

Civilian Portraits.

The Honourable Sydney A. Fisher.

It is eminently fitting that THE CIVILIAN in beginning to-day a series of illustrated biographies of men and women prominent in civil service affairs should select the Honourable Sydney A. Fisher to head the list. Mr. Fisher has, since the beginning of the present order, become in a peculiar way the Minister of the service. He is the author of the Act of 1908, in which the service now moves and has its new being. In the various adjustments that have been necessary in carrying out so radical a change, including the salaries bill of the past session, he has been the leader of the government. From first to last the service owes him much, not alone in the legislation which he has fathered and for which his first responsibility was to the government and the country, but for his constant accessibility and the open-mindedness and justice with which he has discussed and treated all suggestions made on behalf of the service.

Mr. Fisher was born at Montreal in 1850. His education was completed at McGill University and at Trinity College, Cambridge, from the latter of which he holds the degree of B.A. He fought his first election campaign in his thirtieth year—an unsuccessful by-election—in which the government of Sir John Macdonald won. In the ensuing general elections of 1882 and 1887, however, he was elected. In 1891 he was defeated by a majority of one, but in 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908 he was again successful. His constituency since his first entry into public life has been Brome, P.Q. His devotion to agriculture and his study of the scientific principles applicable to

farming led to his selection by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as Minister of Agriculture in 1896, a portfolio which he has held ever since. The list of constructive legislation enacted and administered by the Department since Mr. Fisher's appointment is a long one. Incidentally the staff employed has been very largely increased. Among the most notable additions have been the appointment of a permanent foreign exhibition staff, the extension of the experimental farms system, and the enlargement and improvement of the archives staff. In connection with the last named, the construction and equipment of a commodious archives building has been a feature of Mr. Fisher's administration. It was while Mr. Fisher was Acting Minister of Public Works also that he appointed the advisory council for the purpose of purchasing works of merit for the National Art Gallery and of encouraging art in Canada. In November of last year Mr. Fisher represented Canada at a conference held in Rome on the invitation of the King of Italy. The object of the conference was to form an International Institute of Agriculture for the purpose of collecting and distributing crop reports all over the world. Of this Institute Mr. Fisher became the first Vice-President. Mr. Fisher was chairman of the Canadian Commission which visited Washington last year on the invitation of President Roosevelt to deal with the question of the conservation of natural resources. Prior to 1896 no steamers were equipped with mechanical refrigeration. Today under Mr. Fisher's administration 46 steamers from Montreal are so equipped, and 19 steamers with the cooled-air system of cold storage.

Mr. Fisher is an adherent of the Church of England and has been a leader in the Temperance Movement.