

# Memorial Regarding a 1918 War Bonus of \$350 for Civil Servants.

Presented by the Civil Service Federation of Canada

## GENERAL STATEMENT

In approaching you for a war bonus for Civil Servants, we, the appointed representatives of the federated Civil Servants of Canada, both

**Cabinet as employers of labour.**

Inside and Outside, do so with a full realization of our respective positions. To us you are not Cabinet, or Council, but employers, the largest employers of labour in Canada, engaged in running a business for whose efficient administration you are responsible to the people of Canada as a whole. We feel assured of your approval of our belief that circumstances should not be possible of creation under which we could secure employers who should be more alive than yourselves to their privileges and responsibilities. We only ask you to apply to your employees the principles which you have established by Order-in-Council, namely, that of July 11, 1918, as the proper basis for the employment of labour.

(The vital sections of this Order-in-Council are quoted on page 5.)

In presenting to you the plight of your average employee, we do so in the certainty that the full conditions cannot be known to you. A large part of these conditions, such as the evil effects of fixed salaries and permanency of employment at too low a rate to attract or hold the competent, are now in process of adjustment as a result of the reclassification and reorganization called for by the legislation of the past session. We desire here to express our appreciation of your action in this matter and of the efficient way in which your instructions are being carried out.

But there are other conditions of vital importance which require immediate attention. These have been brought about by a truly astounding increase in the cost of living, an increase generally estimated at fifty per cent for the war period 1914 to 1917, and if the present rate of increase in the cost

**Conditions demanding immediate relief.**

of living maintains its upward tendency for the year 1918, and we know of no factors which are likely to disturb its course, the increase for this year will amount also to fifty per cent, or fully as much as that of the preceding three years. (See page 5 for exact figures.)

The salaries of Civil Servants, established ten years ago, and increased since at an average rate of only \$22 a year (see the section on salaries, page 5) are being stretched more than twice to cover the needs of families which had none too much ten years ago. The struggle long ago passed the bounds of reasonable economy and your average employee is now cutting down in ways which sap his strength and efficiency, and that of his family. In fact the struggle of the last few years has introduced elements of weakness into life

**Struggle hard, particularly on the children.**

which have been serious for all but which have borne particularly upon the children.

No increase now can ever repair the harm done to the rising generation by this period of under-nourishment. The short-sightedness of such a policy on the part of employers responsible for the welfare of an essential part of the State, for the whole State in fact, can only be atoned for by a generous assumption NOW of their duty to pay their employees a living wage.

Lest you think that we are overstating the plight of your employees, we will call attention to the fact that our figures are based on the average employee

**Thousands below the average figures quoted.**

and that there are thousands far below the figures presented. Yet the average salary compares favorably only with such minima as those established for street cleaners in the city of Toronto, for example, and is several hundred dollars short of the accepted minimum upon which a family of five can live in decency at the present time. (See the chart.)

We feel also that attention should be called to the fact that while the disorganization attendant upon any organized interruption of work (strikes, to use plain language) may be dramatic, it does not do even a fraction of the damage caused by the continual lack of *esprit de corps* in a NEGLECTED service. This feeling of discontent is always liable to break out into open rebellion. This fact is serious and one for which present conditions are and have been directly responsible.

We view with concern the growth of any condition that will necessitate the assumption by Civil Servants of the role so frequently forced upon organized labour in its bargains with capital. We, as employees, prefer to approach you, as employers, in a spirit of co-operation.

Your employees know that reclassification and reorganization were provided for by the last Session, but they have seen similar legislation fail to be translated into action, and in spite of the facilities granted by the Commission in the way of publicity your employees have not been made sufficiently familiar with the fact that the worst evils in the Service are already in process of adjustment under capable direction. In fact, such information as they have was gained largely upon their own initiative. Furthermore, the situation with respect to the cost of living is acute, and they see that situation met in industry and by other Governments.

We feel it our duty to inform you that the spirit of dissatisfaction with present conditions in the Civil Service of Canada is one of no inconsiderable proportions, and difficulty has already been experienced in postponing a renewal of the strife which broke out in last July.

**Dissatisfaction widespread.**

Acting Prime Minister to the Memorial Delegation, October 8.

MINISTER OF PERSONNEL; "There will be some one to act as shepherd of the flock."

THE WAR BONUS OF \$350: "Just trust us, we will give you an answer soon."