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Address.

THE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AS A CIVIL SERVICE INSTRUMENT.*

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AN invitation to discuss in this national convention a subject of no little importance to Civil Service, is an honor highly appreciated by a member of the medical profession. The seeming simplicity of this problem of physical examination has given rise to the mistaken idea, even among those of my own profession, that either there is very little to be said about it, or that everything which can be said has already been well and finally expressed. Since simplicity, however, is so often the superlative of complexity, let us test the verity of the paradox by submitting this topic to a more philosophical discussion than it has yet provoked in the forum of this assembly.

I am not altogether imaginative when I remind you that before the days of the modern

Civil Service Commission, the only Civil Service law was the law of physical diagnosis, and the only Civil Service Commissioner, the physical examiner, on whose knowledge, good judgment, honesty, and civic perception depended the physical excellence or inferiority of the personnel of many of our police and fire organizations. That this quasi-civil service law was indifferently administered is now a matter of history. Its administrator, however, was no more blamable than many other excellent citizens whose reason, bewitched by the seductive euphony of a slogan more specious and more ancient than autocracy, scorned the prosaic logic that links a victim with the spoils and the victor. If I may paraphrase a line from Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, the fault was not in their stars, but in their own civic color-blindness, that they were underlings.

In proof of this, there is abundant evidence, classical as well as conclusive. I refer to the sketches of that old-time cartoonist who waxed fat on a dull-witted public, by depicting with monotonous regularity the physical and mental obesity of a grotesque, club-swinging figure dressed in the uniform of a policeman. Happily there were those who refused to laugh at a joke which was all on themselves and at the expense of the sacred ideals of their fathers.

* Read at Milwaukee, Wis., June 21, 1918.

These were your forebears, in whose memory we are here gathered and whose coming marked the passing of that old cartoonist. Therefore if I seem to be impertinent in reminding you of your kinship with the doctor and the jokester, it is only because I feel that the failure of the former is entirely mitigated by the splendid tribute paid to you by the latter, when, like Swift,

"He showed by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted you so much."

Twelve years of labor in the field of Civil Service would represent much time ill-spent if, early in my career, I did not recognize the fallacy of the clinical attitude of mind of my profession which classifies those departments of government that enlist medical service as mere dependencies of the empire of medicine. Justly impatient with the foolhardiness of this fallacy, men with civic vision raised the science of public health to a dignity and efficiency which it never knew under the old feudal system of its clinical ancestor. I point the moral not only to adorn the tale, but also to serve notice that in the exposition of this subject, I fully realize that I am a medical passenger riding on a branch of the main governmental line. To complete the metaphor, let me add that I was shunted in from a siding. In other words, in the field of Civil Service, a physical examiner performs a medical function subordinate to the function of the government, and not a governmental function subordinate to the function of medicine. Hence in this discussion, I shall endeavor to forget that I am a student of medicine, and shall try to think with the more logical mind of a student of government. Like Virgil, singing of arms and the man, I intend no harangue anatomic.

At the outset, the purpose of the physical examination must be clearly understood. To understand this purpose, it is essential that we appreciate in a broad way, at least, not only the ideals which direct every purpose of Civil Service, but also those which direct every purpose and function of true democratic government. Briefly, true democracy means these three things: first, equal opportunity for all; second, special privilege to none; and third, the utilization of superior ability. The first two desiderata recognize the moral function of government. The third emphasizes the vital importance of the economic function, but it

points particularly to the indispensability of the strongest possible leadership, without which the moral and economic functions cannot be co-ordinated, or maintained inseparable and inviolable. Autocracy, interested only in the materialistic philosophy of economics, demands for her very existence the utilization of superior ability; but she differs from democracy in that she substitutes steel and high explosives for the moral force which distinguishes what Mr. Ralph Adams Cram calls "the democracy of ideal." While democracy is loath to admit that complete moral paralysis is the price of economic success, she has not demonstrated that moral cretinism or ethical anaemia can achieve anything more than economic mediocrity. Under the baneful influence of the alien efficiency expert, less efficient, less expert, and less human than a cash register; and under the coarse and bogus leadership of the economic juggler lacking the honesty, the accuracy, and even the soul of an adding machine, democracy has seen stricken from her budget the modest salary of her sealer of moral weights and moral measures.

These three distinguishing marks of democracy are also the three distinguishing marks of Civil Service. Primarily, you are champions of the moral function of government; but since the integrity of democracy demands that the economic and the moral functions be indissoluble, you cannot avoid challenging the former when it runs amuck in your section of the moral domain. Representing therefore the potential energy of inseparable righteousness and efficiency in government, you are more than an employment bureau. Milton did not mean you when he said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." Yours is a condition of activity within, and not of inertia without, the gates of government. You can fail only if your conception of efficiency means thralldom to the bloodless and pitiless rule of economics.

