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interviews
etc

Civil Service.

Jan. 5th. 1856

Firemen.

Interview with Mr Leonard Miller:-

I have been trying for a long time to get hold of the firemen but the authorities have hitherto taken no notice of my appeals for information. I have to-day however seen Mr. Miller who is manager of Messrs. Merryweathers' Fire Engine business, and Editor of the 'Fireman'. He has given me a copy of the paper for July 1st 1851 which contains the rate of wages at that date. He thinks there has been little or no alteration since. He has further given me a letter of introduction to Mr Smith the Second Officer, who he thinks will receive me with sympathy.

Mr Miller tells me that all London firemen must have been seamen before they join the brigade, and many men go to sea for this purpose.

Since the L.C.C. took over the Fire Brigade there has been a good deal of friction, due no doubt mainly to the meddlesomeness

of some of the Councillors: but at the same time the ~~men~~ men ~~are~~ often rather extravagant in their demands, as they know that they are pets of the public.

On the whole they are a fine body of men but perhaps not quite deserving of the adoration they receive. They are exposed to many temptations: a great part of their time is inevitably spent in loafing about the stations: this leads to a great deal of drinking, or soaking rather, as the officials are no doubt very strict against actual drunkenness. The men all come from the working class, and are not likely to devote much time to self improvement, but the authorities encourage innocent recreation as much as possible. The amount of spare time varies of course according to the station, but at no station is the work too or at all continuous.

Jan. 16th.

Interview with Mr S. S. Gamble, Second Officer of the Fire Brigade:-

I received to-day from the L.C.C. full particulars as to the Fire Brigade, which only required to be supplemented by a short interview with Mr Gamble.

Mr. Gamble gave me the numbers of the various classes of men in the Brigade, and I have added them to the L.C.C. papers.

With regard to Promotion hitherto it has taken men about 8 years to get into the second class, 12 years into the first, and 15 years to become Engineers. Owing to the large number of men appointed lately promotion for the future will be much slower, and unless some system of automatic promotion is adopted many men can never hope to rise above the second class.

Hours. A Fireman is always either on duty, sick, on leave, or suspended.

Special Lines. It will be seen from the papers that Special Lines are for the future forbidden. This has caused much discontent among the men, as in some cases they made £5 or £10 a year in this way.

The London Salvage Corps is a private concern run by the chief Insurance Companies. Mr Gamble thinks they will give me no information.

Post Office.

Statement of the First and Second Class Clerks at the Central Telegraph Office:-

As I have only been able to get a loan of the paper dealing with the grievances of the Telegraphists I have copied it out:-

"Classification. The chief cause of dissatisfaction in the Central Telegraph Office is and has been for the past 20 years the system of classification of Pay of Operators unattended by any definite classification of work. This system is productive of much discontent, and of glaring anomalies, owing to the inequality of promotion from class to class.

There are numerous cases of Clerks of equal qualification and length of service performing precisely similar duties, being in receipt of salaries differing considerably in amount, such difference being due in a great measure to the above inequality of promotion.

There are also many Clerks of a certain length of service receiving better pay than

others whose term of service is longer. Many Clerks have been promoted into a higher class before attaining the maximum salary of the class below, while on the other hand clerks of equal ability, after reaching the top of their class, have had to wait several years before ~~their~~ promotion was granted. These cases have been and are the cause of great discontent.

This irregularity of promotion is best demonstrated by the following tabulated statement (compiled four years ago) of promotion during previous years from the second to the first Class:-

2	Clerks promoted after	7	years service
6	"	8	"
47	"	9	"
101	"	10	"
87	"	11	"
52	"	12	"
27	"	13	"
11	"	14	"
4	"	15	
7	"	16	"
1		18	

The length of service given in the above Table is inclusive in some cases of service in Provincial offices.

Playfair Scheme 1876. Both in the first and second class the main grievances arise from anomalies produced by the present system of promotion. This system which is based on a classification, will be found require some little elucidation. Its original intention as stated by its formulators was "That the salary should be low in the earlier years of the service, and should rise more rapidly as the clerk gets older, when his responsibilities in life increase and the value of his experience becomes greater to the State." How far ~~this~~ the scheme has failed to carry out this intention the sequel will show. The staff of the Central Telegraph Office was first divided into four classes and a probationary stage. During the probationary stage, extending over about two years, the salary received was generally

as follows:- 12/ for first three months (or thereabouts), 14/ for next three months, and 16/ after one year's service. After a further year's service subject to passing the necessary examination in Telegraphy, £45- in the Third Class was received. The classes were then as under:-

Third Class,	£45- per ann.	rising by £5- to	£65-
Second "	£70	" "	£90-
First "	£100	" "	£130
Senior "	£140	" "	£160.

