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# The Methods of Appointment of Administrative and Clerical Staffs in the Local Government Service of England and Wales

By EDITH HOW MARTYN,  
*Middlesex County Councillor.*

PROFESSOR GRAHAM WALLAS expressed to me the urgent need for an inquiry into the methods of appointment and control of officials in the English Local Government service. The following paper is the outcome of this remark.

On inquiry as to what had already been done in this field, I found that with the exception of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law,<sup>1</sup> which reported in 1909, little or nothing had been done. In the case of the National Civil Service, Royal Commissions and Select and Departmental Committees have shed a flood of light on the organization and the staffing of the Departments as well as on the methods of appointment, the grading and the prospects of Civil Servants.<sup>2</sup> The absence of such reports in the case of the Local Government Service is a measure of the public ignorance and indifference which exist with regard to the working, organization, staffing and one might almost add the activities of the Local Government Service.

This apathy contrasts strangely with the considered opinions of competent authorities. For instance, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb say: "The reform of Local Government is the most urgent need for the British Government of to-day."<sup>3</sup>

In the Journal of the National Association of Local Government Officials, November 1920, Mr. O. Lewis Abbot of Manchester writes as follows: "At the present time the Local Government Service, in view of its many and abstruse responsibilities, is recruited in a grotesquely haphazard manner. . . . What have the local authorities ever done towards the training of their future officials? What inducements have they ever offered to their younger officials to improve their proficiency? The truth is that efficiency has come

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. 1909. Cd. 4499.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Commission on the Civil Service, 1912-1916. Six Reports: Cd. 6209, 6534, 6739, 7338, 7748, 7832. Ridley Commission, 1886. Playfair Commission, 1874. Civil Service Enquiry, by Sir C. Trevelyan and Sir S. Northcote, 1853. Reference to the Sessional Printed Papers of the House of Commons shows numerous reports on different branches of the Civil Service.

<sup>3</sup> *Constitution of Socialist State*, 1920, p. 211.

from outside and almost in spite of the authorities. . . . What local authority has inaugurated an entrance examination for the aspirants to official distinction upon entering the service? How many local authorities ever give any meed of recognition upon any of their officials obtaining their always difficult qualifications? How many local authorities have arrangements whereby young officials can spend a few hours a week in office time at the local technical school or, may be, the university? . . .

It is no exaggeration to say that, so far as building up the Local Government Service is concerned, the authorities themselves have signally failed."

Mr. Abbot omits to notice the work of the London County Council in this direction, but with that important and notable exception the indictment is practically a true picture of the state of affairs.

#### DATA

In order to determine to what extent this lack of data really exists, I interviewed the Secretaries of the County Councils Association, the Association of Municipal Corporations and the Association of Urban and Rural District Councils and found that with the exception of the results of an inquiry into the method of appointment of Clerks to County Councils, they had very little information to give on these points. The Secretary of the Association of Local Government Officers very kindly placed at my disposal such small amount of information as he had, and also gave me many useful hints.

I then drafted a questionnaire which Mr. Sidney Webb very kindly revised. The questions asked included :

1. Are appointments made to the Clerical Administrative Staff after examination ?

(a) Competitive. (b) Qualifying.

2. Are any educational qualifications specified as required and if so, what are they ?

A form was sent to the Chief Clerk of each of the 344 largest Local Authorities. In addition a few Councillors personally known to me supplied me with the requisite information. The response to this appeal for information can be seen from the following table..

Name of Authority.	Number to receive form.	Number of replies.	Proportion of replies.
County Councils ... ..	All, i.e., 63	37	59%
County Borough Councils ... ..	All, i.e., 82	55	67%
Borough Councils ... ..	88 (population over 20,000)	62	70%
Metropolitan Borough Councils ... ..	All, i.e., 28	15	54%
Urban District Councils ... ..	83 (population over 20,000)	64	77%
Totals ... ..	344	233	65%

Thus the number of the Authorities<sup>1</sup> supplying information was two-thirds of the total number, and therefore, a very fair idea of the conditions prevailing in the Service can be obtained.

I have much pleasure in thanking those Clerks and Councillors who have supplied me with information and to a special degree the Clerk of the Middlesex County Council, who is ever ready to give me the benefit of his very wide experience.

## COUNTY COUNCILS

### THE CLERK.

The greatest anomaly in the appointment of officials existing in the Local Government Service concerns the Clerks to County Councils. These important bodies (with the exception of London and the Isle of Wight) have no legal power to appoint their own Clerks, but must accept as Clerk to the County Council the person who is appointed by the Standing Joint Committee to the office of Clerk of the Peace for the County.

