

# THE CIVILIAN

VOL. VII.

AUGUST 21, 1914.

No. 9

## The Merit System

*Continuing the series of articles on the merit system, the editors have chosen for today's issue a portion of an address delivered by Dr. Henry Moskowitz, President of the Municipal Commission of New York City, before the National Assembly of Civil Service Commissioners of the United States at Pueblo on June 14th. A careful study of these articles by all Civil Servants is earnestly recommended on account of their general application to our own conditions. Officers of Civil Service Associations and delegates to the Federation conventions should make a special effort to assimilate the matters treated in this series of articles.*

The present municipal administration was elected to give the people of New York an efficient, an economical and a progressive government. The mayor and every member of his cabinet assumed responsibility for carrying out this solemn pledge. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every department head to measure his work by answering in the affirmative the questions—Is your department efficient; is it economically managed, and is it progressive?

It is evident that a commission must in the final analysis be governed by its own conception of economy, efficiency and progress under the law it is appointed to administer, and six months' experience in Civil Service administration has confirmed my belief in the absolute freedom of action within the law of Civil Service Commissions. They should be as free as any appointive or elective judge, and any device, such as fixed tenure of office, over-lapping terms which prevent servile dependence and secures conscientious independence of action on the part of Commissions is in the interest of effective and fearless administration of the Civil Service Law.

Commissions have sometimes been hampered in their administration because appropriating bodies have not

understood the value of the services they render and have measured economy by a reduction in lump sum appropriations without regard to the cost of an efficient and progressive administration of the Civil Service Law. Efficient service may mean more money to improve the quality as well as the quantity of output of the Commission. If appropriating bodies were more in sympathy with Civil Service and if they took its administration as seriously as they take the administration of the Police Department for example, whose patrolmen are frequently furnished by Commissions the latter would make more substantial advances. Nevertheless New York City Civil Service Commission has shared in the mayor's responsibility to give an economical administration. It has made an efficiency study of its bureaus and discovered needless duplication of the work done by different departments. It has simplified its organization by consolidating departments where duplication existed and in consequence has done away with the services of high-priced employees who became unnecessary under the new organization.

What constitutes an efficient administration of the Civil Service Law