The physical examination, therefore, like other instruments in your technic of selection, is concerned fundamentally in assisting you to solve the complex problem of efficiency presented by the many difficulties which beset your determined purpose to have the public service enjoy the benefits that can come only from the utilization of superior ability. While from a purely Civil Service point of view, physical excellence is de-

manded as a pledge of present and future usefulness, the physical examination, nevertheless, expresses many other ideas which cannot be ignored by Civil Service Commissions who would be progressive. More than any other governmental activity you have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the legislation which has enabled our public health boards to achieve such beneficent results, and also by those ideas expressed in such creations of modern social legislation as the industrial accident board, the board of labor and industry, and the minimum wage commission. With all these you must discover your points of contact, for underlying them are principles which you must recognize and support, if you would maintain a high degree of efficiency for yourselves, as well as for those governmental departments within your jurisdiction.

To the influence of this modern social legislation, I can only briefly refer, but that you may understand my meaning, let me ask you if I am any less a Civil Service man, if I keep out of the public service a communicable disease, such as tuberculosis or syphilis, or refuse to pass a man who has never been vaccinated against smallpox, until he has been successfully vaccinated? Or am I any less your representative, if I refuse to pass for a dangerous job an applicant with a physical defect which may contribute to the unnecessary maiming or killing of his fellow workmen? It is true that these injured men will be compensated, if they are protected under the Workingmen's Compensation Act; but the justice of that act will in the long run be more far-reaching, and the compensation of the injured and of the families of the dead more adequate, than at present, if all possible means are taken to prevent accident. If industry is to shoulder the burden of accident, by adding its cost to the cost of production, we must do our part to reduce that burden, so that in the end the workers and their families and the nation at large will enjoy those happier social and financial conditions that will obtain when accidents are reduced to a minimum.

In the first case, I am exercising a function of preventive medicine to protect the public health; and in the second case, I am contributing medical service to the prevention of accident, in order to advance the cause of social justice. I am, however, contributing also in

your name to the efficiency of government, which is in both cases potentially threatened. Incidentally, let me ask you also if an anti-vaccinationist, or the Civil Service reformer whose social myopia or astigmatism is still unrefracted, can visualize the countless governmental ramifications that make the modern Civil Service problem, for the amateur or the faddist, a hopeless soliloquy, in which he reveals a pitiful hesitancy which even dwarfs the classical irresolution of the melancholy Dane.

Here let us not forget also that efficiency connotes mental as well as physical superiority. To a greater or less extent, it means a combination of the mental and the physical, in proportions varying according to the demands of different occupations. Psychologically, the idea of the purely physical, as it relates to the human being, is associated in the popular mind with the ideas of strength and beauty, and their opposites. We forget that other physical quality which contributes to the creation or the expression of the useful as well as the beautiful. That quality is skill—the skill of the hand, which dignifies the arts and crafts and trades, and which in the history of man, in his struggle towards civilization, long preceded his escape from intellectual oblivion. Indeed it made possible that escape. Usually the endowment of a finely co-ordinated nervous system, and of a mind more or less richly imaginative, as often as not a stranger to great mental capacity, and occasionally having for its handmaids physical weakness and physical deformity, skill remains a quality of intrinsic value.

Hence in the psychology of the Civil Service mind, the idea of physical skill must be substituted for the idea of physical beauty, at least until such a time as we shall be drafted as judges of the increasingly popular modern beauty contest. At present we must be neutral, sensibly avoiding, however, a condition of armed neutrality, which might tempt beauty to prove at our expense that no man can be adamant to her charm. I cannot help thinking that the importance of physical skill will become more and more apparent as we awake to the seriousness of the inevitable problem which our country will be called upon to solve for the social and financial uplift of her soldiers who are crippled in this present war. In

the presence of this quality of physical skill, the physical examination seems to me to be a piece of glass arrogantly attempting to scratch a diamond, the value of which is enhanced rather than diminished by a crude or unattractive setting.

Moreover, inasmuch as a poor physical equipment lacks the necessary recuperative power against the physiological fatigue peculiar to certain occupations—a fatigue which is mental and nervous as well as physical—the physical examination transcends the idea of mere physical efficiency. Herein lies another danger. Let me warn you therefore against giving to this test too exalted a position in the hierarchy of your requirements. If you would hold steadfast to your purpose of utilizing superior ability, you must avoid the ever present temptation to sacrifice on the one hand, mind to matter, and on the other hand, matter to mind. Early in your history, in the case of applicants for police and fire service, the sacrifice of the physical to the mental was quickly recognized and properly remedied. Obviously, as a qualification for admission to these branches of the service, physical strength is of paramount importance. With only a medical examination, it is impossible to rate these applicants on the basis of strength, speed, and agility.

Originally, their mental capacities, as indicated by their marks on the written examination, determined their order on the list of eligibles. Thus many who were physically sound, but inferior in physical strength, enjoyed a special privilege on account of a high mental mark. Realizing that this inconsistency nullified not only your second purpose, to allow special privilege to none, but also your third and ultimate purpose to utilize superior ability, you perfected your technic of physical selection in the case of these applicants, by adding the strength test, in order that they may rise or fall to more equitable positions on the list. I heartily agree to the soundness of the judgment which would give to the strength test mark a greater weight than is given to the mental mark.

