CHAPTER 4

THE HOUSING PROBLEM

In no direction does the state lag so far behind the other large employers of labour as in the matter of accommodation for those who serve it and the provision of equipment to enable them to carry out their tasks with reasonable efficiency. Many government offices are glorified dustbins compared with those which house the employees of the banks, insurance companies, and many of the larger industrial concerns. For a number of years after the last war, employment exchange staffs carrying a heavy load of responsibility, and paying out thousands of pounds of government money, were working in unbelievable conditions. The people who assess and collect your tax were not much better off and in 1929 their spokesmen uttered a vigorous protest against standards which in their view were "a disgrace to a country so far advanced in the development of technical processes applied to building construction and office equipment". The Royal Commission to whom the protest was addressed, while agreeing that some of the government offices visited by them were definitely unsuitable, felt nevertheless that any large programme for the rehousing of the staff might involve a serious increase in expenditure. This, they thought, should not deter the good employer from providing up-to-date housing and equipment for his staff and they expressed the pious view that the state would stand to gain in efficiency as a result of the outlay involved. Whereupon some small improvement was effected. In 1937, however, the position was still so bad that the same staff union responsible for bringing the matter to the notice of the Royal Commission took matters a stage further and secured the services of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology for the purpose of undertaking a thorough investigation into the conditions in which tax officials were required to carry out their duties. It will

be of interest to summarize some of its principal conclusions:

1. The 1929 standards in operation allow only for a bare minimum of accommodation and equipment and show little consideration for the convenience and comfort of the staff.
2. The open office principle has been introduced without due regard to the problems created thereby. The resultant conditions are in no way conducive to hard work and efficiency.
3. The psychological factors affecting the clerical worker in the efficient performance of his duties are being disregarded.
4. The rigid economy and degree of control exercised by the Office of Works in matters affecting accommodation is a contributory cause of the loss of efficiency involved.
5. This loss, estimated at not less than 15 per cent, is equivalent in salaries alone to a sum of half a million pounds a year. The expenditure of only part of this sum on improved environmental conditions, apart from benefit to the staff, would increase the quality and efficiency of the work with ultimate advantage to the Exchequer.

The report of which the foregoing is a summing up cost the union in question over £300 and it provided a damning indictment of the cheeseparing methods which condemned thousands of state employees to all the discomforts and inconveniences of "slum" standards of office accommodation. The frustration of working with equipment, much of it of the Heath Robinson type, which was never designed to fit the needs of a modern state apparatus, was also brought to light. Copies of the report were sent to all heads of departments and the responsible ministries, but by the time they got around to it the present war was upon us.

Since then of course even 1929 standards have suffered some deterioration, and it will require a whole decade and a completely different approach to fit government offices for the functions required of them in the post-war world. That new

approach will only arise out of a realization on the part of the general public that it is *their* Civil Service and that it can only serve it adequately and efficiently in the best environmental conditions. No plans for the architectural reconstruction of Britain will be complete which do not provide in every town and city for a nobly designed civic centre around which not only the municipal buildings but the local offices of every government department are grouped. Complete accessibility to the public, modern design and equipment, and perfect sanitary and psychological conditions should be the minimum requirements to secure the efficient discharge of public business and no time should be lost in fulfilling them when the war has been won.

CHAPTER 5

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The British Civil Service, like every other social institution, has passed through a number of phases. If therefore we are to see it in perspective, we should be well employed in sketching its development from rudimentary beginnings up to the present time, when it has become, for good or ill, an enormous influence in the management of our affairs. It is just as unhelpful to describe it in the words of Winston Churchill as "the finest Civil Service in the world" as to refer, as others in less flattering terms have done, to the swollen hordes of the bureaucracy which batten on the lives of a people who only desire to be left to their own devices, unless at the same time we examine more closely its origin and its purpose. A little history then. The Civil Service, in the form with which we are now familar, is a growth of no more than a hundred or so years, though long before that time some sketchy form of state apparatus existed. In the sixteenth century for instance the state functionary was little more than the personal attendant of the sovereign.