The Local Government Act<sup>2</sup> of 1888 provides in Part 1, section 83, that : (1) " the Clerk of the Peace of a county, besides acting as clerk of the peace of that county, shall also (subject to the provisions of this Act as respects particular counties) be the Clerk of the County Council.

" (2) He shall be from time to time appointed by the Standing Joint Committee of the County Council and the Quarter Sessions, and may be removed by that joint committee.

" (11) The Clerk of the Peace for the County of [London shall be a separate officer from the Clerk of the County Council for the administrative County of London."

In section 30 it is provided that " there shall be a standing joint committee of the quarter sessions and the county council consisting of such equal number of justices appointed by the quarter sessions and of members of the County Council appointed by that council as may from time to time be arranged between the quarter sessions and the council and in default of arrangement such number to be

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that seven Authorities refused any information, while 104 did not reply. Two refusals are as follows : " Permit me to say at once that it would be quite inconsistent with the ordinary practice in Local Government administration for me to give information such as you desire to have in regard to office arrangements."

" I regret that I am not able to send you this information. If it is required for the purpose of the County Council of Middlesex, I shall be willing to consider any letter from the Clerk to the Council, but I cannot undertake to reply to individual requests for information."

For the purpose of comparison I wrote to the President of the Civil Service Commission of a large City in the United States of America. He sent a full reply and added, " I trust it will help you with the investigation into the methods of appointment of Local Government officials. If there is any other way in which we can be of service to you, do not hesitate to call upon us."

<sup>2</sup> Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1888 (51 and 52 Vict. cap. 41).

taken equally from the quarter sessions and the council as may be directed by a Secretary of State.”

This statutory Committee usually consists of twenty members, of whom ten are annually appointed by the Court of Quarter Sessions in April, and ten by the County Council at its Statutory Meeting in March. There is no appeal from the decision of this Committee. The powers of the Standing Joint Committee are laid down in Section 30 (3) of the Act :

“ Any matter arising under this Act with respect to the police, or to the clerk of the peace, or to clerks of the justices, or to officers who serve both the quarter sessions or justices and the county council, or to the provision of accommodation for the quarter sessions or justices out of session or to the use by them or the police or the said clerks of any buildings, rooms or premises, to any sums received by clerks to justices, or with respect to anything incidental to the above-mentioned matters, and any other matter requiring to be determined jointly by the quarter sessions and county council, shall be referred to and determined by the joint committee under this section; and all such expenditure as the said joint committee determine to be required for the purposes of the matters above in this section mentioned, shall be paid out of the county fund, and the council of the county shall provide for such payment accordingly.”

This survival from the days of the undemocratic administration of County Government by the Justices of the Peace is in many cases resented by the County Councils themselves. The Parliamentary Committee of the County Councils Association <sup>1</sup> has recently given full consideration to the matter, after obtaining the opinion of the individual County Councils and of the Standing Joint Committees and a report drafted by that Committee has been endorsed by the full Council of the Association. This report contains the following recommendations :

- (a) That the appointment of the Clerk of the Council should be in the hands of the County Council, instead of the Standing Joint Committee, but that, in the interests of economy, the offices of Clerk of the Peace and of the County Council should, where possible, be held by the same person ;
- (b) That the County Council should have power, without the sanction of the Secretary of State, to fix the salary, duties, and tenure of office of their Clerk ;
- (c) That the staff employed in the office of the Clerk of the Council should be directly appointed, employed, and paid by the Council ;
- (d) That the Clerk of the Council, by virtue of his office, should be (and, in the opinion of the Sub-Committee, is in fact) Clerk of the Education Committee as of the other

<sup>1</sup> A body which contains as representatives, councillors from every County Council in England and Wales, but until recently did not directly represent the Standing Joint Committee in any respect.

Committees of the Council, but that the division of duties as between the Clerk and the Education Secretary should be left to the discretion of each County Council ;

- (e) That the position of the Clerk and the persons employed in his department, as regards superannuation, should be the same as that of the other employees of the County Council ;
- (f) That Standing Joint Committees as at present constituted should remain ;
- (g) That Standing Joint Committees should be required to furnish County Councils, for the purpose of information, with an estimate of their expenditure at the commencement of each financial year, and with any supplementary estimates, and, further, should be deprived, in favour of county councils, of their powers and duties relative to such county buildings and their staffs as are not used and employed exclusively for the purposes of the police and the administration of justice.

Bills to give effect to these recommendations have been drafted and, when finally settled, will be introduced in Parliament ; but, in view of the fact that the virtual monopoly by the Government of the time of the House allows but little opportunity for the discussion of Bills presented by private members, it is very doubtful whether any early change in the law will be effected.