In the broader field, in which lie those positions for which physical skill or mental attainment is the criterion of fitness, your physical examiner often feels as an aviator must feel when he is sailing the heavens without a com-

pass after dark. In the presence of communicable disease, it is easy to make a decision, but more often than not the examining physician needs the assistance of his superiors, who must be constantly on guard to prevent this valuable but not unerring instrument of efficiency from contributing to their own inefficiency, as well as to the inefficiency of the public service. If the physical examination is allowed to defeat the ideals on which rests the touchstone of your usefulness, the fault is in you and not in the physical examination.

In order to emphasize further the efficiency aspect of the physical examination, I wish to unsettle an idea which exists not only in the minds of many applicants, but also in the minds of not a few students of Civil Service. The reasonableness of examining physically applicants for police and fire service, everyone admits; but there are few who seem to understand clearly the reason for the physical examination of applicants for unpensioned positions. The confusion arises from inferring a relationship between the pension system and the physical examination which does not exist. The physical examination was applied to police and fire applicants before their pension system was established. It is being applied to them today where no pension system exists. It would be applied tomorrow if every pension system were abolished. Even maximum age limits were established before pension systems were created. From your standpoint, minimum and maximum age requirements are efficiency precautions, the origin of which is explained by your third desideratum, the utilization of superior ability. The pension system (I am of course not referring to the compulsory contributory form) represents a gratuitous reward for service performed, regardless of its quality; the physical examination represents the promissory note demanded as a pledge of efficient service to be performed. The pension system represents altruism; the physical examination represents justice, and justice though merciful is not altruistic. The pension system is the clearing house for the inevitable inefficiency of age; the physical examination personifies the director of the mint from which is issued the new currency of the attractive and desirable efficiency of youth. You stand for the efficiency of the applicant, whether he seeks a pensioned or an unpensioned position.

I have dwelt at length upon this phase of the subject, because, having an almost personal relation with the applicants, I have learned that much of the hostility to Civil Service is due to misunderstanding and doubt which could be easily dispelled by the creation of the proper machinery on your part. The employees of other governmental departments, besides being familiar with office technic, know much about the purpose of their department and its practical relation to government. Civil Service, however, having a distinctly philosophical relation to government, as well as a very practical relation, is more difficult to comprehend in its entirety. It is more than rules and regulations and office technic. In other departments, the employee is quietly asked by the citizen, "What is the rule or the law?" The employee in the offices of the Civil Service Commission is often asked in a tone that is anything but meek, "Why is this rule or this law?" In the first case, the citizen wants to be sure that he isn't breaking the law; in the second case, he wants to be equally certain that the law isn't breaking him. In the first case, he bows to the time-honored majesty of the law; in the second case, he sees no reason why that venerable aristocrat shouldn't bow to the long-neglected majesty of the individual.

It ought to be just as easy to teach those who look upon Civil Service as an impregnable barricade intended to discourage worthy ambition to see in it a rock of safety for those who are proficient. In the title of this paper, I have used the word instrument because I am so often obliged to explain that the physical examination is not a weapon, and that I am not an armed soldier on guard before a besieged citadel, but a peaceful umpire of a manly sport, in which the loser must shake the hand of the winner. I often tell the applicants, in the vernacular of the athletic world, that they have entered an "open meet" in which there are no handicap events. The establishment by every Commission of a department of information, in charge of someone who is more than an office technician, would do much to enlighten the applicants and create among them and their friends a more reasonable attitude towards Civil Service. If your introduction to the public were through such an agency, you would be spared the needless irritation of many petty problems, and your physical examiner would

not find it necessary to explain that he is not advancing the cause of positive eugenics, and that the physical examination is not intended as an indignity.

From what I have said so far concerning its purpose, it is apparent that the physical examination, like the written, must be responsive to the various demands of different occupations or positions; for unless an instrument be skillfully and wisely used, a knowledge of its purpose availeth little. A test of physical fitness divides the applicants into two distinct classes, one which includes police and fire applicants, and the other which includes the applicants for all other positions. In the case of the former, the problem resolves itself into first eliminating the physically unsound by the so-called medical examination, and then by means of the strength test, further eliminating from those physically sound those who are physically weak. Furthermore, the strength test performs another function, for it rates on a percentage basis the speed, strength, and agility of these applicants according to their respective merits. I believe that it also has a moral effect, because since it is the real barrier to the job, it is a silent means of stimulating the serious applicant to develop his speed, strength, and agility, not only because he wants the job, but also because of that inherent human trait which makes men in competition anxious to excel in order that they may also win the respect of their competitors. The man who has altogether neglected his physical development, or has allowed himself to become soft through laziness or dissipation, suffers a blow to his pride which either eliminates him forever, or fills him with a grim determination to develop his latent strength, so that in some future examination he may win back his lost prestige and regain the esteem of his friends. Police and fire applicants have nothing but contempt for the competitor who isn't there physically. This is probably the reason why you seldom get a complaint from a strength test failure, although complaints from failures on the written examination are common. And the explanation is this. Few are unwise enough to be arrogant over their physical strength, especially if their measure has been taken; while on the other hand, fewer still are wise enough to be modest concerning their mental capacity, even if that capacity can be measured as accurately as the few scattered hairs on the top of a bald head can be numbered.

