administering an empire and maintaining its unity and integrity for over 2000 years.

Now we might cast a glance at the imperial bureaucracy that Rome developed. During the days of Rome's growth as a military empire, its civil offices were shared out among the senators, and there was no organised civil service. It was Julius Caesar who conceived the idea of a proper administrative machinery though it was Augustus his successor, who had the opportunity to develop his ideas. The new Roman civil services owed much to the theory and practice of administration in Egypt and Rome may therefore be said to have inherited and continued the bureaucratic traditions of the Pharaohs.

Roman bureaucracy in its palmy days was a four tiered system: the highest involving the administration of great provinces, etc., was still confined to the senatorial families and was recruited on the basis of rank and property. It was generally a supervisory career, involving civil, military and judicial posts. The second grade or the equestrian service was more like a modern civil service, with grades, promotions, etc. Here also, a property and rank qualification, the right to own a horse, was insisted upon. The other two were lower grades including junior administrative and clerical posts in what may be called the subordinate service.

The Roman civil service took its final shape during the reign of Diocletian. A single imperial administrative service was created. The Praefects, originally a high military rank, were in the time of Constantine charged with supreme civil authority under the Emperor. They were styled "illustrious", below them ranked a class of officials styled "respectable", and the third category had the appellation of "honourable". The whole empire was divided into 167 provinces, governed by officers of different grades. As Gibbon says: "The appellations of these magistrates were different; they ranked in successive order; the ensigns of their dignity were curiously varied. But they were all, excepting Pro-Consuls (who were only 3) of the class of honourable persons. They were alike instructed, during the pleasure of the prince, and under the authority of Praefects or their deputies with the administration of justice and the finances of their districts".

Originally under Augustus it was freed men mostly that provided the direct service of the Emperor, but with Vespasian begins the policy of recruiting into the services men from all over the empire. In the later period of the Empire, the Roman civil services thus became truly international in character.

We may before concluding this survey of the growth of civil services in earlier periods take a glance at developments in India. When Indian administration comes into the light of authentic history, it is as a fully organised bureaucracy that we see it. We are fortunate enough to possess a detailed record of the administrative system of the Mauryan age. The very headings of chapters in Book II of Kautalya's *Artha Sastra* would give an idea of the range and scope of official activity. Following are some of the activities to which I would specially

draw attention: the business of collection of revenue by the collector-general, the business of keeping up of accounts in the office of the accountants; the detection of what is embezzled by government servants out of state revenue: examination of the conduct of government servants, the superintendent of store house; the superintendent of commerce; the superintendent of forest produce, the superintendents of weights and measures; superintendent of tolls; the superintendent of weaving; the superintendent of agriculture; the superintendent of ships, the superintendent of cattle, etc.

The mere enumeration of functions would be sufficient to show what an army of officers was required to man the Mauryan state. The Mauryan state, and following its tradition all the imperial states in India, built up administrative systems which covered the entire economic life of the people—a system which necessitates a regular bureaucracy trained in both general and specialised functions. The state in India at all times was non-feudal, that is, with authority to collect land and other taxes directly from the people. As land administration was the basis of the state and recurrent famines required storage of grain and uncertain monsoons rendered irrigation absolutely necessary the Indian state developed what a distinguished historical thinker, Prof. K. V. Rangaswamy Aiyangar, has termed a cameralist system, in which the king with the assistance of trained personnel carried out a systematic programme of economic and social welfare.

The weakness of the system was that it evolved no satisfactory method of recruitment to offices, with an interest in the continuity of the state. All that Kautilya says in respect of recruitment is that "those who are

possessed of the qualifications necessary for high office should, in accordance with their individual capacity, be appointed as heads of government departments". It is also worthy of notice that he emphasises that "without the knowledge of their master they (the officers) shall undertake nothing except remedial measures against imminent dangers".

The absence of a system converting this army of officials into a graded corps, a bureaucracy, led to disastrous results, for whenever an empire fell, the civil services disintegrated except at the lowest level of village revenue administration. This is the opposite of what happened in China for whatever calamity fell on the dynasty, the mandarinat carried on and upheld the unity of China. In India every time, a dynasty was overturned, the country broke up into bits, and therefore no imperial civil service tradition developed at any time. Every empire had to build up its administrative services. This was possible because the tradition of local authority, dealing with land, irrigation, tolls, etc., was permanent in India, as against an imperial authority which was always imposed from the top. On the basis of local authority the higher structure could be built up whenever the imperial idea was revived.

Apart from the epigraphic records about the system of officials, for example the mention in the Damodarpur plates of an uparika or governor named Arata Datta, and the discovery of the seals of officials like police chiefs, controller of stores, etc., we have considerable literary evidence which establishes beyond doubt the continuance of the bureaucratic tradition in the dispersed courts of India. Kshemendra in his *Narmamala* and *Desopadesa* has left us a description of the state of a local officialdom which is specially interesting. This

is particularly valuable as from other sources we have but little information about the structure of government. In the *Narmamala* which is a satire on officialdom we see that the lowest rung of the official ladder was the village *divira* (or what is known now as Patwari). *Asthana diviras* or clerks of the court are also described. Next higher than the *divira* was the *niyogi* whose function was to supervise a district, check the accounts and generally see to the administration. The *niyogi*'s tours in the districts with their attendant troubles for the villagers are carefully described and it is of significance as showing that the system of tours was a regular feature of government from the earliest times. Above the district officers were *paripalakas* or governors who were assisted by superintendents of finances. The *paripalakas* were very important officers with extensive powers. They had control over the entire administration of the provinces. A governor's chief assistant was *lekhakopadhyaya* who was in charge of all government records, and responsible for the issue of all orders. The *gana diviras* or superintendents of finance were also provincial officers. The summit of the official structure was of course the ministry and the central secretariat.

The detailed description by one who was himself descended from Nagindra, the prime minister of Kashmir, and was in his life time (A.D. 990-1065) associated with the highest in the land is of particular value as clearly proving the existence of a regular bureaucracy, a hierarchy of officials in which promotion was according to ability. Kshemendra in fact describes mainly the methods by which the officials rose to high dignities. The existence of an official hierarchy is corroborated from other sources also. The Vishnu Dharmasastra in defining a public document says that it should be written in a public office by a Kayastha (a

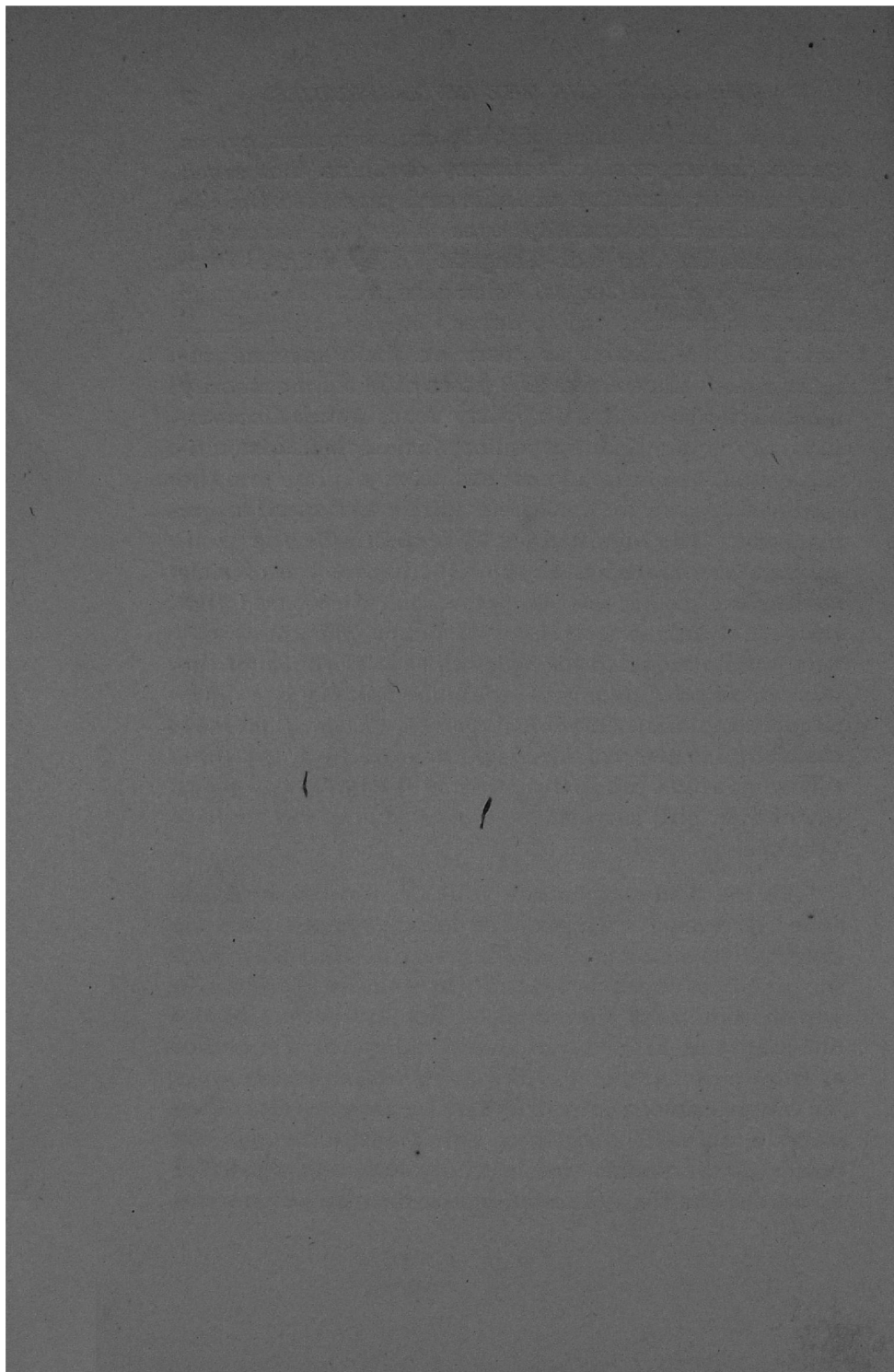
clerical official) and attested by the superintendent of the office.

