

## CHAPTER X

### THE BURDEN OF BUREAUCRATS

WE are all democrats but we know little enough about democracy and from appearances we seem to care even less.

When a body of people, a society, a town, or a nation decide to take some action collectively they do not themselves take that action, but always employ somebody else to undertake it for them. A town appoints a town clerk, an association appoints a secretary, a nation appoints officials in the various departments of Government. These people are in every case the servants of those who appoint them; that, at least, is the theory of the matter. We always speak of public *servants* and of the public *service*. But things do not work out that way in practice. Theory and practice have a nasty habit of differing, and public servants all too often become, in fact, public masters.

Perhaps the biggest political problem of the age, which, like all really big problems, is not much discussed, is the slow, sure, steady, silent transference of power into the hands of our new masters—the bureaucracy. Self-government is a very difficult thing to get and a still more difficult thing to work. The democratic principle is the basis of our liberties, and, as I have said before, the democratic principle is in danger. It will be a sad conclusion to the glorious history of the British Constitution if, having through the centuries wrested power from one privileged class after another until all power is quite definitely placed in the hands of the people,