

SARDAR PATEL AND THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (IAS)

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Introduction

While every nation has to have a bureaucracy, the shape it takes, the role it performs and the salience it has in the ecosystem of governance depends largely on the vision of those who are instrumental in setting it up, the confidence they have in working with them and the mode of selection as well as the conventions laid down by the founding fathers of the nation. This, in turn, depends on the experience of those who are at the helm at the time of the establishment of the Service.

This note will take a look at the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, not just in the making of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), but also the retention of the Indian Civil Service, and laying the foundation of an ideal relationship between the political leadership and the permanent civil service. It was a relationship of trust and mutual confidence backed by Constitutional guarantees, an absolutely fair and transparent system of selection, besides inculcating, by example, a sense of patriotism and nation-building among them. By placing on the nascent civil service the role of keeping India united, Patel made them responsible for this mammoth task, which we take for granted today, but which at the time of Independence was fraught with many an uncertainty. It will also examine Patel's experience in public life: as the Mayor of Ahmedabad Corporation, as the leading light of the Indian National Congress and the Gujarat Congress and later as the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister in the Interim Cabinet, and the possible impact it may have had on his views on the Civil Service.

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Bureaucracy and the Ship of the State: The ICS and the Empire

By whichever ideological disposition one may look at the British rule, post the Royal Proclamation of 1858, which more or less coincides with the establishment of a merit-based civil service in India, there is a general acceptance that the Indian Civil Service fulfilled its mandate of keeping the Empire geographically intact, revenue-surplus and offering protection to the commercial interests of the mother country. Management guru Peter Drucker marveled at the institution, which despite its initial reluctance to accept bright Indians in its fold emerged as one of the finest organs of administration.

India got merit-based civil service after hundreds of years of arbitrary governance – after Kautlaiya's *Arthshastra* of the 3rd century BC, the next efforts at a rule-based pan-India administration was made by Chandragupta and Samudragupta, followed by Harsha, who could not extend his domain beyond North India. After a long hiatus, Todar Mall established a revenue code for Akbar, but the later Moghuls were a shadow of their forbears. In the anarchy that followed, which is reflected in the subtitle of Dalrymple's book by the same name — the East India Company, corporate violence and the pillage of an empire, governance was reduced to collection of tax, suppression of dissent and a feeble attempt at fixing the borders.

The East India Company and later the British Raj, did what no one with the possible exception of the Mauryas in Magadha had done before. Inadvertently, they fixed the 'borders and maps of civilisational India'. The rulership imperative compelled them to have a common currency, a common criminal code, extensive use of English and a system of governance, the topmost echelons of which were manned by the ICS. Having done this, they realised that the best way to rule this country was to harp on the 'differences' and promote these by playing one against the other and assume the burden of keeping these borders sacrosanct. This is the one marked difference between a civilisational society and a nation-state, but in the latter project, the ICS, and later its successor service, the IAS played a salient role.

The Indian Civil Service, was part of the 19th century Imperial Civil Service, created according to the provision of Section XXXII (32) of the Government of India Act passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1858, was the higher Civil Service of the British Empire in British India, which remained in existence during the entire British Rule in the country between 1858 and 1947, the year of India's freedom. The members of this Service while working

for the office of the Secretary of State for India were responsible for approximately thirty crore Indians (population of the country at that time) in 250 districts. They were responsible for keeping control over the country in various forms and the implementation of policies of the colonial Government.

The British Parliament had by its historic decision taken in 1861 abolished the system of nomination for the Service and resolved the induction of people in the ICS through competitive examinations in English of all British subjects, without racial distinction. The competitive examination for the entry to the Civil Service was combined for the diplomatic, the home, the Indian and the Colonial Services. The minimum age was fixed at 21 years while the maximum age limit was 24 years, and everyone was entitled to a maximum number of three attempts. Incidentally, there was no retirement age, but officers were expected to resign after 35 years.

From the day the Civil Service was thrown open to the Indians, it attracted to its ranks some of the ablest men in the country who made their mark in various branches of the administration. The first Indian to enter the ICS was Satyendranath Tagore, a brother of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore. Seven years after Tagore's admission in 1864, four more Indians, namely, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Beharilal Gupta, and Shripad Babaji Thakur, followed his example.