The generic term used for officials was Kayastha, and up to the eleventh century the Kayasthas were an official class though in the works of Kshemendra and in *Rajatarangini* the word is used as signifying officialdom: for example, in *Rajatarangini* the Brahmin Sivaratha is described as a Kayastha. In numerous inscriptions dating from the middle of the eighth century we have mention of Kayasthas as officials.

The official classes were mainly recruited from among the Brahmins and certain castes included among the Sudras who had a tradition of education. The educated castes among the Sudras assumed naturally a higher social status especially in areas where Buddhist ideas were widely prevalent and the upward movement was clearly marked in the numerous castes outside the first three Varnas who had achieved high social position. They formed in fact the basis of all officialdom in India at least from the time of the Mauryas.

A bureaucracy with so long-established a tradition was bound to create its own forms and formulae, especially in a country where literary precision was so highly esteemed as in India. We know from the Hathigumpha inscription of the first century B.C. that Kharavela underwent a training in the drafting of documents. We have in fact a *lekhapadhati* or standard forms of writing of official documents in Sanskrit which has come down to us and which show us the elaborate nature of the forms in use by the bureaucrats of ancient India. The *lekhapadhati* of the Gujerat kings gives us fifty-four different forms in use; and the abstract of *Sukra Nīti*, a late work on politics, contains what may be described a secretariat manual.

It is the existence of this local bureaucracy, as against the imperial bureaucracy of China that saved the economic structure of India and preserved the life of the Hindu community even after the successive cataclysms that the Indo-Gangetic Valley suffered from the invasion of the Central Asian Muslims. The Muslim kings in their turn had to depend on the lower official classes of the Hindus to carry on their revenue administration. Even after 450 years of Muslim authority in Delhi and the Gangetic Valley, Aurangzeb discovered to his surprise that the junior officialdom in his territories continued to be almost exclusively Hindu and the routine administration of the empire was dependent on this extensive bureaucracy. Logical to the last, Aurangzeb ordered the replacement of these officials by the Muslims but the emperor soon discovered that without trained personnel such a policy was not practicable and he modified his order so as to permit half the Peshkars to be Hindus and Hindu Quanungos were also encouraged to become Muslims. It is on this long established system coming down at least from the time of Kautalya that the British erected the imposing structure of their civil service.



LECTURE II

THE GROWTH OF CIVIL SERVICES IN EUROPE AND MODERN INDIA

The state as we know it today was a late evolution in Europe. Consequently, bureaucracy as an organ of administration made its appearance as a major political fact only in comparatively recent times and became the subject of serious political thinking only in the 20th century. As Villari, the great Italian historian, has remarked: "The Middle Ages were ignorant of the political organism known to us as the state, which unites and coordinates social forces according to precise rules. Instead, society was then divided into Fiefs and Sub-fiefs, into great and little communes, and the commune was merely an aggregate of minor associations badly bound together. Above the vast and disordered mass stood the Papacy and the Empire, which also increasing the general confusion by their frequent wars against each other, still gave some rough unity to the civilised (European) world."

In the feudal kingdoms, which in time evolved into states, sovereignty was dispersed and in many cases the king had less power than the great nobles. In Spain the grandees openly boasted that except perhaps in wealth they were the equals if not the betters of the monarch. In France, the great feudatories, the Dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, Brittany and Aquitaine were for centuries more powerful than the king to whom they owed a nominal allegiance. In England though the power of the nobles was certainly less, and masterful monarchs like Henry II attempted to develop a monarchi-

cal administration, their efforts were only partially successful, as the Magna Carta, now claimed as the charter of people's liberties, itself witnesses. The Magna Carta was a charter of the rights of the nobles against the king and how in course of centuries it became through a process of mythology, legal construction and internal political changes, the palladium of popular rights is one of the ironies of history, though a major political fact in the constitutional evolution of Europe. In England the encroachments of royal power through a household civil service was first met by the revolt of the nobles leading to continuous periods of anarchy and later by the organisation of Parliament which one cannot too strongly emphasise, was in its origin a consolidation of the power of the nobles against the king. Even the House of Commons was no more than an assembly of the minor barons, the knights of the shire and the city burgesses and it is only much later that it even claimed to represent the people. It is well to remember that representation in the House of Commons of those who were not in possession of freeholds was introduced only in 1832.

The organisation of Parliament prevented the growth of an administrative system. The king in England was sustained by the revenues of his own domains and therefore revenue administration, from which national civil services originate, was not a part of the English political system to any great extent till the 19th century. Such officers as the king appointed to carry on his work belonged nominally to his household and were his personal appointments paid for from his funds. So late as under the first Stuarts this was the case as the instance of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who exercised the greatest power in the state in his time but was only a favourite raised to his

eminence by the whim of the monarch, would prove. The local administration was by the landed gentry—the squires—and the problem of a civil service did not exist, or come to the forefront till the 19th century.

The position in France was slightly different as a result of the greater weakness of the French monarchy in the feudal days. Originally the actual authority of the French monarchy, aside from its pretensions and claims, was limited to the Isle de France, a small area around Paris. The rest of France was under feudal princes, some of them of greater power than the king himself. What enabled the monarchy to gain against the nobles was not a more effective administrative machinery but the growth of a new class of lawyers. The rise to greatness of the University of Paris led to the creation of a class of people, who deriving their inspiration from Roman jurisprudence developed an arsenal of autocratic maxims, which enabled the monarchy slowly to increase its authority over the nobles. "The great jurists of Bologna," says H. A. L. Fisher, "did not scruple to apply to the office of the Holy Roman Emperor, the high prerogatives which the lawyers of a long past age had ascribed to Diocletian or Constantine."¹ Their confrères of Paris claimed for the French king within his own territory the same rights as the Emperor. The University of Paris provided the arguments and became the champion of kingly authority against both the nobles and the church. From a broad social and political point of view, says Canon Rashdall, one of the most important results of the University was the creation or at least the enormously increased power of the lawyer class.

It is on this lawyer class that the French monarchy depended for its instruments of administration. They

1. H. A. L. Fisher : *A History of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 246.

formed the cadres of professional men and when Philippe Augustus created the office of Seneschal he took the first effective step to break down the power of the nobility and laid the first stone in the imposing structure of the French monarchy. It is the body of lawyers that provided the king with his theories, a very potent weapon in medieval times. It is significant to note that when Boniface VIII attempted to interfere with the French king, Philip le Bel did not hesitate to order the lawyer Nogaret to arrest the Pope himself in the name of his king.

But the growth of monarchical instruments, whether lawyers, or household officers, did not mean the creation of a bureaucracy. They were merely the agents of the king for aggrandising his power, and the nobility in France and the Parliament in England resisted vigorously these attempts to establish the theory of a state. The relations of these officers to the king were those of servants to their master. Whether he was a high official like Cromwell or Walsingham under the Tudors or a man of mean origin like Olivier de Diable under Louis XI he was no more than the personal servant of the monarch. The idea of service to the state could not arise when the conception of the state as representing the entire people was contrary to the idea of estates, each of which claimed rights against the other.

The Tudor monarchy in England was the first expression of the nation-state in Europe, but though under Elizabeth it might be said to have represented the nation, the idea of direct administration was abhorrent to a people whose structure was dominantly aristocratic and whose government, such as it was, was based on the local authority of the squires. In France, however, once the power of the great nobles was destroyed by Richilieu and the *fronde*, the monarchy emerged as the unchal-

lenged power. Louis XIV in claiming to be the state was enunciating a truly dynamic theory and emphasizing that the old rivalry of powers had ceased to be operative, that monarchy which was the constructive power in France had triumphed over the divisive principles of the Three Estates. In a sense the French State had also become an administrative machine—a revolution which is associated with Colbert. Colbertism is the first expression of the administering state in Europe. As Mr. Jusserand has pointed out: "No one (he means in Europe) before Colbert had so clear an idea of the importance of navy, commerce, the colonies, of sound finance, of the improvement of communications by roads, rivers and canals." He was the first great administrator, one who conceived the state as being based on a machinery of administration.