It is important to note here that the classification was merely one of salary and not of merit or duty. The duties of Telegraph Clerks are the same in every class.

In 1880-81 the three higher classes became absolutely blocked, and in spite of continued representations the Treasury declined to extend them. The agitation became serious throughout the country, the Telegraph Clerks being supported by the entire press, a large number of prominent members of Parliament, and others

Fawcett Scheme. 1881.

The result was that the P.M.G. (Mr Fawcett) after consulting the permanent officials and holding a conference of P.O. Surveyors, addressed a letter June 18th, 1881, to the Lords of the Treasury, in which he said that one of the chief causes of complaint in the Telegraph Service was "Inadequacy of pay arising to some extent from ~~tardy~~ stagnation of promotion". This letter was accompanied by a scheme known as the Fawcett Scheme ~~of~~ which was accepted by the Treasury. Under this scheme the staff of the Central Telegraph Office was divided into three classes which after the probationary class was passed were as follows:-

Second Class,	£45 per ann.	rising by £5	to £100
First "	£110	" £6	" £140.
Senior "	£150	" £8	" £190

There are many clerks who under the scheme of classification operating prior to the Fawcett Scheme were stopped upwards of two years at the maximum of the then

existing Third Class. Others however proceeded without any stoppage. Again many of those who waited ~~to~~ two years at the maximum of the old Third Class were subjected to a stoppage of nearly three years at the maximum of the First Class under the Fawcett Scheme. Some of these men are again suffering under the recent Raikes Scheme (July 1890) for by raising the Fawcett maximum of the First Class from £140 to £160 by £6 annual increments they are placed at a great disadvantage in comparison with many of their predecessors, who received promotion from the First to the Senior Class (Fawcett Scheme) after waiting less than one year at the maximum of the First Class (£140). Thus under the Fawcett Scheme many clerks advanced from the maximum of the First Class (£140) to the maximum of the Senior Class (£190) in seven years. Whereas under the Raikes scheme (owing to a prolonged stoppage at the 'Fawcett' maximum of £140) it will take many clerks seven years to advance from £140 to £160

and beyond this point, as they have been recently assured, there is no prospect of promotion. For ten years (1881–1891) the Senior Class was in number a progressive class to which all attained in natural sequence; but it has now become a stationary one. This is due to the scheme of Mr Raikes, who when he created the new class of Assistant-Superintendents (48 in number) deprived the Senior class of 45 appointments. That is he converted 48 Senior Clerks into Assistant Superintendents, without filling up their places, and thus reduced the number of the Senior Class by 45. Since the issue of the Raikes scheme two memorials from the First Class Clerks have been presented to the P.M.G., pointing out the hardships and inequality of their position in comparison with that of their predecessors; but these memorials have been met with a refusal of redress. Continued representations have been made to the Permanent Officials by sufferers under this erratic system of promotion, but without effect.

The Prescott Scheme, based as it was upon the same unsound foundation of relatively inelastic classes, with a ~~re~~ rapidly increasing staff, naturally failed to give any permanent satisfaction. The period of its existence was however extended by a method of promotion which is now to be described, and which produced a semblance of content in the second class. It will be noted that £100 was the maximum of the second class under the Prescott Scheme, which operated from 1881 to 1890; but during the whole of that time no clerk of good character, so far as we know, reached that sum before he was promoted to the first class, the minimum of which was £110. The nominal maximum was seldom regarded, but an actual maximum, which was greatly reduced, was always observed as the proper point for promotion. In 1885 this actual maximum was £85 a year, a sum reached when clerks had performed 10 years service, and the Controller stated he considered this the period in a Clerk's

service at which his needs and desires warranted his promotion. For 1867 to 1871 10 years service was deemed as the promotion point for the second into the first class. So firmly did this actual maximum become established that to pass beyond it without promotion into the first class was considered a punishment of a most severe character, any considerable delay beyond this point being inflicted only on men whose characters were so bad that they narrowly escaped dismissal. In 1871 this actual maximum was still further reduced, men of ~~nine months~~ nine years and four months service being promoted to the first class from a salary of £81 per annum. Although 81 promotions have recently been made from the second to the first class, there are still more than 100 men who have passed the point which was deemed as the promotion point from 1867 to 1871 whose only prospect is stated to be promotion upon deaths and retirements, which take place at

