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## Patronage in the Civil Service

The people who think the war will give "backstairs influence" its death blow are living in a fool's Paradise. The war has been in progress nearly twelve months, and to-day "backstair influence" is as prevalent as it was in the "piping times of peace," and as the functions of the State are increasing, it is only reasonable to suppose that "backstair influence" will increase with them. Or, rather, it will increase if its opponents do not bestir themselves, and make quite plain to His Majesty's Ministers and His Majesty's Opposition their determination to put up a strenuous fight on behalf of a clean and wholesome Civil Service.

"Backstair influence" or "patronage" appointments can never be clean and wholesome, and all the time "backstair influence" or "patronage" appointments are made, the Civil Service of the State will remain unclean and unwholesome. "Patronage" according to the dictionary compiler, means "special countenance or support," and presumably the many Civil Servants who have secured appointments in the Civil Service without first having their qualifications tested by the Civil Service Commissioners have been in the happy position of being blessed with the "special countenance or support" of people who know how and when to pull the strings. "Special countenance or support" is doubtless good for individuals, as it is the means of securing for them positions they would not obtain if they were called upon to compete in the examination-room against their fellows;

but it is not good for the State, and it is not good for the men and women who know their powers, and who are not afraid of the obstacles set up by the Civil Service Commissioners. "Patronage" is also prejudicial to the interests of the existing Civil Servants, as a "patronage" appointment is almost certain to be followed by a "patronage" promotion, and a "patronage" promotion is, of course, an act of injustice to the Civil Servant who is not able to command "special countenance or support."

Where "patronage" is allowed to exist, the Civil Servant without powerful friends is invariably a non-starter. He joins the Service in a subordinate capacity, and, no matter how good his capabilities, he remains at the bottom of the ladder, and obeys the orders of, and, in many cases, does the work of, the "patronage" man, who climbs to the top. The Civil Servant who enters the Service through the legitimate channel would not be human if he did not feel aggrieved when he finds a "patronage" man leading him in the race for promotion. He would not mind if the "patronage" man started from the scratch mark; but he naturally objects when he finds that the "patronage" man's handicap is only limited by the influence of his powerful friends.

In the Civil Service a "patronage" man who enjoys the "special countenance or support" of an influential person such as a Minister of State may become anything. He may become a Parliamentary Under Secre-