But in spite of the emergence of this idea, the social and political structure of France did not permit the growth of a national civil service. Though France was united under a national monarchy, strong and unchallenged, the strength of its regionalism was such that Toulouse, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Dijon and other places were minor capitals with Parliaments of their own and possessing strong local loyalties. A national civil service therefore could not be established for over another century. It was only by the decrees of the year VIII of the Revolution that a functioning civil service came into existence in France.

Also the great offices were still recruited by patronage or purchase. Readers of Dumas will remember how in order to get rid of the domineering Minister of Finance, Foquet, some of his more important offices had to be acquired by purchase from him. This system of purchase was universal in Europe, as the fashion in this

connection was set by medieval papacy. In Portugal under the king's orders all important appointments were put up for auction and sold to the highest bidder. The authorities in Lisbon went even beyond this. They developed a procedure of sending out orphan girls with patents of appointments as dowry. In one case, a young lady brought out with her to India the king's order of appointment to the captaincy of Cranganore to any one who would marry her. Matters went so far that the Viceroy had to represent that this procedure would lessen the revenue which the state received by auctioning the appointments and in accordance with his representation a law was made whereby offices given as dowry were valid only for three years.

In England the growth of parliamentary sovereignty and its ineradicable suspicion of royal power operated decisively against the growth of a civil service in the 18th century. The British had an unshakeable belief in amateur government, of county magistrates, jurors, of Prime Ministers who read their game keeper's reports in preference to files and dispatches. The growth of a body of administrative officers, with the tradition of their being the servants of the monarch was therefore zealously resisted by Parliament. Consequently no great honour was attached to paid office, most of which was openly sold and purchased while the more important ones with large emoluments were held by great noble men and carried out by deputies. The Marquis of Rockingham, whom Edmund Burke, the inveterate reformer, claimed as his leader, for example, was a Teller of the Exchequer at the age of 10. The office, which was managed by a deputy was worth £ 20,000 a year. Burke himself described one of the major departments of the time, the Board of Trade and Plantations "as a sort of temperate bed of influence, a sort of gently ripen-

ing hot house, where eight members of Parliament receive salaries of 1000 pounds a year for a certain given time, for doing little, in order to mature at a proper season a claim for two thousand for doing less."

Departments of this nature of course existed, for Britain as a growing empire had to administer, if not her home counties, at least her colonies overseas. But the state of discipline prevalent in these offices may be judged from a remarkable order issued in 1808 by the Comptroller of Stamps. The comptroller begins by remarking that "general irregularity has existed in that part of the comptroller's department, where the day business is transacted; riotous and disorderly acts having occurred." He also noted that many "clerks felt themselves at perfect liberty to amuse themselves, either by singing, fencing, rioting or any other way most agreeable to themselves." and he firmly concluded that "disputations upon politics and various other subjects which the clerks have indulged in will not be tolerated."

This was the state of the rudimentary administrative services that existed in Britain in the first decade of the 19th century. But the time was ripening for a change. The experience of administrative services slowly being developed in India by the East India Company was a major factor in bringing about this change. Another influence was the development of a trained civil service in the German states, and the bureaucracy which France had created by the decrees of the year VIII and later perfected by Napoleon.

The disastrous Thirty Years War had left the home land of the Germans in a state of unbelievable ruin and misery. After the Treaty of Westphalia the most urgent public duty was to salvage whatever could be salvaged from this ruin so that a new life could be built up and

the German people could rise again. In the territories of the Princes and Electors, efficient administration thus became the first necessity. As these states did not have to contend with a parliamentary authority it was easy for the Electors and Dukes to develop a system based on monarchical power, known to German thinkers as *cameralism*. Universities had special chairs and course of studies. Albion Small in his notable work has pointed out the importance of the Cameralist doctrine in the universities in the development of the German state. The courses in cameralist studies included economics, politics and candidates who had passed these examinations were favoured for higher appointments to state service. Cameralist thinkers, notably Justi with Maria Theresa and Zincke with Frederick the Great, had great influence in developing an administrative system, which in the case of the ramshackle empire of the Hapsburgs saved it for a hundred and fifty years, and in the case of Prussia contributed to a large extent to its growth as a first class power. The bureaucratic character of the Prussian state even under the Grand Elector is well brought out by Herman Finer in his book on *Modern Governments*. "The Grand Elector" he says "considered the Privy Council and himself as the unifying and supreme authority over all affairs of state. The character of the Privy Council had changed from that of an advisory to an executive organ. Some of the chiefs of the various departments were appointed members of the Privy Council so that they brought special knowledge to bear upon the discussions and further knew exactly how far their department was called upon to execute the decisions. There was a continuous process of accumulation of business in the hands of the state and a continual creation of special organs to deal with it." This process continued unhampered that "at the end of Fre-

derick the Great's reign the charge of 'bureaucracy' begins, not to end in our own day." It should be emphasised that it was the absence of parliamentary government on the one hand as in England, and of regional authority as in the case of France that enabled the German states to develop into monarchical bureaucracies.

The influence of the Indian experiment on the rise of the British Civil Service was much more direct. After the disastrous failure of the East India Company's commercial machinery in the sphere of administration in the time of Clive, a succession of governors-general, Hastings, Cornwallis and Wellesley, reorganised the services of the East India Company and filled them with young men directly recruited for the purpose from England. The outstanding success of men like Munroe, Elphinstone, Metcalfe, Malcolm and others of their calibre, sent out to India by the Scottish clannishness of Dundas and other dignitaries attached to the Court of Directors could not have been lost on England. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that the demand for a proper organisation of the civil services found its champions among personalities with Indian experience. It is Macaulay and his brother-in-law, C. E. Trevelyan, who could claim to be the fathers of the civil services in England. Macaulay's report addressed to Sir Charles Wood, then Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East India Company emphasised the desirability of recruiting candidates for service in India by examination and that "a considerable number of the civil servants of the company should have taken the first degree in arts at Oxford or Cambridge." It is also significant that in the list of subjects proposed for examination, emphasis was placed on English language and literature, composition, history, moral sciences and classics. The parallel with the Chi-

nese system with its emphasis on classics and composition is obvious. The second doctrine that was dear to Macaulay's heart was that what was required for administration was general intellectual competence, based on a classical education rather than specialised knowledge—also one of the basic conceptions of the Chinese system, with which Macaulay was thoroughly familiar.

It was Macaulay's brother-in-law Trevelyan, who along with Northcote produced the "Report on the organisation of the Permanent Civil Service" for submission to Parliament. This was a very short document of no more than twenty pages, but it was in its contents revolutionary. The assumptions on which the report was based were strange to British political practice. The necessity to base the administration on a trained and efficient civil service was frankly accepted: in a parliamentary government which had for centuries proceeded on the basis that executive officers were King's servants and therefore were to be looked upon with suspicion this was indeed revolutionary. The proposals for recruitment were no less radical. They wanted recruitment by competitive examination as Macaulay had recommended in regard to the service of the East India Company. This was a shocking suggestion in the eyes of parliamentary dignitaries for, was it not obvious that whatever might be the kind of officers required to rule over "natives" in far away lands, Englishmen and especially younger sons of good families surely should not be made to sit for examinations in order to assist in the government of the country which their elders were doing through Parliament without having passed any examinations. The thing was not to be thought of, especially as it would affect patronage. The Report itself had noted with regret that there was rush for employment in the services, but it was sought after mainly by "the unambi-

tious or the indolent or the incapable", who desired to get in through patronage.

The Northcote-Trevelyan report also recommended two sets of examinations, one for the superior posts and the other for the lower ranks. For the superior posts the examination was to be on a level with the highest description of education in the country. As subjects besides "the staple of classics and mathematics", the report recommended history, jurisprudence and other modern subjects. The authors had their eyes clearly fixed like Macaulay on the recruitment of young men from the Public Schools of England and from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge for posts involving intellectual labour.

Though the report was moderately worded and cautious, it did not meet with immediate acceptance as it touched the rights of parliamentary patronage and the prospects of indolent and incapable younger sons of the gentry. The first Civil Service Commission that was appointed following the scandals of the Crimean War had only the function of deciding on the suitability of candidates "recommended by persons of political influence": i.e. nominated as a result of family connections and patronage. It was only after another fifteen years that Gladstone, having decided on the introduction of income-tax, felt the necessity of a different type of administration and by the famous Order in Council in 1870 established the competitive examination system for admission to the civil services. Since then the citadels of patronage, first the Home Office and then the Foreign Office, slowly yielded to the two principles for which Macaulay and Trevelyan had fought, open competition for recruitment and general competence and judgment rather than specialised knowledge as qualifications—both derived from the Chinese system—

triumphed in England, as they had already triumphed in India.²

The phenomenal growth of the civil service since then has been due to the growth of the functions of the state in England. Today if there are over 7,00,000 civil servants—in the wider sense of the term—with a salary bill over £ 245 millions, it is due to the fact which Mr. Attlee emphasised in the House of Commons in 1947 that “with the support of the nation the state has shouldered many new duties in our social and economic affairs. Critics often ignore the fact that the size of the service depends more than anything else on the jobs it is told to do.” To take only a few examples: the change over from free trade to protection involved an immense increase in the customs staff, both administrative and preventive, and the scheme of national insurance meant the creation of a new service both administrative and technical for its enforcement and so on.