the rate of 8 to 10 per annum. This means that while many clerks received £110 after 9 3/4 to 10 years since, and are now progressing towards a maximum of £160 in the First Class, the majority of the Second Class are doomed never to pass beyond the Second Class, the maximum salary of which is £110 per ann. or £2.2 per week. The spirit of the classification is thus altogether lost sight of, and the scheme becomes a mere method of dishonest and unfair economy to the Department. Uniformity of treatment, where there is uniformity of merit, is the only method of ensuring contentment in the service.

A table of the promotions from the Second to the First Class during the years 1881-2-3 will show how large an element of chance enters into a clerk's progress under the present system:-

14	Clerks were promoted with	9 to 9 1/2	years service
68	"	9 1/2 to 10	"
9	"	10 to 10 1/2	"
2	"	10 1/2 to 11	"
6	"	11 to 11 1/2	"
10	"	11 1/2 to 12	"

With regard to the 81 promotions previously mentioned the ages of the Clerks ranged from 11 to 12½ years: and at the present day a large number of clerks with from 9 to 11 years service await promotion with no immediate prospect, and unless the rate of promotion increases, no remote prospect of attaining to a higher salary than £2.2 per week. Thus a service which had been prosperous throughout its existence, until 1891, suddenly takes a retrograde step which injuriously affects its lowest paid body of officers. Under the present system no clerk can say what salary he will receive at any given future time: no one has assured prospects.

In 1890 Mr Raikes introduced a scheme resting in some measure the Fawcett Scheme. The changes as regards promotion were as follows:- The Second Class increment was raised from £5 to £6, and the maximum of that class raised from £100 to £110. The First Class maximum was

also raised from £140 to £160. The probationary period was also reduced to 18 months. The younger portion of the Second Class therefore will reap certain benefits from the Raikes' Revision, but the pay and position of the Senior members of that class are practically unchanged, except in a very trivial degree.

At the same time however as previously pointed out, the stoppage of the extra-numerical promotions which took place during the operation of the Fawcett Scheme has really placed the Senior Second Class men in a seriously inferior position as compared with their predecessors. Thus we have the contradiction involved in a scheme for improving the pay and prospects of a body of men being actually the cause of, or at any rate coincident with, a lowering of the position of a very considerable section of it.

Although admitting that the present initial pay of 12/ per week is a fair

remuneration of a youth of 16 - the average age of entry into the Service - yet his necessary expenses increase at a so much greater ratio than his increments, that after five years service his salary obtainable under the Packer Scheme - £68 - is inadequate. At this period a clerk renders valuable service to the State, being called upon to perform duties of great responsibility, varying throughout the whole of the day and night, and for the most part very arduous in their nature. A Clerk who is at this period ~~22 or~~ 21 or 22 years of age is expected to keep up an appearance creditable to the Department, but it is contended that this is extremely difficult under present conditions, and he is practically compelled to perform overtime - our and above his eight hours duty - in order to secure an income competent into some degree of comfort and proper maintenance. Many Junior Clerks suffer ill health through performing this extra

duty. There are also second class clerks in the Central Telegraph Office with six years' service receiving only £71 per ann: others with 6½ years with £72; 7½ years £76; 7½ years £79; 8½ years £82; 10 years £91; 10½ years £93; and 11 years £96. It is well to point out that these salaries include the annual increment of £6 received on July 11th of the present year. These particulars show that there are skilled clerks ~~at~~ with from 5 to 11 years service in receipt of salaries ranging from about 24/ to 37/ per week, and it is contended that these amounts are ridiculously low and quite insufficient considering the importance of the work and its skilled and technical nature.

The Departmental Committee of Inquiry which sat prior to the ~~issue~~ issue of the Raikes Scheme, refused to listen to any arguments as to the unfair and unjust system of classification. The Committee appointed to inquire into the grievances of the

Staff, thus decided to entertain the chief cause of complaint. The present P.M.G. (Arnold Morley) has also stated that he is not convinced that the abolition of classification would be beneficial to the clerks.