There was no great measure of control over the activities of the early colonizers, and provided that a proportion of the revenues acquired as a result of those activities found its way into the royal coffers there was no inclination on anyone's part to curb the adventurous spirit of the pioneers of the mercantile age. By the end of the century Elizabeth had granted charters for the exploitation of the East Indies and other territories and thereby ensured a sufficient rake-off without at the same time incurring an administrative responsibility. Later, with the achievement of the bourgeois revolution, a Council of State to act for administrative purposes as a committee of the House of Commons was set up.

Hitherto, Parliament had been little more than an advisory body to the king, but with the increasing expense of govern-

ment and the reduction of feudal revenues, the state and the king became separate entities. This statement should, perhaps, be qualified. The king still remained and does to this day an integral part of the state power. It is in his name, for instance, that all Orders in Council are published.

It is still, however, true that the Cromwellian revolution transferred, in theory at least, the larger functions of the state from king to Parliament.

The state, however, was for some time little more than a name and with the Restoration its officials were once again appointed largely by reference to their royalist sympathies. An act passed in 1661 for instance created a body of commissioners vested with the witch-finding function of hunting out and removing at uncontrolled discretion all officers deemed to be "unsafe". Many of the normal functions of the state were carried out by the sheriffs and justices who combined in their own persons the offices of revenue official, sanitary superintendent and dispenser of the law. They constituted what might be described as an unpaid Civil Service and they retained many of their functions until they were superseded towards the end of the nineteenth century by bodies set up by local-government authorities. In 1659 we read of Pepys seated in his office receiving money for the probate of wills, and in the same year Sir Robert Pye the auditor of the Exchequer was committed to the Tower as a royalist. In 1690 with William of Orange on the throne, the forerunner of a long line of Royal Commissions set up to examine the state of the exchequer discovered that vast sums had been allotted to secret services and that no regular accounts had been kept for over thirty years. Also that fees had been extracted from the public by way of percentages in all public offices.[1]

It was soon after this that one of our greatest institutions, the National Debt, was created. War was becoming an increasingly costly business and could only be paid for by raising money at high rates of interest and repaying loans made previously at a lower rate, and very often by the same people.

[1] Prof. E. Jenks, *Parliamentary England.*

One effect of this was to create a big vested interest in the maintenance of the financial *status quo*, thus ensuring the equilibrium of the capitalist state structure, in very much the same way as the more recent attempts at stabilization to-day by the floating of war loans to which all and sundry are invited to subscribe. There is always a natural tendency on the part of the governing class to assume that a nation of savings-certificate holders will oppose itself to any sort of economic change calculated to rob it of the fruits of its thriftiness.

However, be that as it may, attempts to liquidate the National Debt by diverting part of the state revenue into a sinking fund proved abortive, and the result was an accumulation of capital to enable further wars to be waged, trading with other countries to be increased, colonies to be developed and the productive forces of the country to be infinitely expanded. In a sentence, the capitalist system was born and the stage cleared for the Industrial Revolution. Before then, however we saw a period of colonial expansion. In one unbroken chain of cause and effect we saw also the creation of a professional army to conquer and keep the territories due for exploitation, the vast extension of manufacture required for the maintenance of that army, and the artificially created booms arising from the widespread speculation in which so many of the new rich were tempted to engage.

Can it be wondered that given these expansionist tendencies and the increasing need therefore to raise the wind, Horace Walpole should have occasion to refer to the growing influence of finance and to assert that "taxation had become the rudder of government"?

Is it not clear too that the state officials were very largely preoccupied with the financial side of government and in effect little more than a committee of ways and means? It need occasion no surprise therefore that by the time the younger Pitt appeared on the scene the finances of the country imposed upon someone the obligation of a clean-up.

Thus it was that the Consolidated Fund was introduced, a Commission for the Auditing of Public Accounts created and in 1798 the fiscal device of a direct tax on incomes brought

into existence. For the enlightenment of twelve million taxpayers now groaning under the burden of a standard rate of 10s. in the £, be it recalled that the first income tax was on a graduated scale rising from twopence to two shillings, with an exemption limit of £60.