The following table summarizes the results of the opinions obtained by the County Councils Association :

<i>Recommendation.</i>	<i>County Councils.</i>	<i>Stg. Jnt. C'ttee.</i>
(a)	35 out of 42	30 out of 40
(b)	32 „ 35	28 „ 33
(c)	33 „ 36	27 „ 34
(d)	19 „ 31	15 „ 24
(e)	28 „ 28	28 „ 28
(f)	16 „ 35	32 „ 35
(g)	24 „ 25	26 „ 32

The figures show that for recommendations *a*, *b*, *c*, *e*, and *g*, there were large majorities. Recommendation *d* is more a matter of form than of urgency in actual practice. In most counties the work of the Education Committee is so large that the Clerk of the Council could not deal with it in addition to the work of his Council, but it is considered to be useful to have the legal position of the two officers clearly stated.

Recommendation (*f*), dealing with the abolition or retention of Standing Joint Committees, naturally roused great interest, and it is hardly surprising that only three out of thirty-five committees were willing to vote for their own extinction.

The report gives the opinions on recommendation (*f*) as follows :  
*County Councils.*—Thirty-five replies. Eighteen counties are in

favour of the abolition of the Standing Joint Committee and the transfer of its powers to the County Council, and, of these, five counties (Cambridgeshire, Essex, Northants, Notts, and Wilts) add suggestions as to the constitution of the County Council Committee by which the powers should in future be administered. These suggestions refer, in particular, to representations of Justices. One county (Surrey) expresses the opinion that "certain powers and duties of the Committee should be transferred to the County Council; other powers and duties, including control of the police, could be as efficiently carried out by a statutory committee of the County Council constituted on the lines of the present Standing Joint Committee." Sixteen counties do not approve the proposed abolition of Standing Joint Committees, and, of these, one county (Somerset) limits its proposed retention of the Committee to the duration of County Police Forces, and one (Staffs) expresses the opinion that the Committee should have the same status as other County Council Committees.

*Standing Joint Committees.*—Thirty-five replies. Three Committees (Breconshire, Northants, and Wilts) are in favour of abolition, the two latter adding suggestions as to the constitution of the County Council Committee by which the powers should in future be administered. Thirty-two Committees oppose abolition, two of them (Salop and Somerset) limiting the retention of the Committee to the duration of County Police Forces.

The debate on the recommendations showed that many County Councils were in favour of the complete abolition of Standing Joint Committees, but the majority of the members inclined to the view that it was neither wise nor practical to place the control of the county police in the hands of popularly elected bodies, and therefore voted in favour of the retention of the existing powers of the Standing Joint Committee except in so far as they relate to the appointment of the Clerk to the County Council and the control of such county buildings and their staff as are not used exclusively for the purposes of the police and the administration of justice.

As previously stated, the prospect of legislation is uncertain, for the Bills would probably come within the definition of a Departmental Bill as given by Mr. Balfour: that is, a second-class uncontroversial Bill. Of these Bills, Mr. Balfour in his evidence before the Select Committee on House of Commons (Procedure) 1906,<sup>1</sup> said: "It seems to me, that the great blot, the greatest of all blots upon our procedure at this moment, is the fact that Session after Session goes by and Bills to which nobody or very few really object on their merits are handed on from Session to Session, and perhaps from Government to Government, without becoming law. No political credit is to be got out of them; no Government loses by not passing them; no Government gains by passing them; the people who lose

<sup>1</sup> House of Commons (Procedure), 1906, 89 and 181, Question 107.

are the public or the public service ; and the Opposition of the day or a few individuals on the Opposition or even on the Government side, are quite sufficient to stop those Bills from getting through at present, if they have to run the ordeal of the Committee Stage and Report Stage and all the rest of it. If we could earmark those Bills off, I should hold that one of the greatest reforms ever carried out had really been effected."

Mr. Balfour goes on to say he has devoted " hours of thought in trying to discover a means by which such Bills could be differentiated " and later adds : " I have never yet been able to devise any machinery which seems to me either satisfactory in itself or of a kind that the House would be ready to accept which would make this most desirable differentiation possible."