A further point may be alluded to here. One of the most notable changes of opinion in England is the esteem in which the higher civil services are held. As we noticed earlier, the temper of Parliament towards administrative officers was suspicious, as they were the arm of the executive, but two factors contributed to the growth of this feeling of public esteem. The first is that the administering state which came into existence, imperceptibly at first, but more obviously after the first great war, depended for its success on a trained and efficient civil service which could advise the political chiefs

2. “As late as 1875 an article in the *Fortnightly Review* attacked the procedure of civil service examinations as ‘an adopted Chinese culture’”.

H. G. Creel: *Chinese Thought*, p. 22.

Teng Ssu-yu: *Chinese Influence on the Western Examination System*, p. 304-5.

in formulating from vague ideas effective policies and carry them out loyally. The top level civil servants became in practice more and more the associates rather than the executive instruments of the political leaders. Many of you would remember the witty conversation between the President, Mr. Burge Lubin, and the Chief Secretary, Mr. Confucius, in Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* where the dramatist draws the picture of the civil service carrying on the administration under a thin cover of political leadership. That is no doubt an exaggeration, but it undoubtedly represents a very important trend.

The second factor is that the superior civil services mostly come from the classes which have maintained their intellectual and social ascendancy in England, in spite of the rise of labour as a major political force. Most of the members of the service in the higher categories come from Oxford and Cambridge. As Prof. Laski has emphasised "an analysis of the social composition of the administrative class will show, further, that its members come mostly from parents whose range of income permits them to send their sons to the great public schools." "Those who govern" adds Laski "belong effectively to the same class that rules the House of Commons. Largely they go to the same schools and universities; after admission to the service they belong to the same clubs."³ Thus between the political leaders and the civil services there is no social, political or intellectual gap. Even in regard to the Labour Party this is largely true for a very considerable section of Labour Parliamentarians are drawn from these classes.

Lastly I come to the development of the civil services during the time of British authority in India, a

3. H. J. Laski: *Parliamentary Government for England*, pp. 315-316.

remarkable phenomenon which, as noticed before, had a great influence on the growth of administrative services in England itself. The East India Company was naturally not organised for the purpose of administering a territorial area. It had its clerks, writers, factors, merchants and other employees whose business was trade. Writerships were bought and sold. In 1772 a writership was sold for 3000 pounds. In 1783 a newspaper according to O'Malley carried an advertisement offering 1000 guineas for a writer's place in Bengal! When the Company took over the Diwani of Bengal, it was not interested in administering the country which it hoped to do through the Moghul Viceroy of Bengal, but in making profits. But a new system was slowly evolved during the period of Cornwallis and Wellesley. Direct appointments took the place of purchase of posts. Cornwallis' appointment was greeted by Dundas as that of one who had no broken fortune to mend "no beggarly, mushroom kindred to be provided for, no crew of hungry followers gaping to be gorged." Appointments meant patronage and Henry Dundas who occupied the position of President of the Board of Control for eight years from 1793 to 1801 filled the service of the Company with the younger sons of Scottish nobility, the Malcolms, the Kirkpatrickes and others who became in the next generation empire builders in India. Direct appointments of the kind did not give any consideration to qualification: and it was Wellesley who realised that the functions of the Company had changed and that the young recruits, however well connected, required some education. Wellesley decided to establish a college in Calcutta "for the purpose of enabling the servants of the Company to perfect themselves in those acquirements, which form the necessary qualifications for the different lines of service in which they may choose to engage. It is our in-

tention that the junior servants shall be attached to this institution for a certain period after their arrival."

Education, it would be noted, was to be after selection, so that there might be no interference with patronage!

The College of Fort William was a remarkable institution and had many notable men on its staff. A more interesting experiment however was that of Haileybury College which was set up in 1806 "to provide a supply of persons duly qualified to discharge the various and important duties required from the civil servants of the Company in administering the Government of India. Students were admitted at the age of 15 and remained in college till 18. Appointments to the Civil services were reserved for those educated at Haileybury from 1813 when an act of Parliament prohibited any person from being nominated, appointed or sent out to India as a writer unless he has had four terms in the college." In 1833 the principle of competition was first introduced by a clause which provided that for every vacancy in the college "at least four candidates should be nominated and the best of them selected through examination." The idea seems to have originated with Macaulay.

Though much of this reform was due to the desire of Parliament to attack the patronage that the Directors of the East India Company enjoyed — one director having obtained appointments in the Company for most of his 19 children — the acceptance of the principle of competition even in this limited degree was a far reaching reform which in due course came to be the rule in regard to recruitment to the civil services both in Britain and in India.

In 1853, again under Macaulay's initiative, the system of competitive examination was made the basis

of appointments to the civil service. "It is undoubtedly desirable", said his celebrated report, "that the civil servant of the Company should enter on his duties, while still young: but it is also desirable that he should have received the best, the most liberal the most finished education that his native country affords. Such an education has been proved by experience to be the best preparation for every calling which requires the exercise of the higher powers of the mind." That a liberal education is the best preparation for every calling — the old philosophy of the Chinese mandarin — was the firm faith of Macaulay.

It is the Macaulayan system that built up the imposing fabric of the Indian Civil Service which has lasted to our day. As we are concerned mainly with its methods, traditions, strength and limitations, a more detailed analysis of it is necessary for our purpose. The young civilian on arrival in India was posted to the headquarters of a district to learn work under the supervision of a collector. There he was instructed not only in revenue and magisterial work, but also into the mysteries of "ruling the native". He was absorbed into a system which while emphasising the necessity of being *ma-bap* to the peasant and the duty to look after his welfare, never for a moment allowed him to forget that he was a member of the imperial race administering law to the lesser breed. The essential feeling of the civil services in India was its separation from the people. It was a machine which received but little stimulus from outside and lived in a world of its own.

Two characteristics differentiated it from all other civil services. First, in the absence of a parliamentary or popular government, the civil service in India was the government. Apart from the Viceroy (with the exception of Sir John Lawrence) and the Governors of

the three presidencies, Madras, Bombay and Bengal, all the senior executive offices of government were held by the civil servants. The magistracy and the judiciary, including a percentage of Judgeships in the High Courts were filled by them. The members of the Viceroy's Cabinet except the Commander-in-Chief and the Law Member were members of the civil service. Thus the civil service in India not only administered but governed the country: subject to the control of Parliament in England and the Secretary of State, they were the authors of the policies which they themselves executed. Nothing was considered to be beyond their competence or capacity. It is the one instance in history of a civil service constituting itself into a permanent governing corporation.

Its second characteristic was its racialism. Till the beginning of the 20th century there were but few Indians in the service. It was practically an all-white service. The few Indians who by competition gained entry into the ranks were moulded into its shape and till after the Minto-Morley Reforms did not attain positions of authority. The idea was of course of ruling the natives for their good. Sir Bartle Frere writing to Lord Goderich insisted that "it was of more consequence to the Natives that he (the British civil servant) should be good on the cricket field, and on horse back, popular with the servants and the poor, and the champion of the bullied fags" than that he should be intellectually superior. In fact intellect was at a discount.

The civil services which governed India from 1854 to 1921 and with some political dilution till 1947 had no particular pretensions to intellectual superiority. Barring a few exceptions like Sir Alfred Lyall, they were men of ordinary intelligence, with a good educa-

tion, and a background generally speaking of integrity and fair dealing. What made the I.C.S. a singular institution—a great and unexampled political phenomenon—was its sense of mission. The juniormost British member of the service felt that he was carrying the burden of empire: that the administration of a great country was entrusted to him and others like him by the people of England and that it was his duty to pass on the heritage. As a result, the civil servant, from the first; was trained to think that he was under “obligation to do nothing that reflect dishonour on the service”, to do everything to maintain the prestige of his country: to be vigilant where the native was concerned, and while looking after his interests to see that he kept his place. It is unnecessary to add that the Indian members of the service could not genuinely share in this tradition, though many of them in their way tried to outdo the sahibs and remain aloof from the Indians.

