

The Officers and Staffs of the Senate and House of Commons — A Sketch of their Duties.

By A. C. Campbell.

The idea that the average civil servant has a very easy time would die of shock if the Canadian public could be got to consider for a minute the work that the civil service has to do. The work of the average man of business is work that applies mainly to civilized centres where communication is easy and help readily to be obtained. But, as these centres are left, the work of the individual is shouldered off more and more upon the government until, as you get to the unsettled regions of the West or the frozen solitudes of the North, such work as is done at all is the work of the government.

True, the civil servant at Ottawa usually is not called upon to carry on in person the work in lands of physical difficulty and danger — though, more than is at all suspected, men from the government offices are required to undertake journeys to the uttermost limits of Canada's territorial occupation. But, however the work may be done, that work grows more difficult for all concerned as the social machinery grows less effective, and, as already suggested, as the difficulties accumulate the work is left more and more completely to the men in the public's employ.

The immense area of Canada in proportion to population, the extent and ruggedness of the sea coast, the rigors of the climate, both winter and summer, and in every part of the country,—these are other things that mean more work and more difficult work for all those who carry on the public service. The idea that the carrying of the mails in such a territory, the equipping and patrolling of the coast in the interest of navigation, the collection and disbursement of revenues and the thou-

sand and one other services that are carried on for the people under government management, can be and are managed by a number of fourth-rate men lazing through the day in handsome, airy offices,—such an idea is so preposterous that it is a wonder that even the newspaper humorist does not gag as he tries to work it over once again into a fifty-cent jokelet.

Take just a hasty glance at any branch of the public service and consider what it means in the way of work. Take, for instance, the one that is most central in the public gaze, the work of legislation, the machine in the operation of which are thrown out the sparks and flashes which are known to the public as "politics"—take the work of the Parliament of Canada as it shows itself through the efforts of the members of the civil service who attend upon it.

Consider what this mechanism is and what it does. It is made up of some three hundred and odd men from every part of Canada, over two-thirds of whom have to be chosen at least once in five years, chosen by a tremendous pother and pow-wow known as a general election. And, if a paper goes astray in that election, if any officer misses his instructions or fails in the interpretation of a law the complexity of which makes it the despair of the judges of the land, straightway the whole world is given to understand that the civil service is made up of senile idiots or rancorous partisans and that the country has gone to the demnition bow-wows. Can it be supposed that a man or two, picked at hap-hazard from the crowd, and attending to the matter in the intervals of a short and idle day, can get