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XIII.

#### WHY GOOD MEN DODGE

The government service must look largely to the graduates from colleges and universities in recruiting for its technical work. Replies to an inquiry addressed to some forty of the leading colleges and universities of the country to discover what class of men took civil service examinations, whether the number is decreasing and, if so, the reasons, disclose vividly what the training schools of technical and scientific men think about the government as an employer. They warn their graduates against government service, and the graduates heed the warning. Carnegie Institute of Technology, at Pittsburgh, reports:

It is certainly true that the best of our graduates are not interested in government employment because they feel that, first of all, it does not pay adequate salaries, nor does it offer opportunity for advancement that private enterprise does. This spring I interviewed all the members of the graduating class, except the women, and none of them would consider government employment, although there were many positions open. There are now about 1500 male graduates of the institute, and I will venture to state that not more than ten are employed by the government.

Replies of similar tenor and import were received from the University of Chicago, Leland Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Indiana University, and the University of Wisconsin.

Inequality of compensation is one of the chief reasons that deter scientific men from going into the government service. Congress fixes the salaries of most of the government employees. I can give a concrete illustration of how it determines the salaries of scientific men.

Dr. Leland O. Howard and Dr. Edward W. Nelson are two scientists in the employ of the government who have national reputations.

The appropriation bill for the Department of Agriculture was under consideration in the house on January 30th, 1920. The secretary of agriculture had been recommending for five or six years that Doctor Howard's salary be increased from \$4,500 to \$5,000. He proposed it again in that year's bill. When the item was reached in the discussion on the floor, this colloquy ensued:

Mr. Stafford—Mister Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the paragraph in the entomologist whose salary you propose to increase the same person recommended for an increase last year?

Mr. Lever—Yes, he has been in the government service many, many years. The Chairman—I make the point of order.

Mr. Lever—I concede it. Mr. McLaughlin of Michigan—Will the gentleman reserve his point of order?

Mr. Stafford—I will reserve it. Mr. McLaughlin—The committee made the recommendation to increase the salary \$50, took testimony on it and considered it very carefully. In our judgment the increase in salary ought to be made for an official who has been in the department, as the chairman says, for a long time at the head of this bureau. He has performed able and faithful services. The salary is less than that paid to the heads of other bureaus. We felt, after listening to all that was said, and with a knowledge of the work he has been doing and has done, the salary proposed is not too large.

Mr. Stafford—How long has he been there?

Mr. Lever—He has been there forty-two years.

Mr. Stafford—What is his age?

Mr. Lever—Over sixty, perhaps nearer seventy, but he is still vigorous and able to do good work. He is one of the greatest entomologists in the world.

The Chairman—The point of order is sustained.

Five minutes later the matter of Doctor Nelson's salary was reached. The secretary of agriculture recommended an increase of his pay from \$3,500 to \$4,000. This happened:

Mr. Stafford—Mister Chairman, I reserve the point of order on the paragraph. Will the chairman of the committee inform the house as to how long this biologist has been in the service of the government and how long he has been receiving the present salary of \$3,500, on which you recommend an increase of \$500?

Mr. Lever—Mister Chairman, this gentleman, whose name is Nelson, has been in the service of the department since November, 1896. He has served as chief field naturalist from 1907 to 1912, and was assistant in charge of the biological investigation, from 1912 to 1914. On August 4, 1914, he was appointed assistant chief of the bureau, and on December 1, 1915, was made chief of the bureau. He took the place of Doctor Henshaw.

Mr. Stafford—And the salary has been \$3,500 since 1912?

Mr. Lever—Yes.

Mr. Stafford—What is his age?

Mr. Lever—I should think that Doctor Nelson is round fifty years of age.

Mr. Stafford—He is not superannuated.

Mr. Lever—Oh, no; he is a very vigorous man.

Mr. Stafford—Mister Chairman, I withdraw the point of order.

Doctor Howard was refused his increase of pay because he was too old, "over sixty, perhaps nearer seventy."

Doctor Nelson was allowed his increase because he was not superannuated but in his prime, "round fifty years of age."

Now, as a matter of fact, Doctor Howard is more than two years younger than Doctor Nelson. Is it any wonder that scientific men of any attainments are reluctant to enter a service where the measure of the value of their services is set down in any such haphazard and casual way?



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