The system worked so long as administration was personal and the civil servants could legitimately feel that they were the government. But when with dyarchy a new principle was introduced into the government of India, that of popular representation, the ideology of the I.C.S. began to be undermined. That ideology was based on an imperial conception. Representative government even in the form of dyarchy challenged the idea of governing the native for his good. A contradiction entered the ideas of the civil service which weakened its morale and undermined its ideology. It had not the same faith in itself as the idea of governing the native for his good had to be discarded. I would venture in this connection to quote what I wrote so long ago as 1918 when I was an undergraduate at Oxford in a book entitled *Indian Nationalism* :

"Under the changed conditions of Indian political life, it was more than good officials that India required. Administration is a part of government and everywhere government is essentially political. But politics in India of the 20th century differed essentially from the politics of the 19th. . . . Then political government meant only efficient administration, with as little interference in the social life of the people as possible. Now it involves an appreciation of collective thoughts, social forces, political energies, and not these alone but also of vague moods and unvocal feelings which are always facts for politics and may at any time become facts in politics. In short the old world distinction between things political and things administrative was getting gradually obliterated. The mere executive efficiency which the Indian civil service has developed to an astonishing degree, was not of a character which could rise to that higher political efficiency which develops an understanding of complex social tendencies and gives insight into the things that agitate the human mind."

The result was a gradual deterioration in the quality of the services, an attitude of sullen hostility to changes in India, a desire to emphasise financial and other claims leading to the astonishing proposals of the Lee Commission, branded in India as the Lee loot, an estrangement between the people of India and the services. With the weakening of their idealism—that of carrying on the burden of empire—came a feeling of frustration and discontent. Though Mr. Lloyd George might flamboyantly assure them that "there is an institution which we will not interfere with, there is one institution which we will not cripple, there is one institution we will not deprive of its functions or its privileges, and that is the British Civil Services in India", he

could not stem the tide. Those were brave words, but the services knew better, and realised that the conditions had changed.

The last days of British Civil Services in India may best be described in the words of a sympathetic English writer. Mr. Guy Wint in his *The British in Asia* describes the situation as follows :—

“The last years of the British Raj, once the most solid and beneficial political structure in Asia, have been inglorious. A group of perplexed English civil servants have carried on an administration amid the jeers of the country, under a hatred of which, mercifully, they were only partly aware, and in the humiliating shadow of the revival throughout the land of famine, to eliminate which had been one of the claims of British rule, while they sought again and again, and in vain, for the ways in which they could transfer power to the rival communal parties without those parties at once engaging in hostilities among themselves and bringing down to ruin the work of a century. In the demoralising atmosphere, corruption in the services, from which the British regime at its higher levels had been almost uncannily free, began to be accepted once again as the normal state. A new feature was the influx of correspondents of the Press, especially the American Press, who have doubted the intention of the administration so persistently that the civil servants may perhaps be forgiven for a certain dislike on their side for those who

Hawk for news

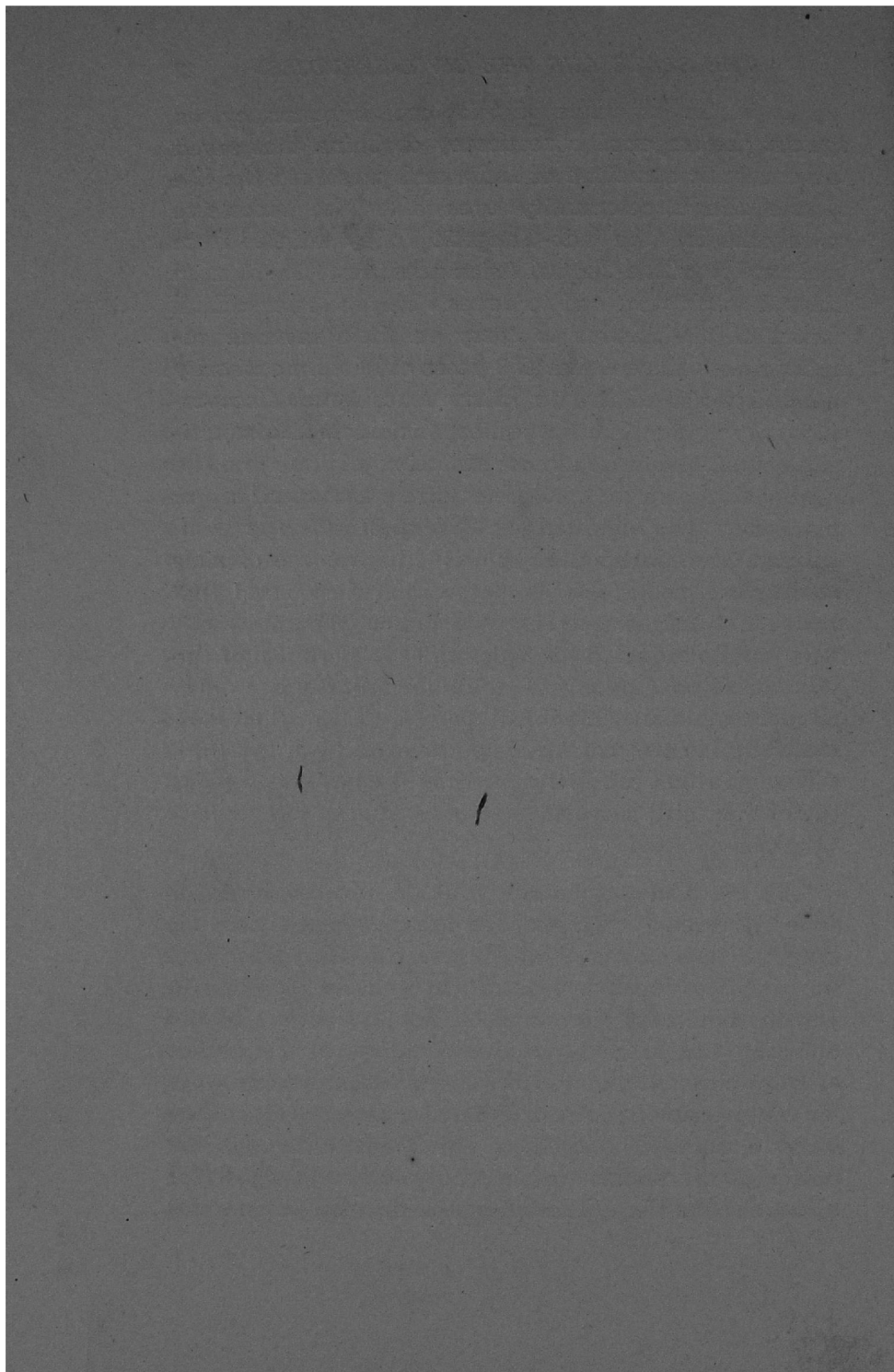
Whatever their loose phantasy invent

And murmur it with hated breath as though

The abounding gutter had been Helicon

Or calumny a song.

There was too, an inevitable incomprehension by the civil servant of the motives which necessarily guide the party politician and which so often make his actions distasteful to those who in the security of permanent office can afford a tender conscience. It is to be hoped that there has been in Delhi during these years a gifted diarist able to record for posterity the talk and emotions of the Indians who amid the tinkle of tea-cups and swish of sarees, amid diffused distrust and indiscriminate suspicion, amid the new-found pleasures of scattering wealth in a riot of clubs and parties, have furthered the great handing-over of responsibility."



LECTURE III

THE PROBLEMS OF THE SERVICES TODAY

In August 1947, at the time of India's independence, one of the major problems that faced the country was the relation of the civil services with the new state. Apart from the character of the services, their traditions and the difficulties of their internal organisation as a result both of British withdrawal and of partition, the issue was complicated by the system of parliamentary government which India adopted bringing with it the unfamiliar problems of relations with parliamentary chiefs, with the political leadership all over the country, and with a vociferous legislature. The immensity of the administrative problems arising from the partition, and the ramification of post-war controls, the acuteness of the law and order position and the imperative necessity forced on the new state of procuring and distributing food supplies added greatly to the responsibilities of the services in fields where their previous experience provided but little guidance. These problems are referred to briefly here in order mainly to enable us to discuss the future position of the civil services in our state.

With independence, the civil services became wholly Indian, as by agreement with Britain, the British personnel were given the option to retire and only a very small number decided to stay on in India. As most of the senior posts were till the last held by Englishmen, it was an attenuated civil service that India took over. By promotions from subordinate services, and by special recruitment the all-India cadres were maintained and it is a matter of pride for us that the administrative machinery

proved itself equal to the major tasks that faced it immediately after our independence. Law and order was re-established; communications were restored; the unparalleled problem of millions of displaced persons was tackled without any major breakdown; the task of feeding the country which at one time assumed menacing proportions was successfully arranged; a new pattern of trade was evolved; and the nightmare of an inflation which threatened the economic life of the country was exorcised; a planned economy was initiated. It was a wise, far-seeing and effective political leadership that provided the dynamism for these great policies. But even the wisest political leadership could not have carried through these policies successfully without an adequate administrative machinery at its disposal. That the civil services were able to adjust themselves to the new conditions and did not prove themselves inadequate for these tremendous tasks is sufficient tribute to them.