There is only one remedy for the evils caused by the system in vogue, viz:- the entire reconstruction of the method of payment, on the principle of, say the Lower Division - that is, every untrained clerk should advance to a certain annual maximum, by stated increments after a certain number of years service. It is manifestly unfair that one clerk with 25 years service should be in receipt of £90 a year, while another clerk with the same or even longer service, and performing similar duties, should be in receipt of only £60, with no prospect beyond this stage. Until this is remedied, and chance promotion eradicated, there can be no hope of the service being contented, or the system of

payment being considered equitable.

The staff have petitioned for years, asking that the operating staff should be placed on one ascending scale from a definite minimum to a definite maximum - a maximum to which any telegraph clerk of good conduct should be free to rise - but all to no avail. The inequalities continue, and are accentuated year by year. Until the Treasury abolish the classification & give to all operators performing identically the same duties, discontent will seem to attend in the Telegraph Service.

Another grievance to the ~~to~~ Second Class, which is most pronounced in its nature, is the permanent employment of the Central Telegraph Office, of a temporary staff. This staff which is also classified, consists of two distinct bodies. The first is known as the "Temporary Staff" and the second as "Season Substitutes". The difference between the two bodies is that the temporary staff

enjoy the advantage of an annual holiday, while in the case of the latter the Department reserve to themselves the right of retaining them for a period of three ~~to~~ weeks annually - the object evidently being to prevent the men from establishing any claim on continuous service. Beyond the three weeks referred to, ~~they~~ these Casual substitutes are permanently employed. In Sept. 1892 the Controller stated the number of the whole Temporary Staff stood at 176, and said that the number would be reduced. This promise appears to have been violated, inasmuch as such labour of this description is being introduced from time to time, to supply the places of such men as are drafted from the temporary staff to the permanent establishment.

It is far from the intention of clerks at the C.P.O. to seek in any way to hamper any person in any attempt to secure employment of a nature which may be congenial to his or her tastes, but-

It is strongly urged that the permanent employment of persons under temporary conditions proves beyond a doubt, the strongest necessity for a substantial addition to the permanent establishment. It urges that all temporary clerks who possess the necessary qualification should be appointed. We would call attention to the fact that in their Report, the Ridley Commission strongly condemned the practice of employing Temporary Clerks - with the result that in other ~~[illegible]~~ branches of the Civil Service the system has been largely, if not entirely disputed into.

Report of Interview with Messrs. Groves, Cheesman and Raby of the Fawcett Association:-

The various workers in the Postal Service, except Clerks, with their wages, are as follows:-

I. Telegraphists:-

(1). Second Class Telegraphists: at first they are called Learners: they enter at 16 years of age and begin at 12/ a week rising to 14/ then to 16/, and in about two years to £45 a year. From £45 they rise by £6 a year to £110.

(2). First Class Telegraphists:- begin at £110 and rise by £6 to £160.

(3). Senior Telegraphists:- begin at £160 and rise by £8 to £190.

All Telegraphists under £150 have three weeks holiday: over £150 four weeks. These holidays extend throughout the year.

II. Sorters:-

(1). Second Class Sorters: enter at 18:

Start at 18/ a week, and rise by 1/ a year to 20/, then by 2/ a year to 40/.

(2). First class Sorters: start at 40/ and rise by 2/ a year to 56/ a week.

Three weeks holiday between March and October.

III. Tracers:-

(1). Junior Tracers: start at 16/ and rise by 1/ a year to 20/ a week.

(2). Second Class Tracers:- start at 18/ and rise by 1/6 a year to 30/

(3). First Class Tracers:- start at 31/6 and rise by 1/6 a year to 42/.

Tracers have a fortnight holiday between February and December.

IV. Postmen:-

(1). Zone Postmen:-

(a). Zone 4: start at 18/ and rise by 1/ a year to 24/ a week.

(b). Zone 3: start at 18/ and rise by 1/ to 26/.

(c) Zone 2: start at 18/ and rise by 1/ to 30/

(1) Zone ~~4~~ 1: start at 18/ and rise by 1/ to 32/.
(2). Town Postmen: start at 18/ and rise by 1/ to 34/.
(3). Head Postmen: start at 18/ and rise by 1/6 to 38/. The suits a gentle postman have a uniform, reckoned by the Department at 1/6 a week: also a boot allowance of 21/ a year.

For every five years service with good conduct a postman gets one stripe, and additional pay of 1/ a week, up to three stripes; i.e. after fifteen years good service he gets an additional 3/ a week.