It was designed as a temporary expedient to tide the country over the period of the French wars; but it proved so successful for its purpose that, apart from one short break in its continuity, it has remained a cardinal feature of our budgetary system ever since.

Now, having sketched in that very slight historical background, we can have another look at the Civil Service to see what shape it was beginning to assume and what factors, social and economic, were moulding its destinies and determining the general trend of its development.

It will be an interesting exercise to note its gradual growth and observe the adaptations of its structure as imposed upon it by the clamant needs of the thrusting, thriving capitalism which had begun to take over the instruments of production from its predecessors.

Before we proceed to this, however, we shall again take note of the ebb and flow of the state power in its changing relations with the productive system. The mercantile system of the eighteenth century which created a Civil Service to give authority to its expansionist aims and to finance its projects, sowed the seeds of the *laissez-faire* era of capitalism which was to come after it. In this later phase, the general tendency was toward keeping the state in its place and reducing its interference in trade and industry to the barest minimum. We shall see later with what degree of success or failure *laissez-faire* capitalism achieved this object. We shall also see that as capitalism, in its turn, became more monopolistic in character so the state, faithfully reflecting the trend, became more and more involved in the economic arrangements of the country.

At the end of the eighteenth century the machinery of state provided for a Home Department to which colonial administration was attached as a sideline, a Foreign Department concerned wholly with Europe and the United States, a

Treasury dealing with revenue and accounts and the naval and military departments with their various branches. The Post Office was in its infancy and only 291 officers were employed in the tax offices. On the other hand the greater incidence of indirect taxation created the need for a Customs and Excise Department which employed a disproportionate number of the total civil servants (no more than 16,000 in all) on the strength. The Navy, Army and War Departments between them gave work to no more than 400 clerical and administrative officials, few more probably than were employed by the Alien Office, the Lottery Office and the Registrar of Colonial Slaves. There were, of course, no social service departments.

The tremendous expansion of British industry, side by side with the exploitation of recently acquired colonial territories, brought into existence a large urban proletariat. There was a drift to the towns and with increasing industrialization a rapid development of the home market. The heavy industries began to boom—so necessarily did transport. Inevitably, therefore, industrial processes were more and more brought under direct capitalist control; all of which had its repercussions on the machinery of state.

Capitalist production demanded all sorts of facilities which were not profitable for itself to provide. A regular postal system became a prime necessity. Roads were built and their maintenance and repair must become a social responsibility with the cost charged to the general body of taxpayers. Private property was being accumulated and its protection required the introduction of "law and order" with the necessary functionaries and organization to enforce it. Colonial development again increased the work and widened the functions of the central government. The middle of the century, for instance, brought "the brightest jewel of the imperial crown" under direct British rule, and the profits of investment here and elsewhere, in the ever-expanding empire, had to be safeguarded by a Civil Service at home and abroad, specially trained in the technique of colonial administration.

It is true that the principle of *laissez-faire* was being widely advertised and that with the creation of new industries and

techniques under the spur of free competition and free trade, Britain was gradually building up a monopoly position in the world's markets. This, however, was not inconsistent with a progressive reliance on the organs of government for the backing and support which, having regard to their class character, the administrations of the day were only too happy to give.

As Engels said, "Times were good for British capitalists". Political issues, apart from the exchange of a few shibboleths, were subordinated to economic issues. The administration adopted its new role of holding the ring while private enterprise established itself, and of ensuring that its operations were allowed to continue without undue interference from other interests. One of those interests was of course that very urban proletariat to which reference has already been made and which had been called into being by the new and rapidly expanding productive processes. The horrible poverty and conditions of labour which accompanied these processes represented "a new economic phenomenon due to unfettered competition and unrestricted individual ownership of the means of production",[1] and gave rise inevitably to an agitation for shortening hours of labour and for a measure of protective factory legislation.