I regard the strength test as one of the most valuable assets of Civil Service. Up to 1906, when I assumed my present position, it was applied to the police and fire applicants of only about six or seven Massachusetts cities. In that year, the Massachusetts Commission extended this test to all the other cities in the state and to those fifty or more towns which had voted to place their fire and police organizations under Civil Service. The physical material of those cities where the test was originally applied is all that can be desired, for the strength test, by giving an opportunity to each succeeding class of applicants to equal previous records or establish new ones, has created a physical "noblesse oblige" for those entering these services. In the other cities, the same benefits are already apparent, for the material has improved to such an extent that the strength test exhibitions of my early years stand out as burlesques of those of the present day. This test has eliminated the flabby-muscled applicant who in those days supplied amusement for the gallery, and it has made the careless young fellow realize that the gymnasium, and not the street corner or the pool room, is the evening rendezvous of those who get the job.

On account of the war, the former abundance and excellence of police and fire material has been replaced by scarcity and mediocrity. In the absence of excellence, however, mediocrity is preferable to worthless inferiority, but the temptation will be to relieve the scarcity by substituting the latter for the former. I believe that this war condition can be met without sacrificing one single principle of Civil Service. If you have neither the technic nor the ability to meet an emergency, then you deserve to be ignored.

You would not have any patience with the physician who allowed a man to bleed to death for want of a tourniquet while he went off to get a sterile dressing. Let us grasp this first aid idea expressed by the tourniquet. If an appointing official can get a man for a job, so can you; and even if he cannot get one you can get one for him. The real test is always to find Garcia; the easiest part is to deliver the message. This war has put it up to you to find Garcia.

Now the only elements to be considered in any scheme of physical selection are soundness of body, speed, strength, and agility. These are altogether lost sight of by the critic who

says that our examination does not test those heroic qualities with which certain men think themselves exclusively endowed. It is not intended to do this any more than its function is to eliminate the lazy and the impudent, and I don't know any system of physical selection that can do so. Police and fire departments want not heroes, but efficient workers. The applicants themselves have no romantic ideas about the positions which they are seeking. To them it is a job better than the one which they have. A consumptive or a weakling may qualify as a hero, but not as a fireman or a policeman. I have talked with more than fifteen thousand of these police and fire applicants during my years in Civil Service, and I have yet to find one who wants to be a fireman because he thinks that he has inherited, in the language of the old hand-tub fire-fighter, the ability to "eat smoke," or a policeman, because he thinks that Heaven ordained him to be a sleuth. When asked why he wants the job, his answer is always the same; that he needs it, not only this year when he fails to get it, but next year and the next, when he tries for it again.

Health, strength, speed, agility, and intelligence, therefore, are the only standards by which they can be fairly or accurately measured. These are the acid tests to which their real differences respond. Height, weight, and age, limited as they are by our minimum and maximum figures, express differences so slight as to be almost negligible, when they are counterbalanced by the strength test. I have but little patience with boards of laymen who, knowing nothing about physical qualifications, will haggle over the question of age, height, and weight, as if they were the only things worth considering. The technic of Civil Service selection will take care of all this by a test which has more respect for physical power than for physical pulchritude. That test is founded on some self-evident truths. A good big man is better than a good small man; a poor small man is at least no worse than a poor big man; indeed he may be better, because the big man by actual weight represents more physical uselessness. That a good small man is better than a poor big man is then too evident to need any further explanation. The same is true of age. A young man ought to be a better man physically than one who is some years older. If in certain cases, it can be proved that this is not always true, the test that proves it ought to

merit some consideration. To sacrifice to height, weight, or age, superiority in health, strength, speed and agility, even though this superiority represents only mediocrity, is a big mistake.

There is a vast difference between the man who fails on the strength test and the man who just gets a pass mark. It is the difference between bad and good. There is also a big difference between the man who gets only 70% or 75% and the man who gets 85% or more; but it is the difference between better and best. So far as height is concerned, the advantage is more often than not on the side of him who lacks an inch or two of the other fellow. Weight is a more valuable asset than height, for usually, other things being equal, the superiority is with the heavier man, provided his weight is not due to obesity. As for age, as long as you apply the strength test, it makes little difference whether your maximum age is forty or thirty-three. A man is not necessarily more decadent physically at thirty-eight or forty than at thirty-three. The important fact is that at thirty-three, he makes a sorry comparison with his younger brother of twenty-five. Therefore when you hear a friend of forty boast that he is as young as he ever was, find out whether he means thirty-three or twenty-five. If he means the former, don't argue the case, for he is probably right, and normal and happy besides. But if you have a friend of forty who tells you that he is as young as at twenty-five, advise him to have his blood-pressure looked into, for he is probably beginning to feel that initial exhilaration which comes with a rising blood-pressure. I have a wholesome respect for the man over thirty who passes the strength test, for he proves that he is not only worthy of his hire, but also that the decade between thirty and forty is not a period of true physical decadence.