Sir Surendranath Banerjea, who belonged to the second batch of Indians that entered the Service, would probably have won many administrative laurels had not his brilliance cost him his job. Two more names of brilliant civilians may be mentioned by way of illustration. The achievement of K.P.S. Menon, both in the academic and the administrative domain were impressive. He appeared for the ICS examination in 1921 and outshone all his competitors, Indian and British, by standing first.

But these were exceptions, for while the Royal Proclamation made all Her Majesty's subjects equal, with few honorable exceptions, most British officers harbored deep-rooted prejudice. While the Congress and every shade of Indian opinion wanted a greater opportunity for Indians, it was only from 1922 that simultaneous exams were held in London and Allahabad, and the Indian component got a much better chance. Later as per the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935, the Federal Public Service Commission and the Provincial Public Service Commissions were constituted.

The recommendations of the Government of India Act, 1935, also proposed that future batches of the ICS officers should be composed

of 40 per cent Europeans and 40 per cent Indians, remaining 20 per cent appointments be filled by direct promotion of Indians from the Provincial Civil Services.

The Emergence of the Sardar

It may be mentioned that just as Indians were making a dent in the ICS, Sardar Patel was emerging as one of the main lieutenants of the Mahatma, leader of the Congress, the undisputed mass leader who had a 360-degree connect with everyone — from the peasants of Bordoli to the workers of and mill-owners of Ahmedabad and the heads of provincial Congress committees across the country.

With the working of the Government of India Act, 1935, elected governments in provinces were formed. In most of the provinces, the Congress had formed the governments under the supervision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Thus, the Sardar had overall control over the Congress government in provinces and experience of working with Civil Services. Prior to this, he had successfully dealt with Civil Servants in different capacities: as the Chairman of the Ahmedabad Municipality (1924-28), the *Satyagrahas*, especially the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920) the Bordoli Kisan Agitation (1928), and the catastrophic floods in Gujarat (1927). From his vast experience, the Sardar had not only understood and appreciated the importance of the members of the Indian Civil Service and visualised their role in the near future, especially in keeping India united but had also developed an unambiguous approach towards them.

Meanwhile, Patel had also cut his teeth in the Congress organisation. When he tried to revitalise old institutions like Gujarat Sabha when Gandhi was made its President in 1917. Together, they transformed it from an elite to a peoples' institution and broadened its social base. Gujarat Sabha was given the responsibility to carry out a constructive programme to serve the people. Its members were asked to organise a march to Nilgiris to demand the release of Annie Besant who was arrested there for the Home Rule activities.

After the failure of the Kheda peasant movement, Gandhi and Vallabhbhai realised the inherent weakness of Gujarat Sabha. It had a fragile structure and lacked organisational solidarity. He also found Indian National Congress in Gujarat in a state of disarray and realised the importance of establishing a hierarchy of provincial, district, taluka and village Congress Committees. In 1921, Vallabhbhai was made its President, the position he enjoyed up to 1946. He learned

the art of managing large and complex organisations, trusting people, delegating responsibility and keeping an ear to the ground.

With the launch of the Quit India Movement, the formation of the Indian National Army, the revolt of the Naval officers and ranks and the economic collapse of Britain after the World War, the writing on the wall was clear. The days of the Empire were numbered. The British were keen to cut their losses, (especially their prestige), and leave. It appears that their reactions were driven both by a sense of impotent rage and sheer inadequacy to deal with such a complex situation. Rather than consult the members of the interim Cabinet or the leadership of the Congress which was spearheading the freedom movement, their decision — making reflected their lack of concern about the governance of the country they had direct and absolute control for nearly a century. And so, amidst deepening crisis in the Interim Government, the Secretary of State decided on October 1946, to stop further recruitment to the Indian Civil Service, with the indication of the possibility of termination of his connection with the Services earlier than the date of constitutional changes. Such a step had dangerous implications. A breakdown prior to the transfer of power in the already depleted Services endangered the country's administrative unity. The British had built their Empire on the foundations of such unity through the 'Steel Frame'. Such a 'Frame' was all the more needed in a newly-born democratic India, yet, riddled with fissiparous tendencies. Patel felt more than any other leader that only a single, all-India Administrative Service and Indian Police Service could help him preserve what the British had built and through which that had ruled over India.

