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Personal Reminiscences

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The essential parts of this article might have been written by any one of scores of men in the Public Service of Canada.—Editors.

On January 2, 1864, I entered the Civil Service of the Government as bookkeeper in the Internal Revenue Service in the Third District of Maryland, under Hon. Peter G. Sanerwein, Collector. In March, 1864, there appeared an advertisement in a Baltimore daily newspaper, as follows:

“Wanted—A young man of good habits, writing a legible hand, quick and accurate at figures. Address Box 49, Baltimore Post Office.”

Wishing to obtain mercantile employment, whereby by industry and application to business I might advance, I made an application for the position. I then ascertained that the position was in the office of the Designated Depository of the United States at Baltimore, Md.—now designated as the Sub-treasury at Baltimore, Md.

After interviewing the cashier of the office, and being assured that the business was constantly increasing and that there was every probability of advancement, I was, with several others, subjected to an examination, and I was selected for appointment. The office was at that time under the jurisdiction of the Collector of Customs. I entered that service on March 25, 1864, and have remained in the Civil Service ever since.

On September 20, 1870, I was appointed Cashier of Customs at Baltimore, Maryland, and a reorganization of the Customs Service was contem-

plated. I spent three months in codifying the Customs laws and regulations and submitted my conclusions to the Honourable Secretary of the Treasury.

I was directed by him to proceed to Boston, Mass., to confer with other Customs officials in regard to the matter. I was the youngest official at the conference. I had neither personal nor political influence. After a conference of several days my system was approved and forwarded to the Honourable Secretary of the Treasury for his consideration.

The system was adopted and has remained the same until this day, with a few minor changes and sometimes we believe that all changes are not always reforms. When I suggested to the Hon. Secretary of the Treasury regarding the manner of obtaining officials, their permanent retention, increase of compensation according to the length of service and experience, promotion for pronounced ability and pensioning after having performed their service intelligently and faithfully for a given number of years, he informed me that my ideas were un-American, and would never prevail in this country; that when a party came into power, they would surely reward their friends and would punish their enemies. It was with great regret that I was forced to realize that this vast machinery was