

# THE CIVILIAN

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Ottawa, Oct. 31, 1913

*"The law pertaining to the civil service should be honestly and rigidly enforced, to the end that merit and ability should be the standard of appointment and promotion, rather than service rendered to a political party."*

\* \* \*

*"Entrance to the civil service should be at the bottom, and the custom of securing men from outside the ranks and placing them ahead of old employees should be discouraged, and only resorted to when public interest demands. Civil service protects employees in their positions, but it holds them there in stagnation unless a method be found to not only secure the time of its employees, but to stimulate and reward their ambition."*

## REARRANGING THE BURDEN.

"The first suggestion which I have to offer," says Sir George Murray in his epoch-making report, "is that many of the powers now vested in the Governor in Council should . . . be transferred to individual ministers." He goes on to suggest also that much of the detail now attended to by ministers might be left to their deputies.

A glance at the report shows that we are trying to run the Canada of to-day on the lines that were laid down before Confederation. All sorts of petty details, even to the acceptance of a tender for the erection of a pump or the appointment of a light-house keeper, must come before the ministers as a body; while all other sorts of details, down even to the ordering of furniture and repairs, must come before the minister.

Is it any wonder that need arises for some better organization of the civil service? How can ministers, whose time and attention, when at their desks or in council, must be given to the consideration of a thousand and one technicalities and formalities, find time to organize their staffs on the best lines, to discern and reward merit and to check ambition which has not deeds to show?

It may be said that, in spite of all difficulty, marked ability and conspicuous merit are sure of their reward. But so in a crowd, every man who is markedly taller than his fellows is easily seen. Every man cannot be taller than his neighbors, however, nor can every man show greater ability than those with whom he is associated in his daily work. If the organization of the civil service were merely the management of a number of people, all prodigies of merit, there would be no need of a civil service law. But the bulk of the civil service are just common folks, like other folks. They have about so much ability and perhaps not quite so much devotion to the performance of tasks