The efficiency of the service will be but little impaired and the number of applicants appreciably increased during the war period, by keeping the weight as it is, by lowering the minimum height at least one half inch, and by raising the maximum age by at least five years. The strength test will decide the age question, for, as I have said before, a man who can pass this test is able to satisfy the demands of a reasonable standard of efficiency. The minimum police heights are intended primarily to standardize the size of the men in the various

police departments. That there is good reason for this, I do not deny, but I do maintain that as far as appearance goes, there is no appreciable difference between the man five feet seven and a half inches, and the man five feet eight inches, or between the man five feet six and a half inches and the man five feet seven inches, provided their weights are the same. It has always been my feeling that a man no more than half an inch below the required minimum height should be placed on the list of eligibles, if he obtains a mark of 85% or over on the strength test. He is giving a *quid pro quo*, but the public service is the winner in the exchange, for the *quid* is so much more valuable than the *quo*.

Fire departments, especially, have paid the toll of physical inferiority to the nemesis of height. Wrongfully assuming that the establishment of a minimum height for fire applicants, one inch under, or equal to, the minimum for police applicants, would secure the police type of man for their department, fire department heads have been responsible for the knock-out blow administered to much excellent physical material by the measuring-rod, the only tool in the kit of the physical examiner which is dedicated to the ornamental aspect of the Civil Service applicant. To those department heads who, on account of a lack of imagination, are not practical enough to allow Civil Service to give them physical material which is useful rather than ornamental, I recommend these lines from Bobby Burns, in which the word height is substituted for the word "rank"

"The height is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd (gold) for a' that."

On several occasions, I have been told by Fire Department officials that there must be something wrong with our method of physical selection, since it does not supply to their service the same type of man which it supplies to the police departments. The fallacy of this statement consists in assuming that Civil Service Commissions can create physical material. Obviously, they can send to these departments of the public service only the best of the physical material which does apply, and that they do so is beyond dispute. I want to emphasize that statement, because there is no more tangible proof of your efficiency than the general physical excellence of those police and fire de-

partments in the selection of whose members you have been unhampered. As I have said before, the moral effect of the strength test is apparent in the pride which many of these men take in keeping themselves physically fit long after they have passed the rugged period of youth. I know of a fire department for which the only physical requirement (a requirement established by the state legislature and not by Civil Service) is a minimum height of five feet five inches. There is no minimum weight; and if it were not for the Civil Service strength test, there would be no protection for this department against an invasion of human paper weights. If another fire department establishes a minimum height, weight, and age, identical with the same minimum requirements for the police force of the same city, the Civil Service Commission is not responsible, if, on account of the lack of applicants meeting those requirements, it becomes impossible to maintain an eligible list from which that department can be recruited.

In Massachusetts, men of police size are seldom found among fire applicants. As a rule, when you do find them, it is because they have not yet reached the minimum police age, which in some cities is several years above the minimum fire age. Hence many men of police size avail themselves of the opportunity to mark time in the fire department, until they reach the minimum police age. In looking over my records, I find that in twelve years in the whole State of Massachusetts, only twenty-eight police applicants were also applicants for the fire service; and in all but two cases, these applicants resided in the same city. In every case their preference was the police service, but in nearly every case, the strength test record indicated only inferiority or mediocrity. In other words, it has been our experience in Massachusetts that those who apply for police service do not want positions in the fire department. Police candidates are more numerous, bigger, and altogether physically better than fire applicants. Among police applicants I frequently see those who are already serving as firemen; but I cannot recall one single instance when there has been a policeman among any group of fire candidates whom I have ever examined. Moreover, the many excellent police applicants who year after year just miss an appointment never compete for positions in the fire service, which in many cases they could

easily snatch from those who otherwise get them. A change to the two platoon system might tend to popularize the fire service, and thus make it more attractive than it seems to be at the present time.

The minimum height and weight of fire applicants must be established with the idea of maintaining an area of selection large enough to meet the demands of the service. When the minimum police size is five feet eight inches and one hundred and forty pounds, the area of fire selection is only one inch wide, if the size requirement for this service is fixed at five feet seven inches, and one hundred and forty pounds. Of course if the minimum fire age is below the minimum police age, there is a larger area from which to select the applicants, but in my opinion, the advantage of this is nullified by a ridiculous and inexcusable condition which forces the fire service to be a training school for many future policemen. For the police and the fire service, there should be the same minimum age; and the minimum size requirement of the fire applicant should be at least two inches and ten pounds below the minimum size requirement for the police applicant.

