

Civilian Portraits.

Mr. George Ross, I.S.O.

Among the recent birthday honours, none was more deserved by long and conspicuous service than the I.S.O. conferred upon Mr. George Ross, Chief Post Office Superintendent for Canada. It was in 1874 that Mr. Ross first went into post office work—in Hamilton, where he became a fourth-class clerk. Commenting on his elevation, the *Courier*, to whom THE CIVILIAN is indebted for the accompanying photograph, recently said:



MR. GEORGE ROSS.

"Mr. Ross is out and out a post-office man; one who takes the transmission and delivery of the mails as seriously as some men do the building of railways. He is a hard worker and an up-to-date man. It was he who worked hardest to establish rural mail delivery. It was he who suggested the militia post-office at the training camps.

"In the greystone, somewhat classic building at the head of Toronto street in Toronto, Mr. Ross is the busiest

man of all. He has a large family, most of whom he has brought up in that building. During his career in the post-office he has seen most of the great changes that have come over the transmission and delivery of the mails. In 1874, when he entered the service, there were fewer letters mailed in all the cities and towns of Canada than there are mailed now in the city of Toronto alone. There was then no free delivery of letters—a system which is now in vogue in almost every Canadian city of over ten thousand population. There were no two-cent stamps. Imperial penny postage did not come till twenty years after Mr. Ross entered the service. In that time also the post-office savings bank has been developed into one of the strongest economic institutions in the country. The postal note and money order system has been extended and made more and more elastic, so that the sending of money by registered mail is now no longer necessary, though still practised. Registration has been simplified. The classification of things sent by mail has been made complete. Department stores have aided in the extension of this branch of the service. Special delivery stamps have been inaugurated. Typewriters have decreased the bulk and multiplied the number of letters. The stamping-machine has been brought into use. Letter carriers have had their pay increased. Postmasters-General have come and gone—just who was the P. M. G. when Mr. Ross entered the post-office is not clearly remembered, but he has seen whole dynasties of them come and go; has seen the department and portfolio of labour grow out of the post-office department at Ottawa, and the publication of the *Labour Gazette*, which, however, pays no postage. In short, Mr. Ross has seen so much of the post-office in thirty-five years that life to him has become just one long letter—plus now the letters tacked onto his name."