
*THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS AT THE
BRITISH ASSOCIATION.*

THE work of the Section commenced on Thursday, September 12, by Mr. Francis Galton, F.R.S., reading a paper on the advisability of assigning marks for bodily efficiency in the examinations of candidates for the public services. In the recent report of H.M. Civil Service Commissioners, they state that, a scheme of competition for physical qualifications having been brought before the notice of the War Office, it was not accepted, on the ground that the authorities were "completely satisfied with the physique of the young men who came to them through our examinations." The marks, as at present, of the candidates whose places lie near the dividing line between success and failure, run pretty evenly; therefore it is contended that the State would obtain better servants if such moderate marks were allowed for physical qualifications as to insure the selection of the most efficient in body from among those who are nearly on a par intellectually.

Mr. Galton also read a paper on the principle and methods of assigning marks for bodily efficiency. Two separate considerations are involved in the just determination of a scale of marks, which are usually mixed up in unknown proportions. (1) Absolute performance—on the principle that if the daily output of one man is greater than that of another, he should be more highly paid, or marked, in that proportion. (2) Relative rank—on the principle that superiority, however small, insures success

in competitions, and therefore the order of merit deserves recognition independently of the absolute amount of performance. The general conclusion is, that before proceeding to decide on scales of marks numerous measures should be discussed, made of persons of the same age and social class as the candidates, so that the quality of the men hereafter to be dealt with shall be statistically determined. The next step is to decide upon the relative weights to be allowed for absolute performance and for relative rank. Then, after a few other obvious preliminaries have been settled arbitrarily, consistent scales of marks could be at once drawn up.