Thus if you require five feet eight inches and one hundred and forty pounds for a policeman, you ought to require for a fireman, five feet six inches and a hundred and thirty pounds; and when the police requirement is five feet seven inches and one hundred and thirty-five pounds, the fire requirement will be five feet five inches and one hundred and twenty-five pounds. Some will object on the ground that this man five feet five inches and one hundred and twenty-five pounds is too small; but to them I shall only reply that it was about this man and not about the female of the species that it was originally said, "Good things come in small packages." He represents a type broad of shoulder and deep of chest, with muscles well developed for speed, strength, and agility. These are a few ideas concerning the physical examination in its most satisfactory phase, for in its application to police and fire candidates, it is decidedly a satisfactory instrument of efficiency.

Its success is not in any supernatural quality with which it is endowed, but rather in its consistent and unfailing reaction to every test of those three ideals which democracy represents, and to which your every effort is dedicated. You

will not, I know, think me boastful of the state which I have the honor to represent, if here in this national convention, I pay a tardy tribute to that Massachusetts Commission of thirty years ago, who first saw the necessity of applying this system of physical selection to police and fire applicants. In paying this tardy tribute, it is only proper to mention that Commission of 1906, to whose vision and energy was due the universal application of this test to the police and fire applicants of the Commonwealth, and the extension of the physical examination to include everyone but clerks and stenographers. I am innocent of any thought of self-praise, when I say that it is a pleasure for me to whom they entrusted this task to tell them that it has accomplished all that they hoped for.

It seems to me that we subordinates would render a better account of our stewardship to you gentlemen who are directly responsible to the people for the wise administration of Civil Service, if, in addition to our yearly report, which is merely the dry measure of the quantity of work done, we would also give you some idea of its Civil Service quality, by subjecting it to the test of those three desiderata on which depends the success or failure of every Civil Service activity. My long experience with one of the oldest instruments, and in my judgment the most satisfactory, in the technic of Civil Service selection, has made me look upon the pioneers in this work as men who hold in government the place which Pasteur holds in medicine. He it was who taught us that the ideal treatment of disease is its prevention. Likewise those pioneers made us realize that prevention is the only cure for corrupt government. They were more than mere prescription writers. And just as Alfred Hayes has rightfully and beautifully called the Pasteur Institute at Paris, the Arsenal of Life, so may we, catching the spirit of the tribute, call the institution of Civil Service, which they founded, the Arsenal of Good Government.

When you go out of this field into the larger field, where the efficiency of the individual is not so easily determined by the physical examination, "Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise." The technic of the so-called medical examination does not lend itself readily to a system of percentage marking. Such systems exist, I know, but I trust that I may be pardoned for the hyperbole, when I say that

the only interest which they have for me is the amusement which I get from attempting to figure out a pass mark for a decapitated, armless, and legless individual. I am willing to be convinced that I am wrong in my belief that if a physical defect is sufficient cause for a percentage reduction, it is sufficient cause for an absolute rejection. I know that I am right when I reject a telephone operator who is deaf; but I think that my Commission ought to reject me if I am responsible for staging a hearing, at which an applicant for the same position asks to be enlightened as to the relation between a pronated ankle and operating a switch-board. I know also that I am right, if I reject a stenographer who is tuberculous; but I am not competent to judge the ability of an applicant for the same position who has only one arm. It is more than possible that the efficiency of such an individual may make the supposed efficiency of a normal individual look like gross inefficiency.

Promotion physical examinations, especially fire and police promotions, are still waiting for the last word. To make promotions in these departments depend too much on physical standards, to a certain extent puts a premium on cowardice. Men will avoid danger as well as dissipation, if too high a physical standard is applied to them after years of service. They cannot help showing the wear and tear of time, and high blood pressure, heart lesions, hernia, varicose veins, flat-foot, and defective vision are to be expected. In Massachusetts, applicants for police and fire promotion are examined and their physical condition is submitted to the appointing official. The Civil Service Commission reserves the right to reject in such cases as chronic alcoholism, locomotor ataxia, or other serious disease of the nervous system, excessively high blood-pressure and several other conditions. The fact which I wish to emphasize is that we have established no arbitrary physical standard, preferring instead to consider each case on its merits. At present, I am opposed to arbitrary physical standards, because, in this broader field of service, we have not yet carefully studied the physical demands of various occupations, or learned to strike a proper balance between the physical, and the mental and moral. In the case of superior officers, whether of the fire and police or other services, physical superiority is not always a

satisfactory substitute for mental and moral excellence.