And yet it cannot be denied that there is still an under current of suspicion and distrust in the public mind about the civil services. The causes of these are not far to seek. The civil services deplore it as an evidence of the layman's fear of trained ability, and perhaps also as a survival of the hostility towards the Indian Civil Service when it was an instrument of imperial policy. Whatever element of truth there may be in this view, it is far from being the whole picture. Certain other factors have contributed to this feeling which should be frankly stated and discussed if, as is necessary, sound relations are to be developed between the services and the political leadership.

In the first place it should be remembered that the Indian section of the old Indian Civil Service grew up during the inter-war period, when as we pointed earlier,

the ideology of that service had been undermined and the system itself was weakened by contradictions and uncertainties. While this condition of affairs permitted a considerable number of Indians in the service to develop a sense of patriotism and to cut themselves away from the imperial tradition, the majority still thought in terms of their rights, privileges and financial guarantees. So when independence came we had the strange phenomenon of the senior Indian members of the Civil Service claiming to be beneficiaries under the Lee proposals including free passages to England for themselves and their families. Their reluctance to accept a reduction in the scale of salaries and their insistence on the pound of flesh provided for in their agreement with the Secretary of State at a time when the new state was passing through the crisis of partition could not but create an unfavourable impression. The fact that not a few of them had been more royalist than the King under the British and had been the willing instruments of repression could not also be easily forgotten.

It is not therefore surprising at first that there should have been many who questioned the necessity for all-India services. Provincial services in India had grown into major administrative organisations. They were admittedly cheaper and in some provinces at least seemed to be as skilled and as efficient as the all-India services. But in spite of the attractiveness of the idea, it found no favour as the Government of India realised that only a system of all-India services would provide the necessary steel-frame for the development of a united nation. The lessons of the past, when owing to the absence of a national administrative machine, the unity of the country broke down under the impact of foreign invasions, were too serious to be forgotten or overlooked merely

because of the suspicion and distrust which the Indian Civil Service had inspired at the time. New all-India services were brought into existence more or less on the model of the administrative machinery inherited from the past.

The problems that the civil service has to face in an independent India are different from what their predecessors in the British days had to deal with. Then it was mainly a question of land administration, husbanding the resources of the state, the maintenance of law and order, dealing with epidemics, famines, etc. Land administration, one way or the other, will continue to be the basis of India's life and for as long a time as we can foresee, the Indian political structure will be that of an administering state. Parliamentary control, and political leadership need not necessarily interfere with this special aspect of our life. In the administrative sphere at the district level, the services will remain the primary phenomenon of our political life. Any weakening of that system will only lead to chaos.

But it is not at this level that new problems face the civil services. It is in their relation to parliamentary government that the issue has to be clearly analysed. What is the relation between political control and administrative machinery in a modern state? Where does policy end and administration begin? How far have the civil services to be neutral, that is, have they to remain completely isolated from the effects of a policy, and interested as technicians only in its correct and efficient execution, as if it applied to Mars and not to their own country? What should be the nature of their relationship with the public? These are a few questions illustrative of the political adjustments that the services have been called on to make during the last few years.

A second set of questions, this time in the purely administrative field, may also be noted. With a rising democratic sentiment, how far could the District Officer, the key man in every administering state, continue to be the *ma-bap* of the people? How are his relations to be adjusted to the growing number of non-official and semi-official agencies working in the district? At the higher levels of administration what is the basis of relationship between the expert services in the area of the industrial and commercial activity of government—a rapidly growing sphere—and the higher civil service which on behalf of government is expected to supervise and control these activities? What, again, in these days of planned economics is the sphere of the specialist? How far is it desirable that the administrative services themselves should have specialised knowledge of such mysterious and mystifying subjects as external finance, international trade and currency problems?

Finally, there are the problems of recruitment and training. Is the system of competitive examination the most suitable process of recruitment, even when the functions of the civil service have become much more comprehensive than what Macaulay had envisaged? Can direct recruitment, at higher levels, of persons with experience of large-scale organisation in business, or with knowledge of men and affairs in liberal professions introduce new ideas and new methods into the art of administration? What kind of training is the new entrant in the service of a welfare state to receive before he becomes an efficient civil servant?

To discuss these three sets of questions satisfactorily, within the limits of time available is clearly impossible. All that I can venture to do is to indicate the main lines of thought and offer a few observations on each of them.

Taking the first group of questions—that is the major problems of the relations of the civil services with parliamentary government—it may be noted as a basic fact that this involves a radical change in the tradition of the civil services in India. Till 1936 in the provinces and then also only for the two pre-war years, and till the very end of British rule in India, the civil services were not subject to parliamentary authority. They were the direct agents of government responsible both for the political and administrative functions of government. The problem of their relationship with their parliamentary chiefs came up for consideration in 1936, when the Secretary of State, Lord Zetland, issued a comprehensive set of rules for the guidance of the European members of the civil service in the provinces. But the experiment did not last as the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned as a result of the outbreak of the war. So when the first ministry was formed after our independence, both to the politician and to the civil servant the problem was a new and ticklish one. On the whole, after a short period of uncertainty and difficulty a working relationship seems now to have been established, depending however not on well understood conventions and traditions, but on the personal equation between ministers and their service chiefs.

It is often stated in text books that the function of the Minister is to formulate policy, and of the services to carry out that policy. A recent writer has put this idea in the following words: "It is the function of the civil service to fulfil the will of parliament as formulated by the Cabinet. The Cabinet works out the policy of the government: the civil service sees that that policy, when duly approved by Parliament is faithfully execut-

ed."¹ This is in many ways a misleading statement. The formulation of the will of Parliament by the Cabinet which may be called the laying down of policy is no longer a thing which the political chiefs claim to be able to do on their own, however able they be. The implications of new policies, in the present day, are so wide and involve so many technical questions that before they can be formulated by the Cabinet, they have to be subjected to rigorous examination by competent officials, studied, noted upon, criticised and rearranged before they can emerge in their final shape. This is the reason for the wide difference between election programmes, policies in embryo, adumbrated without precision or too many details, and policies officially formulated when the same party takes office. For example, say Party X in its election manifesto proclaims a policy of land reform. In a general sense it is an enunciation of policy at the political level with which the civil services have little to do. At that stage, it is merely an aspiration, perhaps a promise. But when that aspiration has to be formulated into a definite policy many technical issues have to be carefully studied. To work out a definite policy on land reform requires expert knowledge of conditions in different areas, of tenures, interests, social structure, which no Minister can normally be expected to possess. Though the individual civil servant may be only familiar with some particular aspect of the question, there is at his disposal what Sir Edward Bridges calls the "departmental store house of knowledge", and a body of assistants who know the problem at different levels. Till the vague aspirations embodied in a political programme are processed by this body of civil ser-

1. E. N. Gladden : *The Civil Service, its Problems and Future*, p. 38-39.

vants they cannot be formulated as a policy for approval by the Cabinet. The Minister no doubt has the final decision, but the policy statement which he finally approves and submits to the Cabinet is necessarily the work of many hands. So the idea that policy is for the Minister is only true to a limited extent.

If the civil service has a considerable share in the shaping and formulation of policy, it is equally true that the Minister has even a greater share in administration. The common belief that administration is the exclusive privilege of the civil servant is a fallacy. As Bridges himself points out: "The constitutional responsibility of the Ministers to Parliament and public covers every action of the department whether done with their specific authority, or by delegation express or implied. Ministers therefore cannot escape responsibility for administrative matters."² While it is in a sense true that the execution of policies is left to the civil service, the Minister's authority is always there in the matter of major decisions. Besides, in a country like India, the tours and inspections by Ministers—a tradition inherited from the civil service governments of the past—involve a continuous supervision of the actual execution of policies at the field level. Moreover, through reports and statements the Minister is continually checking on the administration of policies. Public criticisms, newspaper comments and questions in Parliament are perpetually drawing his attention to administrative issues, which compel him to keep closely in touch with even the technical aspects of administration. So the facile division that policy is for the Minister and its execution for the civil service will be found to be fallacious. There is a continuous interplay between politi-

2. Sir Edward Bridges: *Portrait of a Profession*, p. 19.

cal controls and administrative action which I think is of the essence of a successful system of Parliamentary rule.

What then should be the relation between the services and the Minister? Broadly, it may be stated as follows. Subject to the primacy of political authority both in policy and administration, the civil services have the obligation to help the Minister in giving practical shape to his ideas, that is in their precise and practicable formulation as policies, and have also, on the executive side, the primary duty of organising administration appropriate to the objectives finally laid down. It is also their duty to point out either the impracticability or the folly of any proposal, and the effects it may have on the country in general. But it is necessary to emphasise that whatever its powers and influence, the civil service is subordinate to political authority in every sphere, and its work in the field of policy is one of advice based on experience, knowledge and skill, while in the field of execution it is the instrument, the agency, where the training and efficiency and practical experience gained in many fields, are brought into service to obtain the maximum results possible.