In reply to another question (114) Mr. Balfour continues : " I again repeat, that so far as those intentions deal with uncontroversial Departmental Bills, there is no object which deserves the more anxious attention of the House. As it stands at present it is a scandal upon our present system." Questioned as to the possibility of distinguishing between controversial and non-controversial Bills, Mr. Balfour said : " I have never been able to think of a plan which either satisfied me or which I thought would satisfy the House. The nearest I have ever got to it is the construction of a Committee which shall not be formed in the ordinary method, on which the Government shall have no exceptional power."<sup>1</sup>

The whole report and especially Mr. Balfour's evidence shows in the clearest light one of the great obstacles in the path of those who would reform local government by legislation. The difficulty applies to those changes which, to quote Mr. Balfour again, " almost every impartial person considering them would say, ' That is a Bill that should pass, it will smooth the way for the Department, it will remove a public grievance—it hurts nobody and it benefits many. Let it go through without all the elaborate formalities with which we now protect legislation.' "<sup>2</sup>

#### STAFF IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

The Clerk to the County Council is alone responsible for the staff of his department. He appoints, controls, pays and dismisses his staff. As the Clerk to one County Council observed to me, " Legally I could come to the office in the morning and dismiss every clerk in my department and the County Council would have no legal remedy." The statutory basis for this arrangement is the Criminal Justice Administration Act, 1851,<sup>3</sup> which provides : " Where any Clerk is paid by salary under any Order made by virtue of this Act, such salary shall include and be deemed the Remuneration, for all business which such Clerk may, by reason of his Office, be called upon to perform ; and no other payment shall be made for any such business, or for or to a Deputy of any such Clerk."

<sup>1</sup> Question 125. <sup>2</sup> Question 142. <sup>3</sup> 14 and 15 Vict., ch. 55, sec. 10.

The Law Officers of the Crown have ruled that the salary must be an inclusive one.

The actual position may be very different. The Standing Joint Committee may, by arrangement with the Clerk, appoint, promote, and control the staff in the Clerk's department, and in Middlesex the grading and adjustments of salary are carried out by the Establishment Committee of the County Council.

#### OTHER STAFF APPOINTMENTS.

In addition to the Clerk, the staff of a County Council consists of:

- (a) Professional and Technical Staff.
- (b) Administrative and Clerical Staff.

With regard to the Professional and Technical Staff, it is not usual for these experts to submit to an examination by an appointing body as in all cases there are recognized professional examinations and candidates are expected to have qualified for these. All such posts are usually advertised.

The data supplied by my questionnaire refer only to the Administrative and Clerical Staffs.

#### COUNTIES

London is the only County Council which has a comprehensive scheme of entrance examinations.<sup>1</sup> There are two grades of open competitive examination for appointments to its Administrative and Clerical Staffs—(a) for appointments on the minor establishment; (b) for second-class clerkships.

The Essex County Council has graded its staff—apart from principal County officers, chief assistants, specialist officers, chief clerks and women shorthand typists—into two main divisions, viz., a junior grade and an adult grade.<sup>2</sup>

The Middlesex County Council, in December last, passed the following resolution: "That, except in cases of special circumstances, it be made a condition that applicants for new appointments on the clerical staff of the County Council must have passed Matriculation or a General School Examination, or hold a Certificate of a similar standard, e.g., the Oxford or Cambridge Senior Locals."

<sup>1</sup> Particulars of the conditions of service and of the examinations, copies of examination paper and of the qualifications required for candidates are to be obtained either directly or through any bookseller from Messrs. P. S. King and Son.

<sup>2</sup> "At 18 years of age the probationer shall cease to remain in the County service unless he shall have passed a test examination conducted by the Director of Education, or such external examination as shall be deemed to be equivalent.

"A male clerk shall not be retained in the County service after reaching the age of 24 years, unless he shall have passed a second examination conducted by the Director of Education, or such other external examination as shall be deemed to be equivalent, and have secured a recommendation from the principal officer in his department."

At least four other Counties have an examination conducted by the heads of departments for juniors entering the service. Stimulated by the National Association of Local Government Officers,<sup>1</sup> many counties are considering the matter, but a large majority of County Councils have apparently given no thought to the question. In the absence of any systematic methods of entry to the service haphazard selection takes place; boys who know, or whose parents know, officials in the service get an advantage, an energetic Education Secretary naturally urges the claims of boys from the local schools, a few would enter in response to advertisements and others because their fathers or uncles were in the service, which would give them an advantage.

Some comments made by Clerks to County Councils are as follows:

“After thirty years’ experience, I am satisfied that a little common sense is better than hard and fast rules as to the service promotion, etc., of the administrative staff.”

“At the present I could give satisfactory answers to hardly any of your questions as the whole subject of staff and conditions of service are just now to a large extent in a state of suspension, and some or all of the questions you ask depend on decisions (if any) which may be come to when the present application of a war bonus system ceases and permanent salaries are fixed.”

“The Rutland County Council have no clerical staff directly employed by them; they are employed and paid by me.”

“The question of examination on appointment to the Clerical Administrative Staff of the West Riding County Council was recently considered by a Joint Committee of the County Council and adjourned for further consideration.”