There is another matter which deserves our attention. It concerns the war cripple. In the words of the editor of *Collier's*, Mr. Mark Sullivan, "We have not yet come to dread the day that brings the week's casualty list, nor learned to cover with silence the fresh draft on our fortitude. Our wounded have not come limping back to our doorsteps." This war is going to test our ability to visualize many new governmental activities. One of these will be the reëducation and reconstruction of the war cripple. We are at the beginning of an age in which the cripple is going to move up and not down. He will not have to ask for charity, for he will be made efficient; so efficient in some cases that he will set the standard for the normal individual. For this reason, his case will demand an answer from Civil Service. To wait until the question is asked, and then to point carelessly to the physical examination as the only answer, will be a confession of our own unpreparedness, a disparagement of the dignity of others, and an arrogant glorification of ourselves. What the answer will be, no one can predict, for it is a problem pregnant with perplexity. Its solution demands, on the one hand, an intimate knowledge of the methods and results of this system of re-education, and on the other hand, an equally intimate knowledge of the physical, mental, and moral requirements, and the social exigencies of the many occupations in which workers, skilled and unskilled, assist in the business of government. Practical examinations to test the efficiency of applicants for positions in which skill and special training are essential must be speeded on their journey towards perfection; for in this broader field, the physical examination cannot reach its acme of usefulness until a practical test of efficiency gives to it that confidence and degree of accuracy which it owes to the strength test in the selection of police and fire applicants. This field of skilled and unskilled labor would still be an unexplored jungle if it were not for the work of a few Commissions whose wisdom in developing the practical efficiency test has written one of the most important chapters in the history of Civil Service. Here it is that we must be responsive to the demands of our modern social legislation. A general knowledge of the dangers and diseases of various occupations; a knowledge of safety pre-

cautions, human and mechanical; a knowledge of sanitation, of hygiene, and of the physiological fatigue to which every worker is exposed—must be added to the intellectual equipment of those students of democratic government who would escape intellectual stagnation.

I maintain that the true test of the efficiency of a Civil Service Commission is not the successful filling of a few five thousand dollar positions, but rather the more difficult task of filling with consistent success the five thousand or ten thousand \$900 or \$1200 positions at the bottom of the service. In the former case, yours is the easier part of delivering the message. The credit of finding Garcia belongs to the special examiners. In the latter case, the glory is all yours, and the joy no man can take from you. There at the bottom of the service, at its very foundation, building here, tearing down there, Civil Service is engaged in a trying task that will always be unfinished. In this work at the bottom of the service, the value of the physical examination will ultimately depend on our knowledge of the gross and microscopic anatomy and pathology of democratic government. A treatise on the pathology of democratic government might well be called "The Modern Anatomy of Melancholy,"

Let me warn you against establishing an unreasonably high standard of vision for certain high grade positions. When the efficiency of the employee is dependent on his special knowledge rather than on his physical perfection, there is no reason for rejecting him if his visual defect is corrected by glasses. Men have eyes but see not, and ears, but hear not. We must distinguish between mental and ocular vision. This suggests the necessity of a psychological test of the applicant's powers of concentration and observation by the examining department. It is beyond the scope of the physical examination.

I cannot leave this subject without saying a word on the question of using the physical examination as a coarse sieve to accomplish a preliminary elimination of the applicants. If this is done to speed up the work of a Commission it is right and proper, provided that the physical examiner is not pushed beyond the possibility of doing efficient work. But if it is done to save the salaries of a few clerks, at the expense of careful work on the part of the physical examiner, it is inexcusable. There are few occupations more fatiguing than physical ex-

aming. There is no other instrument of Civil Service so likely to upset the square deal, because it is potential with as much injustice to the applicants as to the public service. It demands on the part of the examiner a sound knowledge of physical diagnosis which can be acquired only by a preparation and special training second to none engaged in the work of Civil Service. No man who brings to this work the training commensurate with its importance, and the proper respect for the high ideals of his profession, will ever dishonor Civil Service. You have no right by practising a "chill penury which represses noble (toil)" to make it impossible for him to give to the people that high grade of service which can rebound to your credit only if it is not obliged to blush for shame when scrutinized by the keen, far-seeing eyes of Aesculapius. Physical examiners must not be purchased at the bargain counter. With the advent of the Civil Service bargain, the mark-down square deal must be displayed in the window, and between them the old spoils system will be called back into a blissful earthly life everlasting, in which there will be no communion of saints or resurrection of the corpse of Civil Service.

The distinctive feature of the physical examination, which calls for the greatest tact on your part, is that it suggests to the individual an interference with his personal freedom on the part of the State, and an invasion of his personal privacy. In fact this is true of no other instrument in your technic of selection. In recent years, the individual has been bewildered by many complex schemes of social reform, all demanding recognition as social justice. Many of these were imported from another country where they abetted the brutal frenzy of an atheistic travesty on economic science, in perfecting a vast, intricate system of efficiency—the worst that man could possibly devise—applied to the worst industrial system that the world has ever known. Into the midst of this whirlpool of social panaceas, the medical profession has been drawn, and it is only natural that the individual will be suspicious of any exercise by the State of a medical function which seems to invade his personal privacy. I bring this to your attention, because it explains the vital importance of understanding the purpose of this instrument in order that it may be used wisely.