For some time, as we know, every attempt to improve industrial legislation, particularly in regard to the employment of juveniles, was resisted in the name of commercial liberty. The progenitors of the Balfours and the Benns were preaching then from the same text as the anti-planners of today, that the state should let well alone. Indeed, we learn that a certain legal luminary who was particularly successful in his advocacy, on behalf of the manufacturers, of this doctrine of non-interference, was rewarded with "a present of plate". Another important point to observe is the change that was taking place in the attitude of the rising trade union movement. With the expansion of capitalism and a dawning recognition of its increasing stability, the more radical and revolutionary content of the organizations of the workers was transformed. The

[1] Sydney and Beatrice Webb, *History of British Trade Unionism.*

trade unions had painfully and by very slow steps won their struggle for recognition, and direct action made way for collective negotiation and the initiation of ameliorative legislation.

The first Factory Act applying only to the textile industry was passed in 1802. It was amended in 1825 and 1831. In 1833 further legislation introduced the half-time system, closely bound up with the contemporary introduction of compulsory education.

Another act in 1844 brought about an improvement in hours and conditions, and in 1847 the ten-hour day was, in theory at least, made compulsory in certain industries. In brief, the first half of the nineteenth century saw the inevitable abandonment of the principle of *laissez-faire* in its logical application. Not only public indignation, but the wiser counsels of the more farsighted capitalists were forcing the state to take a hand in the game. By restrictive and regulative legislation it sought to prevent the greedier representatives of the new capitalist class from destroying the source of the surplus value upon which their opportunity to develop must henceforth depend. And even then there was far more form than substance about most of this reformist legislation. For much of its effectiveness in checking the abuses at which it was directed it relied upon government inspectors whose functions were described in the accompanying regulations. It would be profitable here to delay the action of this short historical survey in order to look a little more closely at the work of the inspectorial staff, for here is the civil servant who, perhaps more than most others, knows at first hand where the shoe pinches and to what extent the great mass of remedial legislation placed upon the statute book during a period of a century and a half has eased the pressure. Here is what Marx had to say on the subject quoted from the chapter of *Capital* dealing with the Factory Acts: "The Workshops Regulation Act, wretched in all its details, remained a dead letter in the hands of the municipal and local authorities who were charged with its execution. When, in 1871, Parliament withdrew from them this power, in order to confer it on the Factory Inspectors, to whose province it thus added at a single stroke more than

one hundred thousand workshops . . . care was taken at the same time not to add more than eight assistants to their already undermanned staff."

Marx goes on to tell us that the personnel before this handsome addition comprised only two inspectors, two assistant-inspectors and forty-one sub-inspectors and that the total cost of administering both this act and the Factory Acts Extension Act amounted to no more than £25,347 for the year 1871–2. Can it be wondered that Marx with the biting irony of which he was at times a master contrasted "the necessity imposed on the parliament of the ruling classes, of adopting in principle measures so extraordinary, and on so great a scale, against the excesses of capitalist exploitation; and on the other hand, the hesitation, the repugnance, and the bad faith, with which it lent itself to the task of carrying those measures into practice".

Later on Marx makes a similar criticism of the Mines Inspecting Act of 1860, which enacted that boys between the ages of ten and twelve should, unless they had already received the school certificate, attend school for a certain number of hours. This act, he tells us, became a complete dead letter owing to the ridiculously small number of inspectors and the meagreness of their powers.

In 1866 we find (again quoting Marx) that a parliamentary committee examined a number of witnesses on working conditions in the mines. One inspector giving evidence before the committee was asked if the mines in his area were sufficiently inspected to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act and replied that they were not inspected at all. He went on to volunteer the information that there was one available inspector to look after more than 130 collieries. Clearly the lot of the government inspector in the early days of Britain's industrial development was not a happy one.

Things have improved a little since then, of course, but so far as the mining industry is concerned, then and now, there can be no official so harassed and frustrated as the government inspector, or so convinced of the futility of the tasks allotted to him.