Members of the Durham County Council in conversation with me on the matter said they considered that until all children receive free secondary education, no rules ought to be made which would have the effect of excluding children who have only had an elementary education.

## COUNTY BOROUGHS

Manchester appears to be the only County Borough which has a considered scheme of recruitment by open competitive examination. In 1907 the City Council approved “That a preliminary open competitive examination be necessary to qualify for entrance to official service of the Corporation, and that all future appointments be made from a list of candidates who have passed such examination

<sup>1</sup> The National Association of Local Government Officers founded in 1905 is a Trade Union with a membership of more than 40,000 out of a possible 60,000 to 70,000 drawn from all departments of the Local Government Service. The President is Sir Homewood Crawford, City Solicitor, London. The General Secretary, Mr. L. Hill, and the offices are at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

and to the satisfaction of the respective Committees making the appointments.”<sup>1</sup>

Though no other County Borough appears to have any definite plan of recruitment by open competitive examination a large number are considering the question; the following comments taken from the questionnaire returns will indicate the tentative efforts being made:

“I may say that whenever I have had occasion to engage a new clerk, I have made the appointment, generally with the approval of the Committee; there has not been any occasion for an examination, but first-class educational qualifications have, of course, been essential.”

“Appointments on the junior staff are, as a general rule, made after examination.”

Similar remarks are made by ten out of the fifty-five County Borough Clerks.

“The Local Branch of the National Association of Local Government Officers has asked that all appointments be made after examination, and I shall be prepared to support their recommendation.”

“Generally speaking, the question of Educational ability has not been so much observed in making appointments here as I should wish, but this is very largely being altered. For instance, I am advertising for applicants for the filling of eight posts in my (City Treasurer’s) Department, and I am stipulating that the applicants must either be Chartered or Incorporated Accountants or have passed the final examination of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. At the next meeting of the Finance Committee it is my full intention to recommend that no Junior shall be appointed in my Department in future, unless he undertakes to take such a course of study as will meet with my approval and in due course present himself for some qualifying examination.”

“The whole question of the employment of the clerical staff is at present receiving consideration by a special Committee appointed for the purpose. A suggestion has been made that the junior appointments in the various offices of the Corporation should be

<sup>1</sup> Standing Order No. 96 provides: “(1) Any new or vacant permanent position in the service of the Corporation, the commencing salary for which exceeds £4 4s. per week, shall be filled after public advertisement except where it is deemed desirable to promote or transfer an official of the Corporation, and except in the case of such positions in the Higher Education staff, as the Education Committee consider it desirable to fill without advertisement.

“(2) Every advertisement inviting applications for a new or vacant position in the service of the Corporation, or for any appointment which rests with the Corporation, shall prohibit canvassing in any form—oral or written, direct or indirect—and (in the case of a position or appointment the commencing salary for which exceeds £4 4s. per week) shall require applications with testimonials to be sent to the Town Clerk only, and not to the members of the Committee or of the Council.

“Juniors are examined in arithmetic, writing and dictation, and a good general education is required. In the College of Technology, clerical assistants are expected to attain to Matriculation standard at least.”

filled by selection from the most suitable candidates in attendance at the various schools in the City, such appointments to be subject to the person appointed undertaking to continue his education in a manner satisfactory to the head of the department, but as the whole matter is at present under consideration, no definite decisions have been arrived at."

Derby Council lays down that "Junior clerks must have obtained certificates in the Oxford or Cambridge Local Examinations or such other examination as the Committee may approve," and that "Junior clerks wishing to be passed into Grade 3, or reaching the age of twenty-one, must have obtained certificates in specified commercial subjects at examinations held by approved Societies or Institutions."

East Ham "requested the National Association of Local Government Officers to hold an examination for a number of new entrants now required for the Local Government Service." "Officers holding a degree of a British University are entitled to £10 above the maximum of his grade."

"In most cases junior clerks are selected from boys who have done well at local schools."

"The appointments and promotion of Assistants are generally left in the hands of the Chief Officials."

At Norwich, "engagements are restricted to persons who have attained the age of sixteen years, and this it is understood was imposed with the object of ensuring that applicants for clerical positions have received a secondary education."

"The Sheffield City Council has recently decided that Junior Clerks entering the service of the Corporation shall possess the School Certificate of the Northern Universities Board or an equivalent. Junior Clerks at present in the service of the Corporation are expected to obtain a similar qualification before attaining the age of twenty-one, as a condition of the continuance of their employment after that age."

At Southport steps have been taken "to get the Corporation to recognize National Association of Local Government Officers' or equivalent examination for entry to the service." "Recruiting of Staffs varies in each Department. Everything being subject to the recommendations of the Heads of Departments."