Every department into which the civil services are organised develops an attitude, a point of view on the problems with which it deals. It is not shaped by any individual, or laid down in any document. A leading civil servant has defined it as follows :—"In most cases, the departmental philosophy is the result of nothing more startling than the slow accretion and accumulation of experience over the years. An original scheme has been altered to meet acknowledged difficulties. Some features of the plan have been found too difficult to administer and have been quietly dropped.....so by trial and error something has come about which

differs greatly from the original plan : it is something which has been fashioned by many hands and in making and reshaping it things have been learnt which could only be fully grasped by practical experience These departmental philosophies are of the essence of a civil servant's work. They are the expression of the long continuity of experience Again they are broadly based and are the resultant of protests and suggestions, and counter suggestions from many interests, of discussion and debates in which many types of mind have taken part."

This collective wisdom is an important factor, both in the shaping of policies and in administration. But it has its weaknesses which we should not overlook. The departmental philosophy is basically a conservative attitude, one which is critical of change and progress, and therefore is more often used as an arsenal which provides the civil servant with weapons with which he impersonally and with the appearance of objectivity opposes, and where he cannot oppose, attenuates the policies and proposals which he dislikes. A weak or inexperienced Minister finds himself overwhelmed by this weight of experience, practical wisdom and wealth of precedents. A powerful Minister, with a determination to put through his policy may find that in the working out of his policy, it has undergone material changes on the grounds of practicability, etc. Thus the departmental store of knowledge and philosophy of administration are important things, and most valuable in normal times, but in conditions of rapid change where bold policies have to be initiated and carried out they may become handicaps in the way of progress.

Coming now to the second group of problems, it would be clear that the position in India is basically

different from that in European countries. The Indian government is traditionally based on land administration, on the assessment and collection of revenues. The district is the unit of administration and in the maintenance of law and order, the work of the magistracy and the judicial system and in many other ways, the imperial administrative structure, if I may so describe it, is based on the District. The District Officer is thus the lynch pin of the Indian Government. He is traditionally the Head of the District, the representative of the state and he is likely to be so in the future. To him the people used to turn as the *ma-bap* or at least the local representative of the mysterious power of the state. But though the tradition remains, two major facts have already detracted a great deal and done something to undermine the position of the district officer. The first is the position of the local representatives in Parliament and state legislatures. From the parliamentary point of view they have become the champions of the people, entitled to bring to the notice of the sovereign legislature the difficulties and complaints of the population. The District Officer may represent the administration, but the Member of Parliament and the Member of the Legislative Assembly are limbs of the sovereign body. Besides in a parliamentary system of government the doctrine of the superiority of public servant over the public—a dogma under a bureaucracy when the officer is the guardian of the people—becomes totally untenable. The Collector's durbars, the ostentatious tours, the maintenance of a certain aloofness and distance to uphold the prestige of the Sirkar, all of which were a part of the paraphernalia of *ma-bapism*, must inevitably disappear in a democratic state. Besides the frequent visits of Ministers, ordinary politicians whom the public of the district know to be one like themselves, puts the District

Officer in the shade and takes away a great deal from his glory.

The second development which has affected the authority and position of the District Officer is the immense growth of semi-governmental activity in rural areas—Community Projects, National Extension Blocks and such other schemes with some of which he may be formally associated, but in most of which he has no effective power. A great deal of power has in this way slipped from his hands. This is unavoidable in a growing democracy engaged in a great national effort of reconstruction. The result however is to make the Collector or District Officer a shadow, something like a vedic god, Agni, Varuna or Mitra who still has his titular dignities but not the worship or the power. This aspect of the Collector's position is well described in the Appleby Report in the following words :—

“He was in earlier days, and is now somewhat in theory or in nostalgic yearning more or less responsible for everything done by government within his geographical area. He is impersonally assigned by “Government”—which is everybody, and more or less responsible to every ministry carrying on functions in his area. No Ministry knows how much of his time it is entitled to, and none has any capacity for insuring that it receives that portion of his time and energy. The result has been a halting and rather unclear removal of certain functions and personnel from his direct jurisdiction, but this arrangement involves in its own turn an interaction of the responsibilities and personnel of the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture, along with the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Finance, in association with the development and/or Community Projects offices, and some lingering associations with the Collector. In a technical, administrative sense, no one is really respon-

sible for anything of much importance, and all share in responsibility for almost everything."³

The problem is one of great significance. Whatever the nature of her constitution India will remain an administering state by nature of her geographical conditions and historical evolution; for example the importance attached to land administration and irrigation is unlikely to diminish in India. A compromise between parliamentary institutions and administration at the district level which restores to the Collector some of his power and prestige, is therefore an absolute necessity. Strong and efficient district administration is the only basis of stability in India and without stability parliamentary government would be ineffective and be reduced to a sham—unenforced legislation, uncollected revenues, break down of law and order, and similar phenomena of a weak democracy would follow. This is one of the central contradictions of the Indian structure; how to strengthen the district administration without affecting popular government. I have not the least doubt that the way of safety lies in strengthening the hands of the District Officer by giving him effective responsibility in well defined spheres in his area, as the agent of the central and state governments.

Another major problem included in this group, is the relationship between the new body of expert services in charge of giant government concerns and the higher civil service which in the name of government controls them. In India this has become a major problem. We have embarked on a programme of state industrial activity which involves direct management of immense business organisations by specially recruited

3. Paul H. Appleby: *Public Administration in India, Report of a Survey*, p. 20.

semi-government services. I have only to mention concerns like Chittaranjan, Sindri Fertilisers, the Hindustan Aircraft, the Integral Coach Factory and now the Hindustan Steels to indicate how immense is the range of this new activity and how large are the new expert services that we have been developing. Except at the highest level of control, the services staffing these organisations are recruited direct, and it is natural that in the special conditions of industrial production, the traditions, methods and techniques developed by these services should be different from those of the civil services. Administrative control will be increasingly vested in their hands; and yet since hundreds of crores and soon thousands of crores of public money will be invested directly in these concerns by the government, they have to work under the control of Parliament whose authority can in no circumstance be ousted. This authority has to be exercised through the normal channel of political Ministers and their civil service agencies. In the result, the civil services, with their traditions of measured progress and cautious movements and with their departmental philosophies will have the control and supervision, which the new industrial civil service with their desire for quick success, freedom of initiative and action and their expert knowledge is bound to resent. Since India has deliberately set out on a policy of state activity in the industrial field, this problem is likely to grow in importance. Today already there are over 100 units which are functioning as semi-government organisations. As superior control of organisations like the Damodar Valley project, the Hindustan Aircraft, etc., are vested in the hands of senior civil servants the problem has not yet come to light in its full seriousness. But increasingly the new industrial services are likely to take charge of these concerns and one of the major

problems of the future will be an adjustment of relations between the supervising authority of the civil services, men with all-India experience, over-all points of view and the traditions of strict control of public funds, and the expert services with experience limited to their own spheres, but with technical knowledge which the civil services do not possess. A definition of the spheres of authority and the growth of a tradition which limits interference while maintaining control is one of the essential requirements in our administration today. Those of you interested in a detailed analysis of the problems arising in this connection especially in relation to our development programmes should study the chapter in the Appleby Report which is especially illuminating.⁴

The last group of specific problems to which I would invite attention relates to recruitment and training. These have at all times been a basic problem. In the modern world, as we saw, the issue was brought to a head by Macaulay's Report in 1853 and since then the general practice of recruitment has been by open competitive examinations, with a bias in favour of humanistic training. The general idea is that a young man of more than ordinary intelligence, with sound judgement, high standards of conduct and commonsense can, if trained properly, deal most satisfactorily with general administrative problems. There is no doubt that on the whole this is a correct point of view. But the question is legitimate whether the dominant importance attached to written examination enables an adequate evaluation of the imponderables of personality—always an essential factor in executive work. As long as the civil ser-

4. Paul H. Appleby: *Public Administration in India, a Report of a Survey*, p. 38-47.

vices had only to deal with normal government this might not have mattered seriously. But today the range of their functions has increased calling for a bewildering variety of interests and talents. True, there is the mechanism of interview before selection by the Public Service Commission. My own experience in this matter enables me to say that the interview system is useful in weeding out candidates lacking in personality. But the positive approach of an initial selection of candidates who possess personality, initiative, etc., but lack the special qualities required for the highly academic examinations of the Civil Service Commission seems to me a serious defect. In my opinion a certain number of vacancies, not more than 20 per cent of the total should be reserved for recruitment by other methods, with a suitable general examination to follow and not to precede. In this category, importance should be attached to leadership, initiative, executive ability, etc. In the period immediately following independence a number of candidates of this kind were selected from among the temporary officers of the Army and on the whole they seem to have done well.

The problem of training for the superior cadres is of the highest importance and raises many issues. Previously in the Indian Civil Service it was by a system of tutelage, the new entrant being entrusted to a senior officer for training. O'Malley in his book on the *Indian Civil Service* describes the system as follows:— "The real training of the civilian begins in India with practical work in different branches of the administration. On arrival he is made an Assistant Magistrate with powers of the lowest class and is posted to the headquarters of a district to learn his work under the supervision of the Collector. . . . A further course of examination awaits the civilian before he can be given higher

magisterial power. He is required to pass what are called departmental examinations, first by a lower and next by a higher standard, in the language of his province, in Criminal Law and Revenue Law. In the meantime however he gains experience and knowledge by the trial of petty cases in court, work in different departments and local enquiries."

