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## Europeans in the Indian Services.

THE story of the British servants of the Indian Government falls naturally into three periods. In the first period the Britisher (we cannot say Englishman because he was more often Scotch or Irish) usually gave up his native land, adopted India as his country, often took an Indian wife, and had a real chance of understanding the people he ruled. There were then few white women in India.

The transition to the second period was due to improved means of transport. The Britisher in the Indian Service no longer settled permanently in India, and he also normally brought with him a portion of European civilisation in the form of a wife. From the point of view of the welfare of India the change had a number of consequences. These British rulers were now birds of passage and thus had less opportunity and perhaps even less desire to understand the people. The introduction of European civilisation to India increased his separation from the people. The European wife disapproved of the earlier unions and their offspring, and the Eurasian, who might have continued to rank almost as high as the European if the first period had continued, now fell seriously in public estimation. Moreover, the presence of a wife and children was apt to affect the nerves of men who in their absence would have faced any situation with perfect equanimity; the Mutiny still casts a shadow. But the greatest weakness (a weakness shared with the first period) was the absence of contact between the educational and political sides of the Government. On the educational side the Government was teaching the people respect and admiration for democracy, while on its administrative side it remained a benevolent despotism. So apt a pupil as the Indian could not be expected to refrain from a demand for democratic institutions; which brings us to the third period.

The Morley-Minto reforms were not effectively in the direction of democratic government, and the third period dates from the Government of India Act of 1919 which gave effect to the Montague-Chelmsford reforms and introduced a degree of representative government under the system called "dyarchy." Under this system government activities fall into three classes:

1. Central services carried out for the whole of India by the Government of India.

2. Services entrusted to the local government acting on democratic lines, that is, entrusted to the governor acting on the advice of ministers responsible to a legislative council (called "transferred services").

3. Services entrusted to the local government on the old lines, the governor acting at his own discretion uncontrolled by the legislative council (called "reserved services").

The setting up of dyarchy inevitably raised certain problems, and it is the solutions to these problems offered in the report of the Lee Commission<sup>1</sup> that we have now to discuss. The problems were in effect (1) how should the staff required to carry out the transferred services be recruited and controlled, and (2) what proportion of Europeans should there be in the personnel of each of the services and how is the necessary number of suitable Europeans to be obtained. The principle of dyarchy gives the reply at once to the first question. The transferred services belong to the local government acting in its democratic capacity, that is to say, the officers are the servants of the legislative council, the orders of which they receive through the governor and ministers ; and the appointment and control of the officers who carry out these duties must also be the affair of the governor and ministers acting for the legislative council. Accordingly the report proposes that for the education service, the agriculture service, the veterinary service, and the roads and bridges side of the engineering service, no new appointments should be made on the present terms on which officers hold from the Secretary of State, and that new services should be instituted to be recruited and controlled by the local governments.

Into the problem of the European recruits a number of considerations enter : the fall in the value of money, the question of security of tenure, the prospects of promotion, the comparison of the future and the past in regard to the spaciousness of the European's life, and the interest and importance of his work.

The proposals of the Commission in the matter of security and of the fall in the value of money are of a kind that should enable good men to undertake the work. The question of promotion depends on the relative merits of the European and the Indian in the services. The highest posts of all must be considered as outside the reckoning of the European because under the parliamentary system they will go more and more to Indians. Against this is to be set the fact that a smaller proportion of Europeans are to be recruited, so that the proportion of good posts per European is increased, and if they show themselves better men than their Indian colleagues their flow of promotion should be greater.

The greatest change is in the nature of the duties. The benevolent despot dislikes the change and thinks it will ruin India. He has ruled the Indians all his life on the assumption that they are children and he cannot now look on them otherwise. He is consequently out of place in the new system. Instead of him we need a man prepared to respect the Indian as an adult human

being, to sympathise with his desire for parliamentary government, and to teach him to run the parliamentary machine. While this may be a position of less personal grandeur than the benevolent despot enjoyed, it is one of greater human interest, and for the right man it will provide a life fully as attractive as the old. It is also possible that by regarding the Indians as adults with human feeling and a certain degree of judgment, and not as children, the future European servants of the Government may escape from the shadow of the Mutiny which has so overhung their predecessors.

For the purpose of carrying out the recruitment and control of the services that are in the future to hold from the Secretary of State or the Government of India, a Public Service Commission is to be established. It will be both judicial and educational. Its judicial functions will be connected with the disciplinary control and protection of the services while its educational qualifications will come in in relation to recruitment. The appointment of this Commission is a necessary development and was in fact prescribed by the Government of India Act of 1919, and in addition to this central Public Service Commission each province will find it necessary to set up a similar body to manage the recruitment and control of the officers employed on transferred services. This is recognised by the Royal Commission, which states in paragraph 30 "we are aware that any proposal that a central Public Service Commission should be empowered to interfere on its own initiative in provincial administration would be regarded as violating the principle of provincial autonomy."