## LONDON BOROUGHS

In no case is there a proper scheme of open competitive entrance examinations though eight impose a test on juniors entering the service. Camberwell provides, "that appointments to the Grade A Clerkships shall be made, after advertisement, by competitive examination. Candidates must be between the ages of 16 and 17 years. The difference in age is to be equalised by marks."

St. Pancras requires "Junior Clerks to have passed the Matriculation or equivalent examination."

The Appointments, Salaries and Wages Committee of the Southwark Borough Council reported as follows: " We also feel that boys and youths entering the service of the Council should be required to possess certain educational qualifications or to pass a sort of entrance examination, and that as they grow older there should be certain technical qualifications they should be compelled to acquire, in default of which they should be compulsorily retired from the service of the Council. We feel that if the course suggested is agreed to, the Council will obtain a far greater degree of efficiency than has ever obtained before, in addition to which the status of the officer would be considerably improved.

" The present practice of officers applying for transfer from department to department irrespective of their ability to perform the duties of the particular appointment for which they apply, but tempted thereto solely by a small increase of salary, is in our opinion not conducive to efficient working of departments or the public service generally and should be strongly deprecated.

" We are of opinion that in all future appointments in the Town Clerk's office, the candidates should enter by examination or recognized educational certificates.

" We therefore suggest that promotions in the Town Clerk's office (apart from the existing staff) be granted only on the candidates holding the various certificates of the National Association of Local Government Officers."<sup>1</sup>

The Wandsworth Borough Council " holds no formal examination but a general all-round education is required."

### BOROUGHS (NON-COUNTY)

No Borough holds any systematic competitive examination. Fifteen boroughs have some kind of examination tests for juniors entering the service.

The following remarks are taken from the returns :

" Staff too small for recruitment."

" In a general sense no educational qualifications required."

Juniors are often appointed " on the recommendation of the Head Masters of the local secondary schools."

" Vacancies are usually filled by advertising the post and selection of the most suitable candidate except where the vacancy is filled by promotion of a Junior. Actual merit is recognized chiefly and previous experience."

<sup>1</sup> In the Southwark Engineer's Department, " boys joining the service at £40 per annum, rising to £100, must undertake to study mathematics to duodecimals and to qualify themselves in typewriting and shorthand for promotion to the next grade." Further, " every officer commencing at £110 and rising to £200, must become efficient in the general duties of the office, to do which he must acquire a knowledge of the cost of materials, the checking of stores and the pricing and working out of trench accounts. He must have full knowledge of the Public Health Act, Building Act, Metropolitan Management Acts, and all bye-laws relating to the same, and be able to write reports from draft notes."

"For junior clerks satisfactory educational qualifications are required."

"The Town Council have not yet adopted this method in making appointments."

"Appointments to junior positions are usually made by competitive examination. All other appointments are made after interview, but without examination. In future in the Borough Treasurer's Department appointments are to be restricted to holders of the Diploma of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants."

"Encouragement given to officials to pass examinations relating to their work, and to attend conferences of their Institutes."

"Candidates possessing degrees have an advantage."

"Some of our officials are receiving less than manual labourers in the same departments. The Corporation have passed a resolution debaring applications for increases in salary and also rejected an application for an increase in war bonus."

"Most of the vacancies for Junior Members of the staff are filled by students from the Municipal Secondary School holding Cambridge Local Certificates."

"Our staff is not large enough to involve the necessity for an elaborate organization or scheme."

"There is no established custom. Ordinary members of the clerical staffs are appointed by the heads of the various departments, and the more important officials by the various committees. Each appointment is dealt with according to circumstances at the time."

"As Margate is only a comparatively small borough the appointments to the staffs are made after carefully considering the qualifications of the applicants. In the case of the Borough Accountant's Department, which is the largest, the candidates usually have to pass an examination."

In a small borough with a population of about 5,000, the comment is: "No office staff. The Borough Surveyor also holds appointments as Borough Architect, Waterworks Engineer, Sewage Works Manager, Collector of Water Rents and Inspector of Nuisances, etc." The official's own comment is: "This is a case where the remuneration is inadequate for the training, experience and qualifications necessary to perform the duties. The office of Inspector of Nuisances should be a separate appointment, and he should be a whole-time official. There are no recognized office hours; the officer generally works from 12 to 14 hours per day (six days a week) in order to keep his work up to date. Two weeks' holiday."

"No; but educational qualifications are taken into consideration."

"Being a small borough, the heads of departments have no understudies."

"Small staff, so no necessity for elaborate rules or classes."