What is true of the factory and mines inspectors is equally true of those employed by the Board of Education to examine and report on the health of school children. We find, for instance, that although in 1933 these inspectors carried out 1,855,499 routine inspections, discovering *inter alia* that in 11·1 per 1,000 cases treatment was required for some form or other of malnutrition and that over 36 per cent of all the children examined were in one way or another defective, the immediate improvements suggested that the inspections were little more than a formality.

Or take yet another aspect of the inspectorial work of the Civil Service. Here is an Inspector of Refuse employed by the Ministry of Health and reporting as recently as 1929 that London refuse dumps were nothing but extensive fly-feeding belts, a menace to health as well as a waste of consumable fuel.

Or turn to the Third Report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure, 1942–3, on the health and welfare of women in war factories. After stressing the need for a satisfactory industrial medical service, it proceeds to give a well-earned boost to the existing factory inspectorate "for maintaining efficiency in exceptionally difficult circumstances".

Point is given to this eulogy when we learn that there are only 400 inspectors to a quarter of a million factories, from which the reader will see that in the period between 1866 and 1942 the capitalist state has fully maintained its reputation for niggardliness so far as this section of its apparatus is concerned.

The results are revealed in the report itself which stated that "the Ministry of Labour lacks the organization necessary even to deal fully with day-to-day problems" and later "that the Ministry of Supply factories are in some cases abusing their position by allowing hours of work longer than the factory inspectors would authorize", while "the attitude of the Ministry of Aircraft Production on health and welfare matters has been definitely unsatisfactory".

If there is still any doubt as to the social importance of the work of the factory inspectorate, a glance at the report of

the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1943 will be sufficient to dispel it. Here are one or two brief extracts. This on accidents: "We have no indication which would lead us to think that safe practices impede output. Inspectors are convinced, in fact, that those factories where organization for output is best are, in general, the most free from accident." And on ventilation, "Factories are still being found that at night are practically sealed boxes. Much misery might be saved it if were made a legal necessity for all new buildings to be approved by the factory inspector." And finally, on canteens: "There was a progressive increase during the year in the number of firms which set up canteen works' committees of an advisory nature."

Where is the moral in all this? Surely it lies in a recognition by the general public that things are going on inside the Civil Service which are their own intimate concern. We shall be refuting later, and with some vigour, the charge of bureaucracy made by certain interested persons against the great body of civil servants. We suggest in advance that the reports from which we have quoted at some length certainly lend no colour to the accusation, so far at least as the government inspectorate is concerned; the demand from the public must be for more rather than less of them. They must be men and women with a thorough knowledge of the workers' point of view and psychologically equipped to secure the best results in terms of working conditions as well as output. They must have a high sense of social responsibility and resist every attempt on the part of the administration to reduce their function to a formality.

To return, however, to our history, it is undoubtedly true that in the middle of the nineteenth century we saw the first faint beginnings of a working partnership, unrecognized and often repudiated, but none the less existent, between the private controllers of production and the public administrators, concerned almost wholly with determining the status and conditions of the producers.

With this phase, the Civil Service can be said to have arrived. A whole range of new functions was brought within

its ambit. Its role both in relation to the new ruling class and the growing army of industrial and agricultural workers began to take shape. To examine only two illustrations; the Board of Trade which had been little more than a consultative body became active in a dozen directions. New trading concerns were waiting to be registered. Some sort of statistical research had to be undertaken, the development of road and rail transport needed to be guided, if not controlled, and a watchful eye kept on the balance of trade which, in its commercial relations with other countries, was the keystone of the capitalist arch. The other illustration concerns the growth of functions of the Home Department in relation to poor law administration, the work of inspection arising out of the Factory Acts and the legislation concerned with the employment and conditions of labour.

