

Service Act, in accordance with the pledges given by Premier Borden, to place the public service on a more efficient basis. Hon. Mr. White will confer a benefit upon the whole country if he can free the public service of some of its most serious weaknesses: particularly with regard to the heavy burden the present state of affairs imposes upon the several ministers of departments; also with regard to the making of appointments, promotions and dismissals. The blight of political patronage takes the heart out of the conscientious Civil Servant. Commenting on American Civil Service laws, an editorial in last week's "Saturday Evening Post" said:—

"If we had a law requiring that the secretary of the treasury be chained to his desk lest he loot the treasury vaults, disinterested observers would think it indicated an odd state of morals. Our Civil Service laws are somewhat like that. The time will come when they will not be necessary, because debauching the public service for political ends will be considered as infamous as stealing public money."

The country will look to Hon. Mr. White to free the Canadian Civil Service from conditions which are not creditable to modern enlightenment. The minister has the interests of the public service at heart. With an awakened public opinion behind him much good work could be accomplished.

The comment following is taken from Montreal "Star" editorial columns of Feb. 28th:—

Why We Need a Civil Service Commission.

We are in the curious position of electing men to govern us; and then doing our best to tie their hands so they can govern us as little as possible. The "Saturday Evening Post" calls attention to this tendency, as shown in the American Civil Service restrictions. It points out that the system of wooden examinations does not get the best men. It tends to "deadend and ossify the whole service." No private firm would permit itself to be hampered by it. But the nation submits to it because it takes the appointments to the service out of politics. Wooden as it is, it is better than the "patronage" system. It "prevents," says the "Post," "Cabinets and Congress, which are supposed to be the nation's special guardians, from looting the public service wholesale, as they would certainly do if their hands were not tied. Our Civil Service laws are a strange commentary on our political morality. If we had a law requiring that the Secretary of the Treasury be chained to his desk lest he loot the treasury vaults, disinterested observers

would think it indicated an odd state of morals. Our Civil Service laws are somewhat like that. The time will come when they will not be necessary, because debauching the public service for political ends will be considered as infamous as stealing public money."

This is all quite as applicable to Canada. If we could trust our politicians, we would not need a Civil Service Act or Commission. And we could trust our politicians all right, if we could trust ourselves—to punish them when they abused the power to choose Civil Servants. That is, we take a notoriously bad way of hiring our national "staff"—a way which makes us pay more for a set amount of work than we need—because we ourselves lack the public spirit to compel our public men to act in the public interest.

Well, we deserve to pay.

The Ottawa Citizen speaks editorially, in its issue of Feb. 28th in this wise:—

Public Service Blight.

One more scandal in the public service is being dragged into the light. An inquiry into the management of the Trent Canal has brought about the suspension of the outside superintendent and several of the staff. As ever, the cloven hoof of evil political machinery has left its mark. The unfortunate superintendent has admitted that certain canal funds have been diverted for alleged Liberal campaign purposes. Machine politicians have been paid with public money, it is alleged, by classing them as laborers, although no work was done by them. Accounts for political purposes—for liquor, telephone, railway transportation, and newspaper charges—are said to have been sent in to the department, disguised as legitimate expenditure over public works. Of course, the burden of responsibility has been placed upon a number of Civil Servants. They are promptly suspended, while the probe into political rascality is being continued. Every Civil Servant, and anyone who has ever seen the inside of the public service, must have some idea of the root of the trouble. From the Trent Canal scandal to the Transcontinental Railway steal, the blight spread over all has its origin in machine politics. Active politicians of the party in power do not hesitate to use the public service in every possible way, to strengthen the party's grip on the country. Capable and conscientious Civil Servants are humiliated time and time again by having to carry out work obviously for low political purposes. If every Civil Servant refused to perform any task at all marked with the cloven hoof of machine politics, how many would be left in the service?