

THE CIVILIAN

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The Patronage System.

“ 'Tis the Curse of Service.”

—*Othello.*

For many long and silently endured years the Civil Service of Canada has been a target for the attack of the public press. The character of the attack has been marked by versatility,—sometimes facetious, sometimes vitriolic. It is a question as to which method hurts the more. This impugning of the honour of the public service has been impersonal. Nobody is mentioned, and yet every body is mentioned. Every member of the service, temporary or permanent, has had, at some time, to blush on learning that the penalty of working for one's native land is to be called, directly or inferentially, a ne'er do well or a loafer. Dull and insensitive, the service has, until nauseated, patiently taken this medicine. It is time for the worm to turn.

Since the *Civilian* began publication, its correspondence included complaints on this score. The last case of this kind was published in our issue of October 18th. *Saturday Night* in an article on a public question went out of its way to deliver the usual blow, which we intend to show is below the belt. This is what it stated, referring to outside audit of chartered banks:—

“Let the performance then be carried on by competent firms of private accountants who will report to government and be responsible for their own acts, rather than *create further departments and government officers and sub-officers and clerks who will loaf half their time under the protection of political friends.*

We are paying for too much of that sort of thing now and if we were wise we would, instead of creating further departments and complications, go in there to Ottawa with our *political axes* and *decapitate* right and left and turn over the bulk of the work now performed or *mis-performed* beneath that roof to private firms, who would do it properly and at a small fraction of the present cost.”

A member of the Ottawa service, Mr. Honore Brenot, sent in a pathetic protest which appeared in the correspondence department of that issue. The intention of the present article is to vigorously support the objections of Mr. Brenot to this kind of scurrility, and to place the responsibility where it belongs.

Saturday Night, like the great body of the press, is busy looking out for prestige, sensationalism and success. It has not the time, even if it has the necessary grey matter, to investigate, probe or analyze. A moment's intelligent reflection would suggest to *Saturday Night* and that ilk which stabs the civil service, that they have been plunging their rapiers into the **shadow** instead of the **substance**. They have been indulging in acrobatic abuse of a **result**, of an **effect**; which low art requires little or no brains. This is a less expensive process than employing brains to discover the **cause**. It is as though a bolt of lightning struck a house and killed a number of the inmates. *Saturday Night* might as well pick a quarrel with