New functions required a new personnel—nothing short in fact of a completely reconditioned state apparatus. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century there had been no coordinated body of civil servants, graded and classified according to function, with uniform methods of recruitment and scales of remuneration. Jobbery and nepotism flooded the state service with incompetents and illiterates. Duties were completely undefined and an official on a scale of salary proper to the administrative class was, as likely as not, discharging the functions of the lowest grade of official. Pepys, with the delightful candour which characterizes the pages of his diary, has given us a good insight into all that, and the state of affairs which he so artlessly describes can be said to have continued with only slight amendment right up to the year 1854, when a Select Committee on Public Expenditure made an attempt at cleansing the stable. The report of this committee contained recommendations for the segregation of certain types of work, a method of recruitment by open competition and promotion by merit. The effect of these far-reaching proposals on the diehards of the day was shattering, particularly when the report was followed by another which urged that the Civil Service should be organized in accordance with the highest standards of efficiency and that "there should be no com-

promise with the existing practice of subordinating the Service to the exigencies of party policy".

Further fuel was added to the fire when the report went on to express the view "that while no pains had been taken to secure a good man for a particular office, nothing had subsequently been done to turn such abilities as he had to good account" (a condemnation on two counts) and that "any success attained would not depend upon exertion—in short, if they wasted their time it would not hold them back".

Parliamentary and Service reactions to this report were unfavourable. Resentment at the charge of incompetence was accompanied by a defence of jobbery which according to one government spokesman was "a part though admittedly an ugly part of the price which a free people pay for their constitutional liberty". Another member of the government feared that "open competition would result in the service being packed with clever young men from the lower ranks of society and that a lower tone would thereby prevail." What a familiar ring it all has. Another interesting reaction came from the educational authorities who saw in the proposal for open recruitment a chance to give a fillip to the public schools and private coaches by providing an additional objective.

Even today those of us who are once again approaching the task of Civil Service reconstruction are meeting with this strange point of view, which insists that the primary purpose of state employment is not to get the work done but to provide an incentive for educational advancement. A curious example of the cart before the horse, though we entirely agree with the view that "the relationship of Civil Service recruitment to the educational system is one which needs constant adjustment".[1]

It is fascinating to observe how the experiences of today in the sphere of Civil Service reform repeat at a higher level those of a hundred years ago. Then, as now, it required the impact of war to bring about improvements which previous researches and recommendations had failed to achieve. On this occasion it was the Crimean War which frightened the governing class of the country into some sort of appreciation

[1] Emmeline Cohen, *History of the British Civil Service.*

of the situation which a completely unorganized Civil Service was helping to create. War as we know always succeeds in turning a searchlight on administrative processes and if we have read our Florence Nightingale we know to what extent chaos and incompetence contributed towards the waste of life and material which caused even the capitalists to demand an overhaul.

They discovered in fact that a 'free for all' inside the Civil Service was adversely affecting the far more important 'free for all' outside. Commissioners appointed in 1855 discovered that "of 1,000 nominees to the higher Civil Service, 300 were grossly ignorant",[1] and once again the open recruitment controversy raged. The 'antis' attacked it on the grounds that "it would turn thousands of posts in the service of the British Empire into exhibitions for poor scholars". The 'pros' defended it because "it would introduce a new spirit of economy and industry". Both schools were quite obviously concerned only with its results on the development of private enterprise but with greater vision the latter could see that capitalism was bound in course of time to become less individualistic and that it would require at its back a better-organized Civil Service. It would need, of course, to be one which, persuaded of its limitations, would consent to go so far with the control of industrial conditions, but no further. Finally, the 'pros' won and open competition was introduced to become thereafter the principal method of recruitment to the state service.

It should not be assumed that this admittedly great reform brought to an abrupt end the era of patronage and jobbery within the Service. Its main purpose was to create the efficiency necessary for the proper functioning of the industrial state and by a system of examination to ensure a flow of reasonably intelligent recruits to its service. More than fifteen years were to elapse, however, before the full fruits of open competition could be gathered. Meanwhile, the field of candidature was artificially restricted by an insistence on nomination as a prior condition to sitting for an examination. For some time, there-

[1] Emmeline Cohen, *History of the British Civil Service.*

fore, place-hunting was still the order of the day and all that could be said was that the family fool now had to overcome a very genuine difficulty before he could make his way into the Civil Service preserve.

