

Department has found it necessary to withhold the license until the driver has recovered from the effects of the accident.

As mentioned before, further achievements in providing safety factors in cars and in highways are necessary, but an equally important part of our problem is to make people safer for themselves—either as drivers or pedestrians. Since practically the entire population must be reached, its attention aroused and sustained, no one person or single group of persons can accomplish the task. Considerable attention up to the present has been given to education to the point of telling people what they should and should not do but insufficient emphasis has been directed to the development of an appreciation of why such behaviour is necessary. In the majority of cases, people are not reckless because of any malicious intent or because they have no regard for their

own or others safety but rather because they have never been imbued with a true sense and understanding of their responsibility and of the need for restraint in their use of the roads. The problem of discipline, restraint or control in human relationships is, of course, extremely complicated, but when that relationship involves not only the human factor but a very mobile mechanical factor it becomes even more complicated.

Since the accident problem is essentially a social problem, progress in eliminating abuses will come slowly, but the significant fact that this problem is becoming better understood gives hope for future improvement. The interpretation of it by many agencies involved is developing a deeper interest and stability and the principles and techniques already known need only to be persistently and continuously expanded to have safety become an integral part of our every-day living.

Municipal Services in England

By LADY (ERNEST) SIMON,

UNLIKE the national Civil service, the entrance to all grades of which is by competitive examination, there is no recognised mode of entry to the municipal service. The tenacity with which local councils cling to their autonomy and freedom from central control, makes them suspicious of any suggestion that the municipal service should be unified.

Each local authority is left free to decide upon qualifications for entrants, except of the technical officers. All doctors, engineers, architects, lawyers, nurses, etc., must possess the standard qualifications, and it is true that these officials play a greater part in the municipal than in the national civil service.

In the latter, these technical officials are all under the administrative official who is the permanent head of the department, but in the municipal service the head of a department is, in the majority of cases, a technician. The medical officer of health is a doctor, the chief of the electricity department an electrical engineer, and it is becoming increasingly common for the director of Education to have been a teacher. The chief official of all—the Town Clerk—is, in the vast majority of cases, a lawyer, although there is no statutory requirement that he should be one. I will return to this point later. The rest of the staff, the administrative section, is usually recruited at the age of between fourteen and sixteen.

Some authorities insist upon a minimum age of sixteen, and the possession of a school leaving age certificate, others

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lady Simon the wife of the former Lord Mayor of Manchester, England, is a well known expert on municipal government and a frequent contributor to the British journal *Public Administration*.

like the London County Council, and my own city of Manchester, for instance, hold a special examination for entrants which, as the service is attractive—becomes a highly competitive examination. But this method is by no means usual, and some of the largest cities make no use of it. Where there is no entrance examination, the door is open to personal and political influences, and there is no doubt that this is the case in some authorities. If the municipal service were unified or, if not nationally, yet unified in a series of regions covering the country, the method of entrance by competitive examination would follow, as a matter of course.

A criticism that is made against the English municipal service is, that it offers no openings for university graduates as part of their professional training. There is no doubt that if some of the ability which enters the national civil service from the universities, could come into the municipal service, it would be an advantage.

The reasons why there is no recruitment are various. As I pointed out before, most of the chief officials are technicians, and so long as the top administrative posts are filled in this way, there is not the same inducement as in the national civil service to able young men and women to enter. Some students of local government hold that this is a mistake, that what is wanted at the head of municipal departments, and especially in the position of Town Clerk, is a man of administrative ability and this is only rarely found in combination with technical ability.

If change is coming, it is still a long way off, but quite a number of university graduates are now taking a legal

training, so as to qualify as Town Clerks, and others are teaching, with a view to becoming Directors of Education later on. In this way, some of the advantages of a broader university education are finding their way into the municipal service. Once in the service, the boy of sixteen can look forward to a useful and secure career. In the large authorities, the posts are graded, and salaries and promotion regulated. There is no question of a change of officials if the political complexion of the council changes, and certain chief officials cannot be dismissed without the consent of the central government.

The municipal officials carry a heavy burden of responsibility, but they enjoy a great deal of independence. The central government does not interfere with them, and although they are servants of their councils, they are not only responsible for carrying out its policy, but in most cases inspire this policy. Members of local councils are busy men and women, and local government is becoming each year more and more complicated. The immense increase in social legislation since the war, has put an increasing number of new duties on local councils. Administration that enters so much into the daily life of the people—often in intimate details—has become a highly skilled job, and the amateurs, who are the elected members of councils, have to rely largely on their officials, in order to come to right decisions of policy.

Although there are many improvements that I should like to see in the recruitment and organisation of local government officers, the service consists of a fine body of men and women, who combine service to the community with the job of earning their living.