Acting with alacrity, he called a conference of the provincial Chief Ministers (then called Premiers/Prime Ministers) on 21-22 October 1946 at New Delhi and spoke to them with stern confidence: The sooner the Secretary of State's control is ended and the present structure wound up, the better. He went on to say:

'The main question was whether a Central or a Provincial service should replace the ICS and the IP, recruitment to which had been stopped by the Secretary of state in view of the constitutional changes The Interim government is in favor of an All India administrative service. The reason which prompted the decision in favour of an All India administrative service was mutual advantage to both the Centre and the Provinces. Under this arrangement, it would facilitate liaison between the Centre and the provinces, ensure a certain uniformity of standards of administration and maintain the central administrative machinery in touch with good realities. The provincial administrative machinery, on

its part will acquire a wider outlook, and obtain the best material for the higher posts.'

Eleven provinces, which then constituted British India (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, U.P., Punjab, Bihar, C.P., Assam, NWFP, Orissa, and Sind) were represented by their Premiers or Revenue Ministers and / or their Chief Secretaries, shared their frank views in this conference. While seven provinces were clearly in favour of retention, Punjab, Bengal, and Sind wanted the ICS replaced with a provincial service. Assam wanted a new Service in which the control should be with the province and not someone far away. Note here that even then, the North East felt that its 'distance from Delhi'.

The Revenue Minister of Punjab Nawab Muzaffar Ali Quzailbash felt that the 'provinces must have "full control over their services", and to have full control, they must also select their own services. This would also ensure proper representation of communities and greater attention to local problems, and on the whole, be conducive to efficient administration. Provinces should place the services of their officers on deputation with the Centre'.

Typically, in his closing remarks, the Sardar stated that 'there was a general feeling in favour of the formation of an All India service and hoped that after the general scheme was framed, those who were at present not in favour, would be convinced that adequate allowances had been made for Provincial susceptibilities regarding control and would agree to join in. It was in this meeting that induction to the IAS was also discussed, and the following consensus emerged. 'It was agreed that the quota for promotion of Provincial services men in the proposed service should be 25 per cent of the superior posts. The provinces should be left free (to select) to devise rules of selection for the Provincial services quota, but the process selected would be subject to a certificate of fitness by the Federal Public Service Commission'. It may be noted that the extant provisions was a 20 per cent promotion quota as per the 1935 Government of India Act.

The conference also agreed that training for all members of the higher civil services whatsoever be the mode of recruitment should be under a central scheme and also that cadre allotment should be done in consultation with the provinces , and in making the allotments, the candidates should, as far as possible, be allotted to the province of their origin. As Sardar Patel was in a great hurry to fill the vacant position, he convinced the provincial heads and decided to induct officers who were discharged from the Indian Armed Forces. Training for such offices was started at Metcalfe House in New Delhi on April 1947. He addressed the first batch of trainee

officers at Metcalfe House on 21 April 1947. Speaking on the code of conduct for public servants, he said:

‘Above all, I would advise you to maintain to the utmost the impartiality and incorruptibility of administration a civil servant cannot afford to and must not take part in politics, must be involved himself in communal wrinkles to depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to the base public service and to lower its dignity similarly no service worth the name can claim to exist if it does not have in view the achievement of the highest standard of integrity.’

‘You are the pioneers of the Indian service. The future of the service will depend upon the foundation and traditions that will be laid down by you, by your character and abilities, and by your spirit of service. You can look forward to your future with trust and confidence and if you serve in the true spirit of service and sure you will have your best reward I shall ask you, therefore, to devote yourself to your studies fully conscious of responsibilities and opportunities that await you.’

Earlier, he had called some 30 senior officers of ICS in early 1947 to his house at 1, Aurangzeb Road (now Abdul Kalam Road) in New Delhi and he touched and moved their hearts when he extended a humble invitation to join the government after Independence to play the role in building independent India.

The Constitutional Guarantees

The issue of constitutional guarantees to the civil services was not uncontested, and Patel’s intervention in the Constituent Assembly proved necessary for the acceptance of two Articles relating to the Services. One, Article 311, made it difficult for the political executive to punish officials, and while Article 314 guaranteed the terms and privileges of members of the Indian Civil Service in accordance with an assurance that Sardar had given shortly before Independence. As mentioned earlier, the Sardar was keen that Civil Services should feel ‘secure’ in their new *avatar*, especially as they were seeing a major transition in their roles and responsibilities. Both provisions attracted criticism, as many members of the Assembly had been imprisoned during the freedom struggle by the officials whom the Article would protect.

Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, a future Speaker of the Lok Sabha, said of Article 314: ‘This is an extraordinary guarantee ... This guarantee asks us to forget that those persons who are still in the service — 400 of them — committed excesses.’ He went to say that while ordinary masses had not been guaranteed food and clothing

but an extraordinary guarantee was being given to persons who committed excesses thinking this was not their country and got salaries out of proportion to the national income. Professor Shibban Lal Saxena expressed his opinion that the Article should not bind future Parliaments from determining the conditions of service of its servants. It would be derogatory of the Sovereignty of Parliament. Another member, Babu Ram Narayan Singh, had expressed his opinion with regret that no reciprocal assurances were forthcoming from those assured of a safeguarded future.

H.V. Kamath and Nasiruddin Ahmed also did not agree with the language of the proposal. Mahavir Tyagi, a bureaucrat turned freedom fighter, also opposed the proposal of special protection to civil servants saying that it would be a perpetual liability to future parliaments. He was also not in the favour of speedy elevations to the Secretaries and Joint Secretaries and wanted to insert a provision of freedom to the future parliaments to reduce the number of secretaries according to their requirements. He opined that the pay offered to the bureaucrats would be a great burden on the state exchequer and thought that the bulk of the benefits from the Independence went to the service people. Rohini Kumar Chaudhary, while supporting the Article appealed to the members of the civil services to return the Constituent Assembly's gesture by renouncing a part of the guaranteed remuneration in the country's interest. He mentioned that the civil servants unlike Congress leaders had made no sacrifice and were drawing higher salaries and better perks than the ministers. Dr Punjabrao S. Deshmukh opined that the service was really a reminder of the days of India's slavery, and should not be incorporated in the Constitution. He felt that a guarantee could be given to them, but it was not necessary to include it in the Constitution.

The Sardar took the bull by the horns. In his address to the Constituent Assembly, the Sardar praised the Civil Servants who had the option of providing services to outside agencies on better terms, but they decided to work with the new Government without any apprehensions. Challenging those who were negatively disposed towards the Civil Servants, he said:

'There was plenty of scope at that time for them to come out [of Government Service] and get better terms from outside agencies. Even now, if you are not willing to keep them, find out your substitute and many of them will go; the best of them will go. I will like to assure you that I have worked with them during this difficult period I am speaking with a sense of heavy responsibility, and I must confess that in point of

patriotism, in point of loyalty, in point of sincerity and in point of ability, you cannot have a substitute. They are as good as ourselves, and to speak of them in disparaging terms in this House, in public, and to criticise them in this manner, is doing disservice to yourselves and to the country. This is my considered opinion.'

He went on to say:

'Sir, I am distressed that a senior member likes Mr. Ayyangar... harbours the feeling that the I.C.S. officers are enemies of our country. If that is so, it was his business and the business of those people who think on those lines to move first a resolution to dispense with them and run the administration in a vacuum.

'I have worked with these civil servants during this difficult period. I am speaking with a sense of heavy responsibility, and I must confess that in point of patriotism, in point of loyalty, in point of sincerity and in point of ability... they are as good as ourselves... To speak of them in disparaging terms in this House, in public, and to criticize them in this manner, is doing disservice to yourselves and to the country...

What is the use of talking that the service people were serving while we were in jail? I myself was arrested; I have been arrested several times. But that has never made any difference in my feeling towards people in the services. I do not defend the black sheep; they may be there. But are there not many honest people among them?

'I wish to place it on record in this House that if, during the last two or three years, most of the members of the services had not behaved patriotically and with loyalty, the Union would have collapsed. Ask Dr. John Matthai (the Finance Minister), he is working for the last fortnight with them on the economic question. You may ask for his opinion. You will find what he says about the Services.

'All Members of the Parliament should support the Services, except where any individual member of the Service may be misbehaving or erring in his duty or committing dereliction of his duties. Then bring it to my notice. I will spare nobody, whoever he is.'

He concluded his speech with the following words: 'What did Gandhiji teach us? You are talking of Gandhian ideology and Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian way of administration. Very good, but you come out of the jail and then say, These men put me in jail. Let me take revenge. That is not the Gandhian way. It is going far away from that...'

