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A Symposium on Civil Service Ethics

That there is a gathering storm of discontent with the methods surrounding appointments and promotions, and the administration generally, in the Civil Service is evident on all sides. It may interest the readers of *The Civilian*, and, by the way, serve as a contribution to the cause of emancipation from an octopus that oppresses the Canadian Civil Service, and is a stain upon the fair name of Canada as a civilized country, if a collection were made of some facts recently occurring, and some comments recently made in the public press. The first item is taken from the pen of Mr. M. F. O'Donoghue, a noted figure in the Federal service of the United States:—

The forty-fifth article of Magna Charta has been aptly styled, "the first Civil Service Rule." By it the King engaged not to make any justices, &c., but such as know the law of the realm. The cause of Civil Service Reform has always been the cause of the "Common people." At all times corruption has prevailed in either the legislative or executive departments of government in the proportion that it has controlled patronage. Eliminate patronage and you minimize corruption. A perfect civil service is the republican agency of government. First "Pass" and later "Competitive" examinations.

The Montreal "Star," on Feb. 20th, discussed patronage editorially as follows:—

"Friends of the Government."

The frank admission of both parties at Ottawa that the various Government departments buy their supplies from "friends of the Government," no matter which party is in power, marks a condition of public morality in this country which should prepare us for graver and more shocking scandals. They appear to think up at the lively "political club" which we

maintain on Parliament Hill that a sin which is committed by both parties becomes, by that double benediction, a blessing. When the pot can call the kettle black, then dishonors are easy, and both are regarded as pure white.

What is the "patronage system" but a branch of the "spoils system;" and how can we really imagine that we will root out the one while tolerating the other? What is the difference, in principle, between kicking an office-holder into the street because he is of the wrong political complexion and giving his berth to "a friend of the Government," and striking a Liberal merchant from the "patronage list" and putting a "friend of the Government" in his place? In both cases, profit is taken from the friends of the defeated party and given to friends of the victorious party for no other reason than that the latter party is victorious. If this is not an application of the malign doctrine that "to the victor belongs the spoils," what is?

If Canada winks at this condition of affairs—under both parties—she will eventually pay very dearly for her slackness. This is a poison that will spread. If "friends of the Government" are to get profitable favours, they are very apt to view the necessity of keeping their friendly Government in power through the opaque lense of a gold piece. This is indistinguishable from taking a bribe to vote for a Government; and by what standard of ethics do we condemn the simple soul who takes his bribe in the form of a two-dollar bill and excuse the more astute citizen who gets his by inclusion in the fat list of "friends of the Government."

The Ottawa "Citizen" has an editorial in its issue of Feb. 27th to this effect:—

Civil Service Laws.

The latest copy of the Ottawa *Civilian* refers, in glowing terms, to Hon. W. T. White, as "Civil Service Minister." The able Minister of Finance, in addition to administering his big department with commendable efficiency, is at present engaged on a Superannuation Bill for the Civil Service. Also, he is occupied with the important task of revising the Civil