After all, the big outstanding fact concerning the more extended use of this instrument by Civil Service is that it commits us to the responsibility, which cannot be shirked, of supporting by intelligent action, the social, as well as the political, civil, and economic basis of this government. To Civil Service, this should present no difficulty, for both social justice and practical Civil Service Reform represent the moral function of government. Indeed Civil Service is in many respects a piece of social justice. Unfortunately, many of our attempted so-called social reforms are at variance with the moral principles of democratic government, for in the words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "they lead to the servile state," "they mean the empire of the slum."

Members of the Assembly, I have tried to the best of my ability to prepare this subject for a discussion which will not be profitless. I hope that I have at least shown that this old member of your family is still warm-blooded enough to wag the tongue of gossip. The time for discussing the advisability of extending the physical examination has already passed. Grave social and national problems, the solution of which will "stretch to aching the pia mater" of the strongest leadership that Democracy can muster, are today constantly reminding the thoughtful administrator of Civil Service that he must not be a pigmy where those old pioneers were giants. The segregation and prevention and reduction of disease, the reduction and prevention of unnecessary accidents and deaths, the reduction of long hours of labor, the forbidding of the exploitation of children for commercial gain—in expressing the importance of health and the dignity of human life, express the concrete idea that old Demos recognizes that his efficiency is dependent on the health and happiness and intelligence of his citizens. But it also expresses that most important idea, too often forgotten in a democracy, that each citizen owes in return to the government from which with millions of others he has voluntarily accepted a partnership for which he has been a suppliant, that loyalty, and that obedience to authority, which we call discipline, and without which organized effort is fruitless. That old geometry theorem, with which we struggled in our school-days, that the whole is greater than any of its parts, would have meant more to all of us had it been

taught by the teacher of civics as a fundamental truth of democratic government.

The home rule hallucination of cities and towns; the *l'état c'est moi* delusion of county politics; the outworn doctrine of state rights, so convenient as a subterfuge for perpetrating national wrong; the childishness of sectional, and other jealousies no less unworthy; the *laissez-faire* patriotism of many who ought to know better and do; the freedom of the press, freedom of speech, the freedom of the individual, in which freedom at times undergoes a metamorphosis that results in a three-headed monster with heads turned backward, and eyes that can look only down—these are witnesses, deaf perhaps but not dumb, who bear unwilling testimony to the discouraging task of cultivating a national discipline in an “unweeded garden grown to seed. Things rank and gross (in democracy) possess it merely.” Who is doing more than you to rid this garden of the weeds which choke the healthy growth of discipline and efficiency?

Among the employees of government, lies a wonderful opportunity. If you require a certain physical standard as a pledge of efficient service, you must go into the service and see that that standard is not lowered by conditions which should not exist—and I include conditions for which the employee himself is responsible. If you demand an economic return, you must be willing to pay for it in moral values. There must be a minimum wage, for wages are no longer determined by the law of supply and demand, but by a standard of living which defies the old economic law. You must eliminate the physiological fatigue which accompanies excessive hours of labor, especially in dangerous occupations, and you must see that every employee can hope for an ultimate wage that will enable him and his family to live decently. In return, you have a God-given right to demand a high grade of service and a spirit which is amenable to discipline. In such an atmosphere, the incompetent, the insubordinate, and the shirker will find no sympathy. In order to succeed, you must be inspired by those three ideals of democracy, ever boldly challenging that intellectualized materialism which measures human efficiency only by the soulless laws of physics and economics; and just as boldly challenging also that other materialism, less intellectualized perhaps, but

equally dangerous, which would change this government into a tyranny of the few over the many, or the no less endurable tyranny of the many over the few.

If you would enjoy the most perfect fulfillment of your desire to give to this government that efficiency which goes with discipline and the utilization of superior ability, you must constantly cultivate it, conserve it, and advance it, mentally, morally, physically, and socially. My old predecessor didn't even cultivate it physically, and he fell the victim of a jokester. I cannot help thinking that that old cartoonist is still hovering about ready to prove himself to be the same old David, unless we keep our heads high and our faces towards the dawn.

Original Articles.

STUDIES IN PERSONALITY AMONG FEEBLE-MINDED DELINQUENTS SEEN IN COURT.*

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WE shall not attempt on this occasion to discuss the seriousness and extent of the feeble-minded problem. We have all of us either presented or had presented to us much of the ascertainable data along these lines. But we do wish to call your especial attention to certain aspects of feeble-mindedness that have been inadequately touched upon.

In the first place, we need to know more about an individual than the mere fact that he is feeble-minded. For we have come to realize that feeble-mindedness does not necessarily imply bad social adjustment. We are told by no less authorities than Dr. Walter Fernald and Dr. George Wallace that certain feeble-minded persons get along fairly well in the community.

Our own experience has verified this; we have seen certain persons, undeniably feeble-minded, who were able to earn a living, to avoid serious social difficulties, and to adjust themselves fairly well to the conditions of normal living.

* Read before the National Conference on Social Work and the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded.