

THE CIVILIAN

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Communications on any subject of interest to the Civil Service are invited and will receive careful consideration.

Ottawa, Jan. 26, 1912

THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

As in Canada and the United States, so in Great Britain, a Royal Commission has recently been appointed to enquire into conditions in the Civil Service—with particular reference to appointments and promotions. Commenting on this action of the British Government, a contemporary uses words that are as applicable here as there:

"A dispassionate diagnosis of Civil Service ills and an equally dispassionate cataloguing of recommendations should prove to be the Magna Charta of the Civil Service. At the present moment, we would say that the only cause for misgiving is the traditional perfunctoriness of Royal Commissions. They have always seemed to pursue their labours in too academical an atmosphere and with a callous disregard of time. Not the least important of their vices is an inveterate desire to make a fine art of procrastination. We certainly desire the problem of

the Civil Service probed thoroughly; but if the promised Commission is to be a slave to the traditional habits of Royal Commissions, the very operation of probing will be such as to make the Civil Service heartily tired of the Commission's existence. The Commissioners must approach their task in the knowledge that Civil Service reform is not to be relegated to the dim and distant future; that a democratic transformation in almost every department is a vital need of the hour. On the one hand, they have to pass censure on the anachronistic barrier which separates the lower from the Higher Division, and, on the other, to show that the tendency to distribute subordinate appointments without the preliminary anxieties of competition is a public danger. The dual problem must be grappled with and no mere reluctant tinkering at reform will placate the public."

RAISE THE THIRD DIVISION (INSIDE) MAXIMUM.

Apart entirely from the principle involved in dividing the service into water-tight compartments—as the Act of 1908 does—the fact is indisputable that in days like these \$1,200 is too low as a maximum for even "clerical" or "routine" duties. Even the Government must be beginning to see that a maximum so low will defeat its own purposes. As a matter of simple fair-dealing, however, there are scores of clerks whose functions cannot in anyway be described as executive who are yet worth more to the Government than \$1,200 a year. A flying clerk, for example, by years of experience may become simply invaluable to a department; nevertheless, inasmuch as his work may be defined in the same terms at one time as at another, he is apt at present to be rated as of the same class and salary throughout a large portion of his