

Disgraceful---Humilating---Unjust

(Contributed)

I have read with deep interest articles and editorials contained in *The Civilian* relative to the pitiful condition of civil servants, and after careful analysis of same have arrived at the conclusion that government employees are well-named "civil" servants. Personally I think we are so civil that we are afraid to assert our manhood. We claim to be a body of men possessing intelligence above the average, but we might also lay claim to being a little below the average so far as possession of back-bone is concerned. The treatment we have received and are receiving from the Dominion Government is so shameful, disgraceful and unfair that one blushes to mention the matter in good society, and I think it is high time we asserted our rights and demanded fair treatment, — treatment that white men should expect in a civilized country. In every issue of *The Civilian* are to be found complaints of injustice to civil servants, and I marvel at the patience of the editor, notwithstanding that he goes after the offenders occasionally and handles them without gloves. So little attention is being paid to our demands that we wonder if this thing is to go on forever.

Good men are quitting the Service in disgust every day, — not exactly quitting but being forced out by the tyrannous system under which they worked. It is true that it is a man's privilege to quit if he is not satisfied, but is it fair to men who have given in many cases the best years of their lives to the Service to make it necessary for them to withdraw in order that they may make sufficient wages to keep square with the world and pay their honest debts? Many there are who still remain hoping against hope that some day, — some time in the future, the spirit of justice will prevail and fair play will be shown them. But alas for their hopes! These men are occupying positions of trust and responsibility, — positions that call for certain educational qualifications, and they are working for salaries actually less, yes considerably less, than

our railroads, and call-boys occupy the bottom rung in the ladder of railway promotion. Isn't that fine? Just think of it! And our government spending money hand over fist, — in fact as fast as it can be collected for those who occupy positions where the public purse is at their disposal. And wearing a long face they keep telling our representatives of the "good" days to come. As fiddlers they have got Nero backed completely off the stage; yes, and for general disregard for public opinion they could give the aforesaid Nero a great run for his money. Apparently our government has no sincere intention of giving its employees anything like an even break in the matter of fair wages — wages that will enable them to pay their honest debts and live like white men are supposed to live.

The Civilian—and it is our best friend—has done fine work for us. For years it has been throwing hot shot into the ranks of those who were and are pleased to ignore our needs, but it is just as the editor states, we have got to get properly organized and get back of *The Civilian* and press our demands for justice and fair play. We must find means of getting decent treatment other than going with hat in hand begging for the crumbs that fall from the official table. Where is our red blood? Have we got any? Organization is what we need, — thorough, determined organization, — organization that will not be denied, and then for enforcement of our just demands! *The Civilian* mentions the success of railway employees in the matter of getting results from employers. They are successful. Why? Because they are properly organized and work in harmony. Moreover they are always ready to dig down and pay for service, — for the sort of organization that counts. They are in their just demands are ignored they have the power to enforce them; yes, a position to command and whenever and the grit to stand behind them. There is absolutely no reason why civil servants should longer be the

that paid to call-boys employed on victims of a vicious system of under-pay and discrimination. Surely we are as intelligent as railway workers and our work ought to be about as important. Let us then get busy. We have nothing to lose. The Good Lord knows we can easily find employment paying a higher wage than we earn. *The difficulty would be to find employment paying less.* Why then stand around like a flock of sheep waiting to be fed out of the hands of those who would starve us to death. The longer we put off presenting our demands with force the longer we can wait and the money we should be getting will continue to drift into other channels.

Parliamentarians tell us that now they have nothing at all to do with us; that all matters are in the hands of the Commission, but anyone with half an eye can see just where the Commission gets its orders. What the government wants it gets. Witness the appointment of a collector at Vancouver and other *high-handed steals of jobs that really belonged to men years in the Service.* Do they expect red-blooded Canadians to stand for such things without protest? Isn't it about time we threw our hats into the ring and climbed in after them? We have so many abuses to correct that it would take a specialist to catalogue them all. First we need a proper seniority system so that favourites and blood relations shall not be permitted to walk rough-shod over our cold remains to higher positions and advanced salaries. Oh, don't be surprised! This is done very, very often.

Then we need a real grievance committee with sufficient power to act. That's the kind of committee railway employes have. They see to it that injustices are righted and the offenders punished. Every man gets a square deal and no favourites step in ahead of men already in the Service. There is no royal road to the throttle. It matters not if a man should happen to be a brother to the general.