

There are two parts. The first considers the elimination, whenever desirable, of political influence from the civil service and discusses in this connection the source of the appointing power, the relation of Congress and the President in respect to appointments, the laws of 1871 and 1883, with considerable attention to the extension and operation of the present classified service and "formal systems of selection." The second part deals with the technical problems of personnel administration, assuming that the undesirable political influence has been eliminated from the service. In this part the subjects are promotion versus recruitment, reassignment and promotion, recruiting methods, the maintenance of efficiency, working conditions, organization for administration, and employees' organizations.

Readers will be impressed with the intimate knowledge that the author has of the subjects and particularly with the first-hand information of conditions in the executive departments. Judgments and conclusions are tempered by this intimacy. Some of the references to the English service need revision owing to the recent changes in English practices, but in a world of rapid change it would be impossible to record matter and expect it to remain, even over night, without noting the necessity for alterations in the morning.

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BRIEFER NOTICES

Professor O. D. Skelton's *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* (2 vols., Oxford University Press) is one of the most interesting and significant among political biographies. The public career of this statesman coincided with important developments in the British colonial system and Laurier's relation to these developments was in most cases intimate. As a young lawyer in a country town Sir Wilfrid entered politics fifty years ago. His progress was not rapid at the outset, but in 1887 he became leader of the Liberal party. Nine years later he became prime minister, a post which he held until overthrown on the reciprocity issue in 1911. His biography might well be termed "A Half Century of Canadian Politics," for there were no events in this field and epoch which failed to command his interest and activity. Professor Skelton has made the most of his theme, dealing with it in a broad and scholarly way. He has not overloaded his volumes with extracts from speeches, letters and state papers. The narration is clear and interesting, never apologetic in tone, not always strictly

impartial, but disclosing an endeavor to be fair in all things. Some men are fortunate in their careers but unfortunate in their biographers. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was fortunate in both. He took some risk in selecting, as his literary executor, a scholar who was neither of his own race or faith; but the outcome has abundantly justified the wisdom of his choice.

My Memories of Eighty Years, by Chauncey M. Depew (Scribner's, pp. 417) is an entertaining collection of reminiscences and anecdotes about the great and the near-great told in a rambling and conversational manner by one who has had a long and successful career in business and politics. Among other things Mr. Depew has written intimate accounts of all the presidents of the United States from Lincoln down to Roosevelt, has told about important national campaigns and his experiences in the United States Senate; and has done considerable philosophizing about government and politics along with the lighter parts of the work. In speaking of the "widening chasm between the Executive and the Congress" he writes that "the Cabinet should have seats on the floor of the Houses, and authority to answer questions and participate in debates. Unless our system was radically changed, we could not adopt the English plan of selecting the members of the Cabinet entirely from the Senate and the House. But we could have an administration always in close touch with the Congress if the Cabinet members were in attendance when matters affecting their several departments were under discussion and action."

Ten years at the Court of St. James', by Baron von Eckardstein (translated and edited by Professor George Young, E. P. Dutton and Company, pp. 255), is full of diplomatic revelations by one who admired Bismarck, was charmed by King Edward and disapproved of Kaiser Wilhelm and all his doings. For the general reader the diplomatic snapshots of important personages and the many personal stories are good gossip and have all the charm thereof; while for the student of political science these rather unique reminiscences throw a new light on pre-war politics and diplomacy. Of special interest is the account of those fateful years when Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire and others were trying to bring about an Anglo-German alliance that would perhaps have prevented the recent war. In von Eckardstein's opinion, failure was due not to any fault of these British statesmen but, in the words of Professor Young, the translator, "to the waywardness of the Kaiser, the weakness of his Chancellors, and the tortuosities of Holstein."