Even to this day the principle of nomination is followed in the case of appointments to the Foreign Office—a factor not without some significance in the light of the bungling and worse which have characterized our diplomatic relations with other countries during the period between the two wars.

By the year 1870, however, the open competition method of recruitment had taken a firm hold throughout the larger part of the state service and with its advent other difficulties arose. The partial solution of the recruitment problem in itself gave rise to further problems of grading and personnel.

Until then departmentalism had been rigidly applied. Each of the State Departments had its own hierarchy and as we have seen there had been no attempt to define duties. It took another fourteen years to get the principle of the division of labour fully recognized, and in 1874 the Service was reorganized on a basis of higher and lower divisions. Of the latter class it was recommended that "their pay should only exceed the market rate by as much as would secure the best of that class of labour". Promotion from one division to another was discouraged on the ground that, in the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the time, "there would be a difficulty in promoting a gentleman from the lower division because it was education which gave a man the status required in dealing with the world when representing his office". Another significant fact to be borne in mind is that when the lower division clerks all of whom were recruited from a common source into a common grade took the opportunity of forming a protective association, the Treasury—again through the Chancellor—argued strongly in favour of splitting the grade. The reason was obvious. To use his own words again, "they were exerting a political influence and acting like one man". Too bad. Jumping across another fourteen years a further landmark of Service development was created in 1888 by the introduction of mechanical processes. It is astounding

to recollect that prior to that year most of the copying work of the State Departments was carried on by a special grade of copyists. Typewriters, although already in fairly common use in the commercial world, were unknown in the Service and when one at last found its way into the sacred precincts of a State Department, there was no one with the ability to use it. The truth is that the prejudice against the employment of women in the service of the state was at that time so great that rather than make a breach with tradition the Treasury preferred to play King Canute to the advancing tide of mechanical development in office organization. It is greatly to be feared that their descendants are still with us today, in uncomfortably large numbers.

However, the reluctance of the Treasury was finally overcome and typists who, to quote the then chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, "could perform work for 23s. a week which male copyists would regard as justifying promotion", were graciously permitted to work for the state. We are expected to assume maybe that some at least of those who entered on "a vocational way of life" (to quote Dr. Robson again) were required at the same time to take a vow of poverty.

We are now in a position to sum up the principal reforms which took place within the Service up to the end of the nineteenth century; mentioning only those which, in accordance with our declared object of revealing the social and economic sources of its development, are relevant to our general thesis. First then there was the institution of a more reliable accounting and audit system to put an end to the peculation and graft which had formerly disfigured the public service. The "integrity" of the Service and its freedom from nepotism were thereby assured. There followed the alteration of the system whereby state employees had been little more than the appendages of individual ministers. Henceforth they were to be, in the terms of our original definition, "the paid administrators or clerks of the state". Then, after a long struggle, the introduction of open competition, promotion by merit (at least in theory) and the division of the Service into

grades in accordance with more or less clearly defined functions. Which brings us to a final period of growth and expansion, the assumption of Treasury control and the attempt to weld the Civil Service into a unified whole with its own traditions and its own code. A significant feature of a large part of all these reforms is the accompanying emphasis placed on the need for the strictest economy in public administration. A whole series of government committees devoted themselves almost exclusively to a task imposed upon them by those who then, as now, wanted to get an efficient Civil Service on the cheap.

The subsequent history of the Civil Service has so far been one of continuous development and expansion. We shall be able in a later section of this book to determine the economic factors which have brought about this growth and we shall see how the two strands of social reform and state encouragement and protection of private enterprise are woven into the fabric of the Civil Service to provide its general pattern up to the beginning of the present war.

It is only necessary to add that so far as the structure of the Service and the principles of recruitment, pay and promotion upon which it is based are concerned, there has been little modification. Practically all that the Tomlin Commission of 1929 did was to reaffirm those principles and to resist any attempt at socially desirable innovation on the plea of national economy.