He has a fortnight's holiday between March and October.

V. Porters:-

start at 20/ and rise by 1/ to 30/.

Have partial uniform for indoor work.

VI. Boy Messengers:-

Ages between 14 and 16; start at 8/; rise by 1/ to 10/; then rise to 12/.

VII. Lift Attendant:-

This is a comparatively small body of men, about 40 in all, and I only took particulars of them owing to their inadequate wage. They start at 18/ a week and rise in four years to 19/. Many of them are middle aged & men.

All the above are Civil Servants on the establishment, and so entitled to the usual pension. They also get full pay for six months if ill, and half pay for a further six months. There is still one more grade:-

VIII. Unestablished or Auxiliary Porters:- some are in part some in whole work. Their wages are from 6/ a week for part

work to 18/ a week for whole work.

In addition to the above information I received a mass of literature dealing with the Fawcett Association and the grievances of Post Office Employés.

The hours of work of all P.O. Employés are slight but in many cases and especially with Sorters and Postmen it is split into two or more periods. The question of split hours seems to be a special grievance with Sorters.

Feb. 27th.

I yesterday spent about six hours at the G.P.O. during which time I was taken right through the various departments both Postal and Telegraphic. To give an account of the duties of the various classes of men from one visit would be quite impossible. as one of the many officials to whom I was introduced said "to give a proper account of the work you would have to spend your whole time here for a week." The Tourist's "Visitor's Handbook" (in the material) gives only an ~~[illegible]~~ inadequate description of the various departments, and only includes a portion of what I saw, as I was taken to many departments where strangers are not generally admitted.

During the course of my visit I was introduced to and had short conversations with Mr Spencer Walpole, the Secretary; Mr Carey, his private secretary; Mr Fischer, the Controller of Telegraphs; Mr Hill, the chief of the Statistical Department; and Mr Badcock, the Controller

of the London Postal Union. All of them take a ~~strong~~ strongly official line on the question of pay and ~~fr~~ grievances, and refer to the statements of the men as for the most part "lies." Though the Department does not now refuse to recognise the various associations it is easy to see that they are disliked, and none of these officials have a good word to say for any of the officers of the Associations, the man known for whom they reserve their principal hatred is Clery, who they one and all declare to be a thoroughly unprincipled rascal. Clery is the only one of the prominent Union men whom I happen not to have met, so that I can say nothing of him from personal knowledge. Churchfield, the Secretary of the Postmen's Federation, Mr Badcock says is "as artful as a wagon load of monkeys": as Mr Badcock is his official chief I imagine that his position in the Union must be against his chance of promotion.

Mr Hill who talked perhaps more sympathetically

of the men than any other official, pointed out strongly in how many respects their position is superior to private employment: apart from pensions, sick pay, medical attendance, holidays and other privileges they have the certainty of drawing their pay regularly without the least fear of irregularity of employment; and ~~unless~~ except in most flagrant cases have an almost absolute security of tenure. When once a man is on the staff the Department puts up with much that no private employer would tolerate.

One of the grievances of the Postmen is that few live to enjoy a pension. They allege that they are worn out upon the age of 60. I questioned both Mr Walpole and Mr Hill on this point. Mr Walpole doubted if the proportion of postmen who lived to the pension age was not as large as among civil servants generally; and he further said that comparatively few postmen received pensions as such, as with few exceptions they were promoted to higher posts. The latter argument seemed to me

very unsound and Mr Hill at once threw it over, agreeing that the number of postmen who survive above that rank is very small. He promised to try and get out figures which would show the proportion of those who enter the service who live to enjoy a pension. Mr Hill says that the present medical officer thinks that men begin postmen's work too young, and that 21 is a more suitable age. At one time they used to begin at 16 and after four or five years were often completely worn out.

March 25th

In addition to the above I have seen a large number of officials connected with the various Civil Service Associations, but I have really got nothing further from them than is contained in the voluminous printed material. I have however derived the general impression that the great advance in Civil Service salaries and wages of late years has been the result of continual agitation.

It is evident too that the officials have the strongest dislike to this agitation, and almost all Union officials complain that they are marked men.

It is almost impossible to understand thoroughly the organisation of the Civil Service without at least dipping into the Report of the Ridley Commission, which is however of tremendous length. The Appendices to the first three volumes are especially interesting and valuable.