'Therefore, for God's sake, let us understand where we are... If you want to take anything from the Service, you should touch their heart... Don't take a lathi and say, "We are a Supreme Parliament." *You have supremacy for this kind of thing? To go back on your word?*

All opposition collapsed after this intervention. The articles were

accepted. The paragraphs quoted show that the Sardar's defense of the I.C.S., as also his roles in creating its successor, the I.A.S., and the Indian Police Service, sprang from his grasp of the follies of revenge and of breaking one's word, and from his grasp of the criticality, of a bold civil service in a democracy.

Sardar Patel: The Patron-Saint of Civilians and his Civil Servants

It is generally believed that but for the vision and sagacity of the Sardar, the ICS officers, who were regarded as protégés of the British, would be booted out after Independence, and replaced by patriotic persons. Nehru had himself once remarked of the Indian Civil Service (ICS): 'I think it was Voltaire who defined the 'Holy Roman Empire' as something which was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. Just as someone else once defined the Indian Civil Service, with which we are unfortunately still afflicted in this country, as neither Indian, nor civil, nor a service.'

However, Vallabhbhai's deep-seated trust in the civil servants won him several battles post-Independence. No wonder, Rajmohan Gandhi, the author of Sardar's biography says:

'His stout defense of the man of the ICS and his role in the founding of its successor agency, the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service earned him the title of the civilians 'Patron Saint'. The civilians' industry, ability and in some cases the Independence had impressed Vallabhbhai, but he also saw All India Services as protection against separatism and they gave the centre a lever against the provinces. According to him, "This Constitution is meant to be worked by a ring of Services which will keep the country intact. We have in our collective wisdom come to a decision that we shall have this model wherein the ring of Service will be such that will keep the country under control...'

As an administrator in charge of Home, Patel's immediate task was to grapple with the problems the country was facing on political as well as the administrative front. Girija Shankar Bajpai, Secretary-General to the Government of India and the senior-most ICS, called it, 'a double task: conservative, in the good sense of the word, in what had been provinces in the old India; creative in the Indian States. Neither was easy. To the ordinary stresses of a transition caused by the withdrawal of trained personnel, who had wielded all power for a hundred years, was added to the strain of Partition and the immense human upheavals and suffering that followed it.' Bajpai thought: 'The fate our new State hung in the balance during those perilous months ... that, despite some oscillation, the scales stayed steady was

due not only to the faith of the people in its leaders but to the firm will and strong hand of the new Home Minister-Sardar Patel.'

As per the British historian Judith Brown: 'Patel, as Home Minister in the Interim Government, was well aware that in the turbulent days of 1946-47, the ICS, whatever its previous image in the eyes of Congressmen, was a bastion against chaos and disintegration of Government.' Patel was 'partly instrumental in persuading other Congressmen that continuity in administration must be maintained, clearly the Service was a source of stability.' In fact, he was critical of his own countryman and their attitude towards the civil servants. 'I see a tendency today that in several provinces the services are set upon and said: "You are servicemen; you must carry out our orders." The Union will go, you will not have a united India, if you have not a good all-India service which has the independence to speak out its mind, which has a sense of security that you will stand by your word and, that after all there is a Constitution of which we can be proud, where their rights and privileges are secure.'

He, therefore, turned to those members of the ICS who had opted to serve free India. He needed them as much as they needed him. The British had left them orphaned; while Prime Minister Nehru and pro-Left Congressmen openly aired hostility towards them as a class.

Patel's concept of the Civil Service emerged from the belief he held and which he once expressed to his Home Secretary H.V.R. Iyengar: 'It would be a bad day if people did not look up to officials holding high positions. Ministers come and Ministers go, but the permanent machinery (the Civil Service) must be good and firm, and have the respect of the people. Today my Secretary can write a note as opposed to my views. I have given that freedom to all my Secretaries. I have told them, "If you do not give your honest opinion for fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you had better go. I will bring another Secretary..."'

The officers working with the Sardar found that he listened, was not omniscient, said little, and said it clearly, decided quickly, delegated freely, inserted no second thoughts and took responsibility. In addition, he was accessible to his officials and often in direct touch with them. He was in short, the Civil Servant's ideal Minister.

The government faced an extremely difficult administrative problem over the implementation of the Congress Working Committee resolution directing it to take immediate steps towards the formation of a linguistic Andhra State. Iyengar, as Home Secretary, was, however, opposed to making a move in the matter.