“The staffs are small; I cannot give the numbers off-hand, and regret time is limited.”

“Secondary School boys are appointed as juniors and are promoted as opportunity occurs.”

In a borough with a population of about 9,000, the comment is: “The Clerk, Medical Officer of Health, Inspector of Nuisances and Housing Surveyor are the only salaried officers. There has been no vacancy during the last 20 years.”

“Examination certificates not recognized pecuniarily, but taken into account on appointment or promotion.”

“The staff in small towns of 20 or 30 thousand hardly comes within your scheme. The Town Council is much more in touch with officials than in the larger County Boroughs. Changes are rarely made if the official is competent, and officials rarely leave to seek promotion, i.e., in the smaller towns.”

“Except in the case of the very large local authorities, I do not think it would be possible to arrange qualifying examinations for the clerical staff. These appointments are comparatively few in number, and it would be difficult to fix standards suitable to the varying conditions. I do not think the same difficulty arises in regard to competitive examinations, both on original appointment and on promotion, but it does not follow that mere examination alone is an indication of fitness.”

## URBAN DISTRICTS

Eleven urban districts have some kind of examination for juniors entering the service; of these, Beckenham, Chiswick, Edmonton and Southgate have adopted the scheme drawn up by the National Association of Local Government Officers. Cleethorpes, Ilford, Shipley, Southall, Stretford, Willesden and Worksop set their own examinations.

Willesden Council, apparently alone among urban district councils, has graded the staff and instituted examinations for Junior Division Clerks and Fourth Division Clerks. Candidates for appointment must have received a good general education, and may be required to submit themselves for examination in the following subjects: (1) Handwriting, (2) orthography, (3) English composition, (4) arithmetic, (5) manuscript copying, (6) geography, (7) English history.

Candidates for appointment as Fourth Division Clerks may be required to submit themselves for examination in subjects: (1) to (4) as above, (5) book-keeping and accounts, (6) précis writing, (7) advanced shorthand and typewriting, as well as two of the following: English history, geography, mathematics, elementary science.

In other divisions it is provided that: “Candidates for appointment to other divisions may be required to submit themselves for examination in the advanced stages of subjects mentioned in the immediately preceding paragraph, or alternatively, to produce

qualifying certificates from some recognized examining body, according to the department in which a vacancy exists."

Also, candidates for new appointments under the Council may be required to submit themselves to a medical examination by the Council's Medical Officer.

In view of the returns from the larger authorities it is not surprising that the Urban District Councils have not thought it necessary to demand academic qualifications from entrants to their service.

The returns contain the following comments :

" Many departments are, so to speak, one-man departments, or one man and an office boy."

" Not at present, but the question of making use of the system of examinations instituted by the National Association of Local Government Officers is under consideration."

" Junior entrants to the service should receive a high standard of education, and should attend Continuation Classes and study for examinations the syllabus of which deals with the work that they will be called upon to do."

" Promotion is a slow business without method and only accomplished by great perseverance."

" No system adopted ; Committee concerned decides to suit itself."

" I would like to point out that Goole is not of sufficient size to justify any elaborate machinery or fixed policy in regard to most classes of its officials and employees, and that, in practice, it is found better to deal with each case on its merits than to make strict rules."

" In the larger districts the appointments are graded and specific qualifications are required for each grade, whereas in our case each officer has more multifarious duties to perform, and he is selected from his training and experience in the various duties required."

" The Council engage youths from school sometimes, and train them."

" There is a resolution about ten years old that vacancies should be filled up by promotion of the staff or otherwise by public advertisement. This is usually more honoured in the breach than by observance, to the general detriment of many members of the staff."

" The system indicated is quite satisfactory to all concerned." The system, or rather lack of it, being no entrance examination of any kind.

In a district with a population of 20,000 the comment is " The Clerk is not whole-time, but has a legal practice and other appointments. He has also a partner ; all of them at times do Council work, but are not exclusively engaged in it."

The returns as regards questions 1 and 2, i.e., entrance examination tests, are summarized in the following table :

Authorities.	Recognized examinations for admission.	Informal tests for admission.	No examination tests.
County Councils ... ..	2	4	31
County Borough Councils ... ..	6 (5 " Nalgo ") <sup>1</sup>	7	42
London Borough Councils ... ..	4 " Nalgo "	4	7
Borough Councils ... ..	2 " Nalgo "	9	51
Urban District Councils ... ..	5 (4 " Nalgo ")	6	53
	19	30	184

Thus, in less than 25 per cent. of the authorities is there any examination of the entrants to Local Government Service.

### WOMEN CLERKS.

In view of the importance to women of equal opportunities for employment with men in Local Government Service, I hope to deal with the matter in a separate paper, limiting myself here to a few general remarks.

