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The Merit System.

The merit system has not made encouraging progress in Canada, but the duty of the Civil Service is to educate itself and to inform the people and the Government as to its advantages. The editors of The Civilian have an accumulation of literature on the subject, which will be published in this column from time to time during the summer months. The article today is the reproduction of an address delivered by Henry Moskowitz, President New York City Civil Service Commission, before the Civil Service Reform Association. Practically all the address is applicable to Canadian problems.

Civil service reform has been appreciated by two elements in the community—the men in the street and the high-brows. I presume that I appear before a sympathetic audience of high-brows. The leadership of your Association in this very important subject of government is well known. You have held aloft the standard of civil service when its friends were few and when the cause was unpopular. Many of your leaders were not afraid to be in the right with two or three. It must be gratifying to your organization to note the progress that is being made in civil service reform throughout the country. But your organization has an important work still to do, for, though the man in the street is instinctively in sympathy with the justice which is at the basis of civil service reform, civil service has been too technical and undramatic to stir his imagination for any period of time. To be sure, whenever the principle of civil service is seriously attacked and an issue is presented before him, as in Ohio, he comes to its rescue with overwhelming support. The large mass of citizens in the strata which fills the gap—which is the strata between the man in the street and the high-brow—still belong to the unconverted. Among these are administrative offi-

cers, who, when the civil service principle does not affect them, tolerate the institution and give their unctuous support to it. Very frequently, however, they find the application of civil service somewhat irksome, and, in consequence, they oppose its application in their departments, and find reasons why the principle should not be applied to them.

Civil service has been opposed by two important political groups. The spoilsmen always opposed the merit principle, for very obvious reasons, but this principle has now more powerful opponents, opponents who present very plausible arguments on their face, in opposition to the merit principle. I refer to the ambitious efficiency folks. Mr. Harriman expressed their attitude when he said: "Civil service is the substitution of incompetency for dishonesty." To meet this argument of these efficiency experts, it is important to show that civil service exists not alone to bring about an immediate efficiency to last for four years, but to effect efficiency of government for long stretches of time. From a long range point of view, the civil service principle amply justifies itself. But is civil service inconsistent with efficiency? That depends upon how the law is administered. It depends fundamentally