Being in a quandary, he asked Patel: 'Sir, the gentlemen who have passed this resolution include Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Dr Rajendra Prasad and you yourself. All of you are Cabinet Ministers and you have taken this decision. What do you expect of me to do about it?' Without a moment's hesitation, Patel asked me: 'Are you or are you not the Home Secretary?' Iyengar was a little taken aback. 'Of course, I am,' he replied. 'Then', Patel said, 'do your duty as Home Secretary.' After the Cabinet meeting, Iyengar called on Patel and told him rather in lighter vein: 'I have succeeded in getting you as Home Minister to overrule you as Sardar Patel of the Congress Working Committee.'

Patel had a quick eye for merit and could gauge the potential of each officer and knew what use to make of him. From his officers, he demanded fidelity and integrity, and in return he gave them his trust. A striking example of Patel's trust in Civil Servants is typified by the confidence he reposed in his redoubtable States Secretary, V.P. Menon, which he enjoyed to a degree as no other Civil Servants perhaps did, even when he was a non-ICS. Such confidence Patel had expressed as early as July 1946, when he told him: 'Menon, you and I are working for a common purpose. Let there be no mistake about our determination to achieve Independence. If the British are under the impression that they can hang on because of the difference of opinion between the Congress and the League, they are mistaken. We will not consider any sacrifice too great to achieve our objective.'

Menon describes Sardar's leadership in these words: 'Leadership is of two kinds. A leader like Napoleon, who was master of both policy and detail, wanted merely the instrument to carry out his orders. Sardar's leadership was of the second category. Having selected his men, he trusted them entirely to implement his policy. Sardar never assumed that he knew everything and he never adopted a policy without full and frank consultation. Whenever we entered into any discussion, we did so as personal friends rather than as Minister and Secretary.'

Patel, as an administrator was precise, direct, sometimes biting but always strong. It could be soft and soothing or cut through like a razor. But he was ever discreet in the use of words. His effectiveness lay in his restraint, in his unerring judgment, fair-mindedness, and inflexible determination. Iyengar calls him a 'genius in the art of administration' who had 'a tremendous capacity for listening and listening patiently and carefully before he made up his mind. And, thereafter, he was a rock.' And, 'after listening and reflection', when he had made up his mind, then, 'you knew that a giant had got up and moved inflexibility into action.'

Even those who were not directly under him felt his presence. Once a bureaucrat, who had an unpleasant experience with another very senior politician, asked Patel in some context if he really wanted his honest opinion. Patel erupted: 'Does Government pay you Rs 4000 a month for your dishonest opinions? It is for you to give an honest opinion, and it is for me to accept it or not.'

The conditions changed rapidly when the Congress assumed charge in the Interim Government formed in October 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the Food Minister. He was a God-fearing man, a man of very strict principles and of the highest integrity. However, he was not familiar with the intricacies of the administration, and whenever he was faced with a difficult situation, he invariably consulted Sardar Patel, and on some occasions he even brought him to the Ministry to attend some official discussions.

MKK Nair recalls, 'On 27 April 1948,' Sardar Patel wrote to Nehru, 'I need hardly emphasise that an efficient, disciplined and contended Service, assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is a *sine qua none* of the sound administration under a democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule. The Service must be above the party and we should ensure that political considerations, either in recruitment or in discipline and control are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether.'

Philip Mason, a British ICS, had commented that Patel was 'a natural administrator who did not seem to need experience.' Things seemed to come to him instinctively and intuitively. He belongs to that rare class of administrators who are born, not made.

It was no wonder that the death of Sardar Patel (16 December 1950) was mourned by the Civil Servants with all the poignancy of personal bereavement. After his death, a condolence meeting was held in the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi when all civil servants posted in New Delhi paid their tribute of tears to his memory. The meeting, which was presided over by Sir, Girija Shankar Bajpai, passed a resolution re-affirming the officers' determination to render devoted service to the nation. The resolution stated that they owed 'a special debt to him for his confidence and support, and for his keen and unfailing solicitude for our welfare. In grateful remembrance of his services to India and his trust in us, we pledge our complete loyalty and unremitting zeal in service to the land that he helped to liberate and to strengthen.' He went on to say, 'We meet today to mourn the loss and to pay tribute to the memory of a great patriot, a great administrator, and the great man. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was all the three, a rare combination in any historical epoch and in any country.'

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