The system is undoubtedly an excellent one, for there is no better method of learning work than by doing it under proper supervision. But the problem now is more than learning work. The old Civil Service was practically British and there was a unity of approach and outlook among its members. The Indians who were recruited after a period of education in England also conformed to type and were generally speaking absorbed in the system.

Today the position is different. With the provincialisation of our educational systems and with the universities giving emphasis to local languages, the entrants to our civil service have no unity of outlook. A Tamil, an Andhra or a Maharashtrian who passes the examination remains a Tamil, an Andhra or a Maharashtrian, unless he sub-divides himself into his caste or community membership. The first training for the all-India services required today is something which will stamp the new entrants as Indians: give them a wholly Indian outlook, and make them forget they are Tamils, Andhras, Malayalees, etc. Some institution like the Armed Forces Joint Services Wing College at Dehra Dun where all the officer cadets are put through a course of education seems a primary necessity. The new entrants into all-India services, not only the Indian Administrative Service, but the Indian Police, Audit and Accounts, Revenue Services, etc., should at least for a period of one year be made to live together, where a

course of general instruction on Indian history, culture, study of one language of an area other than one's own, and courses on political and economic problems in India and outside, will be given to them, before they are separated for their departmental training. This I consider an essential prerequisite before training through tutelage is taken up.

These are some of the problems which concern civil services in India. In this connection, you will no doubt have noticed that I have confined myself to what used to be known as the Superior Civil Services, i.e. Indian Civil Service and other all-India cadres. But a student of Public Administration in India would get the picture out of focus if he concentrated on those services. The provincial services, in general, police and other aspects of administration constitute the solid base on which the superior services function. They form the main body of executives, providing at state level a good proportion of superior and supervisory staff, both in the secretariat and in the districts. Their intellectual equipment may not be of the same level and their training is more limited and generally confined to their own provinces. They are less familiar with all-India policies and problems, but they have the great advantage of being less separated from the people. While it may be said that the administration of India is controlled and supervised by the superior civil services a great deal of the field work is done mainly by the provincial services.

Nor can we omit in this connection the subordinate and secretariat services, without which no administrative service can function. They have to prepare the case at different levels, organise the study of questions by collecting previous papers, bringing up linked files and numerous other preliminary but essential procedures, prepare returns at stated intervals, keep the records

properly indexed and readily available, and generally process all problems before they are considered by the superior officers. It is this large body of Superintendents, Registrars and Assistants that make the smooth functioning of administration possible. Nor is the criticism just which brushes aside the work of the subordinate service as being mechanical. At the level of heads of sections, Assistant Superintendents and above their work have not only to be intelligent and highly skilled, but well acquainted with the practices and precedents in the government.

In conclusion, we may discuss some of the more prominent defects inherent in any system of civil services, especially in relation to India. We have already mentioned their natural conservatism, their tendency to resist changes, their undue caution when anything new or unfamiliar and not falling within the range of past experience is suggested. In the case of an administrative machinery, where the motive power and direction have to be supplied from outside, this perhaps may not be considered a defect.

The main criticism against the civil services is that in a graded system where promotion depends mainly on seniority the service personnel develop an interest in its own internal politics wholly out of proportion to their importance. Assignments, promotions, accruing rights, etc., become matters of major concern to which a great deal of time and attention come to be paid. In short the civil services tend to become a vested interest, with all the characteristics of vested interests. In any human organisation which deals with the prospects and career of men this is perhaps unavoidable, and as long as it is kept within bounds, there is no particular harm in it. But it is a matter for serious consideration whether the present system of looking upon seniority as conferring

a valid claim for posts, with the necessary corollary of appeals against promotions, supersessions, etc., is conducive to efficiency. In any case the system of too many gradations in superior services, secretaries, additional secretaries, joint secretaries, deputy secretaries, etc., seems too cumbersome, leading to a blurring of responsibility and to the growth of a tendency to create jobs to meet the claims of seniority.

We may here also deal with the popular criticism of the civil service that it believes too much in routine and its procedure is governed by red tape. In fact Red Tape has come to be a term of contumely as representing the general attitude of the civil services. But I would venture to say that this attack on routine is the facile approach of those who believe in rough and ready methods—a sure indication of sympathy with autocracy and arbitrary decisions. As Professor Whitehead, a philosopher and mathematician and not an official, has pointed out: "It is the beginning of wisdom to understand that social life is based on routine. Unless society is permeated through and through with routine, civilisation vanishes. So many sociological doctrines, the products of acute intellects are wrecked by being oblivious to this fundamental sociological truth. Society presupposes stability, and stability is the product of routine." If we analyse our own daily life we will see it is governed predominantly by an inherited or self-realised routine. In public administration this is much more important, for without a proper attachment to routine we shall become subject to the whims and caprices of those in authority—in fact we shall revert to an unsystematic autocracy. Therefore the popular criticism about the civil services being addicted to routine seems to me unjustified.

The limits of validity of another criticism is perhaps easier to define. It is that the civil services develop an intellectual pretentiousness, which leads on the one hand to an arrogance in dealing with the public and on the other to an attitude of extreme complacency. They develop a jargon of their own, an official phraseology out of which it is difficult to make clear sense. Dickens in one of his books has a chapter entitled "Containing the Whole Science of Government". His Circumlocution Office is a caricature of the modern secretariat as he saw it develop. "Because the Circumlocution Office went on mechanically, every day, keeping this wonderful, all sufficient wheel of statesmanship, how not to do it, in motion." Its language certainly earned it this title. This is not a weakness special to the civil services in India as may be seen from Sir Earnest Gowers' *Plain Words* and its sequence *A.B.C. of Plain Words* written at the invitation of the British Treasury to help in improving official English. In India the late Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari—a most remarkable if unorthodox civil servant—used to say that there was a rule in the Madras Secretariat which laid down that the language of official correspondence should be dignified when addressed to government but "should be sonorous when addressed to the public". Whether the story be true or not it is fairly indicative of the official point of view of desiring to impress the public by solemn utterances. It was something analogous to the Byzantine custom by which the Emperor at the reception of foreign ambassadors appeared on a throne lifted up in the sky with golden lions roaring on either side of him. The principle was the same: the public had to be impressed, so that those holding power may appear to the ordinary man as possessing a mysterious dignity.

An even more important criticism of the civil services especially in India is their intellectual backwardness. This may appear strange in view of their pretensions of being the cream of India's intelligence. Actually whatever their intellectual stature at the time of their entrance into the civil service, there is broadly speaking a gradual decline of interests leading in many cases at the end to an atrophy of mental powers. Of course these are notable exceptions. But the basic fact would seem to be that the civil servant has no time to continue his more serious studies after he has joined the service. If he is a reading man, he keeps his familiarity with literature up-to-date and reads the works of better known authors. But in economics, social sciences, history and other subjects, where continuous attention and study are required, he gets neither the opportunity nor the time to keep himself up-to-date. Thus when a civil servant reaches the policy-making level, his views on economics and social sciences are generally speaking, what he learned at the university twenty years before. Today he will talk in terms of Laski and Graham Wallas: in economics in terms of Marshall, Cannan and Pigou. In dealing with social problems he is, again broadly speaking, armed with the theories which were fashionable a quarter of a century ago. This it may be said is not a peculiarity of the civil services but of educated people in general, who carry on throughout their life with what they learnt at the universities. That is no doubt true but the ordinary run of educated people are not placed in positions of authority where they have to advise on social and economic policies. The intellectual backwardness of the civil servant is therefore a major weakness, perhaps inherent in the system, but all the same something which we should attempt to remedy.

There are many other aspects of the civil service in relation to the state and the general public, which it is not possible for me here to touch upon. But I trust I have said sufficient to show how important a problem it is in modern political life. No organised government is possible today without a highly trained army of administrative officials. With the range of government's activity increasing every day, there is the growing recognition that an honest, trained and impartial civil service is the basis of all government, the instrument for carrying out national policies. The civil services have therefore become in the modern state one of the *prakritis* or attributes of the state, the maintenance of which through proper methods of recruitment, training and control has become a matter of primary national concern. The prejudices of parliamentary democracy arising from its feudal origin in England and from its fear of the power of the crown are of course not applicable to the conditions in India. But as against that there is the suspicion and distrust of a bureaucracy which, stepping outside its position as a Civil Service, had long been the government of the country. It is as necessary that we should grow out of this prejudice, as the Civil Service should live down its tradition of being the effective government. For a civil servant who is trained to routine, skilled in the performance of his duties, is a good servant if kept under control but whatever his qualities he becomes a bad master, if the training is poor and the control is weak. We in India have to apply our mind continuously to this problem.