Before the war very few women were employed in the administrative and clerical branches. During the war there was a large influx, and the footing thus gained has not been entirely lost. It is gratifying to note that the National Association of Local Government Officers endorses the claim for equal opportunity and equal pay for women with men in the Local Government Service.

### CONCLUSIONS

The facts and comments given indicate sufficiently that the method of recruitment for and the standard of qualifications demanded from entrants to the general administrative and clerical branches of the Local Government Service have hardly kept pace with the very large increase in responsibilities placed by Parliament on local authorities.

The London County Council alone has dealt adequately with the problem, and this is due to its great size and the compact, fairly homogeneous population of 4 millions. Next in size to London, the largest authorities are the Lancashire County Council, with a population of 1.7 millions, though with an area nearly fourteen times larger than that of the London County Council; the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council, population 1.5 millions, area 1.7 million acres; and the Birmingham City Council, with a population of 919,438.

In comparison with London, not one of the other authorities employs a sufficiently large staff to make worth while the setting up of comprehensive machinery for competitive examinations on the lines of the Civil Service examinations. The County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations, if they

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Local Government Officers examination.

wished, could easily conduct such examinations and thus establish a suitable standard of educational attainment for the staffs of all the larger local authorities.

The technical and professional officers employed by local authorities must have passed the appropriate examinations, and thus the qualifications of these officers—surveyors, medical doctors, midwives, accountants and others—are of a sufficiently high standard, whether they are employed by a large county council, by an important county borough, or by a remote rural district. This is very advantageous to the smaller authorities, and the problem now awaiting solution is to provide that the members of the administrative and clerical staffs are as appropriately trained and have had as good opportunities of acquiring recognized qualifications as the technical officers. Scientific administration is as important and fundamental to the Service as a knowledge of medicine is to the Medical Officer of Health or of law to the Town Clerk.

The National Association of Local Government Officers attempts to supply this opportunity. At its annual conference in 1920 the Association approved an educational scheme prepared by Mr. Abbott. The scheme provides for preliminary, intermediate and final examinations, and for Associateship and Fellowship of the Association.<sup>1</sup> A Correspondence Institute has been organized which provides tuition not only for the Association's own examinations but also for those of fourteen other bodies, including Surveyors' Institution, Sanitary Inspectors' Association, and Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, each of which deals with aspects of Local Government work.

The National Association has circulated to all authorities its scheme for an entrance standard to the Service with a request for its adoption. This scheme has been adopted by fourteen borough councils and four urban district councils.

The Association aims to make the Local Government Service equal in importance and efficiency to the National Civil Service. As the General Secretary expresses it: "Agitation may win the Local Government officer bonuses and other temporary advantages; education alone can give him what he rightly regards as his due—equality with the Civil Servant."<sup>2</sup> This may seem ambitious, desirable or rather terrifying according to one's views of public administration, but it is certainly in the trend of modern tendencies. Sir William Beveridge, discussing devolution in local authorities,<sup>3</sup> points out: "What is certain is that, if the Government is in future to enter more into the lives of the ordinary citizens than it did before the war, it can only do so successfully by continuing and extending the war-time policy of devolution, either to localized

<sup>1</sup> A Prospectus and Syllabus can be obtained from the Association at Caxton Hall, Westminster, price 1s. <sup>2</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, May 29th, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *The Public Service in War and in Peace*, by Sir William Beveridge. (Constable). 1920. P. 58.

staffs of the central departments or to the municipal authorities as such. The latter is the more probable development ; we may look forward to seeing ever-increasing and more various responsibilities thrown upon local authorities and their staffs. Their work will approximate more and more to the administrative work of government departments ; similar problems will arise as to the selection, payment, terms of service, and training of the staffs."

At the moment this appears somewhat utopian. The normal course to-day is for youths to enter the service at from 14 to 16 years of age, practically untrained ; no attractions for entrance to the service are offered to men and women who have had a university training. Degree courses in public administration are taken by students in various universities and the London School of Economics offers special facilities for training in these subjects. Yearly, numbers complete their full graduate course, but it is the rarest thing to hear of their special knowledge being utilized in the Local Government Service.

The Civil Service Commissioners could also be approached with a view to a certain number of posts in Local Government being given to candidates who sit for the examination for first division clerkships.

To bring about most of the desired changes does not require legislation, and that is a most encouraging factor. Councils can at once improve the status of their staffs by adopting the examination scheme of the National Association of Local Government Officers, by allowing the junior members time in which to qualify themselves to pass higher examinations and by arranging that such higher qualifications lead to the officer being entrusted with more responsible work.