It is rightly recommended that the knowledge and experience of the Public Service Commission should be placed at the disposal of any local government that chooses to use it. It is highly desirable that the local governments should take advantage of this opportunity, but any self-respecting government will shy off if the attentions of the Public Service Commission are thrust upon it, and yet in paragraph 27(3) the Royal Commission recommends that the Public Service Commission should be the final authority for determining "the standards of qualification and the methods of examination" for the local government services. This recommendation clearly violates the principle of provincial autonomy and cannot possibly be put into force ; and the very fact that it is recommended may determine the local governments to have nothing to do with the Public Service Commission.

The truth is that the Royal Commission has given little attention to the machinery of recruitment. Witness the illogical minute on the London Open Competitive Examination which has been thought worthy of publication. Witness also the recommendation that the upper limit of age for the Indian Civil

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, dated March 27, 1924.

Service should be twenty-four, because the universities prefer that age, and the statement that "it was a corollary of the decision to reduce the upper age limit to 23 years that the period of probation for recruits should be extended from one year to two"; the truth being that the basic decision was for two years' probation and reduction of the upper age limit to twenty-three an inevitable corollary. In this connexion we should have expected the Commission to take some account of the fact that a probation of two years is already in force for the Indian Civil Servants recruited in India.

In spite of these blemishes to which we have thought it necessary to direct attention, the fact remains that the Royal Commission has done sterling work towards making the government service attractive to the European. Its work is in the main excellent, and the blemishes can easily be removed.

### Southern Nigerians.

*Life in Southern Nigeria: the Magic, Beliefs and Customs of the Ibibio Tribe.* By P. Amaury Talbot. Pp. xvi + 356 + 32 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1923.) 21s. net.

"ONLY by the good will of the black men will it ever be possible for more than the faintest idea of his complicated psychology to be grasped by the white; and could but the educated negro be brought to understand that he has infinitely more to gain than lose by recording every scrap of information concerning native customs and beliefs—omitting nothing and concealing nothing—such a book might be written as has never yet seen the light of day." This expression of opinion sums up Mr. Amaury Talbot's whole attitude towards the African. His latest book, "Life in Southern Nigeria," is written not only with knowledge and experience, but also in a spirit of sympathetic understanding. As a guide for future administrators the work is invaluable, combining as it does the results of scientific research with an appreciative knowledge of the beliefs and superstitions of an ancient people.

The Ibibio, of whom the author writes, are a little-known people living in the south-eastern part of Nigeria. They number, in all, more than a million, of whom some hundred and fifty thousand inhabit the Eket district. This is Mr. Amaury Talbot's description of them: "The Ibibio are typical negroes, thick set, with long arms, short trunks, medium-sized legs and feet broad and flat. Their language belongs to the Semi-Bantu group with many and strong affinities to the Sudanic tongue of their neigh-

hours, the Ibo, with whom they have much in common." Although, as the author points out, the march of Western civilisation results in the younger members of the Ibibio becoming Christianised, many of the older generation still cling to beliefs and ways unchanged since the childhood of the world. "For them," he writes, "the commonplace does not exist, each object is tinged with wonder and mystery, while forces benevolent or malignant are to be felt on every hand."

According to Mr. Amaury Talbot there are two forces which influence the life of the Ibibio, the Ndem (meaning fresh water) and the Ibokk (often translated by Juju as well as by medicine). The first of these forces dwells in or near rivers, pools, springs, and trees. They are gnomes, salamanders, dryads, etc., and are supposed to be male and female. The Ibokk are natural or elemental forces, which do not affect, or come into contact with, human beings until made to do so by a doctor or "wise" man. An interesting chapter is one on magic plays, where the author describes what may be called conjuring tricks. "A vast concourse of people gather together and a baby is brought into their midst. The child is thrown into a fu-fu mortar and beaten to pulp before the eyes of all the people. Three men are chosen to eat the babe, and when all is eaten, they begin to dance. After a while the central figure shakes his leg violently and from the thigh the child appears."

The idea that the soul of man or woman has the power to leave its human form and enter into that of its "affinity" is firmly held by these people. In proof of this the author relates the story of a Yoruba steward, who was caught by a crocodile one evening and dragged below into the river. After investigation it was found that the crocodile was supposed to contain the soul of a Juju man who, when angered against the Government, wreaked his vengeance on the officials. On this particular evening he was especially incensed against an official who had reported his evil deeds, and waited until he could have his revenge.

There are, according to Mr. Amaury Talbot, three secret societies of the Ibibio, the Egbo, Idiong, and Isong. Their initiatory ceremonies bear a strong resemblance to Freemasonry, and any non-member attending the ceremony would be punished severely. In an interesting chapter entitled social organisation and tabu, the author lays stress on the fact that slaves taken in war were most kindly treated, and in many cases allowed to marry into their masters' family. Amongst the food taboos the animals forbidden were snakes, monkeys, and lizards. In this chapter Mr. Amaury Talbot relates an experience he had whilst District Commissioner. Three of the head chiefs