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Co-operation and the Civil Service.

The following paper was read by Mr. R. H. Coats, Secretary of the Civil Service Association, at a special meeting of the Executive, held on Nov. 20th. It is reprinted at the request of the Executive.

"It is the duty of him who pleads a cause, or solicits the attention of the public to any subject, to state distinctly what the subject is—if he knows it; so that those who confer upon him the favour of their attention at the outset may possess the means of deciding whether or not they will continue it"

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

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During the past few months there has arisen, as we are all aware, a widespread spirit of inquiry among civil servants at Ottawa as to the possibility of applying the methods of co-operation to the conduct of their private business. We have seen the establishment of a co-operative loan and savings association, designed to apply those methods in the department of banking and finance, and, as its constitution states, "to inculcate generally the spirit of unity by the undertaking of meritorious matters in common." We have had at least one successful experiment in the domain of co-operative buying, and at the present moment no less than three other undertakings of the same nature are in progress. The Civil Service Association as the chief articulate body of the service, has come to feel that, although it has itself been organized for other purposes, it has a duty to perform in the matter, if only the

duty of self-education and the informing of its membership. This feeling was specifically voiced at the late annual meeting, when a resolution was passed instructing the incoming executive to take the matter at once into consideration, especially in its bearing on the higher interests of the service, to lay down general principles, to frame regulations for approved enterprises, and to define the relations of such enterprises to the association.

The present meeting represents the first organized attempt to carry out the above instruction and to set on foot a full and free investigation into the question of civil service co-operation. The question is essentially technical, as well as complicated to an unusual degree. It has been felt, therefore, that the whole executive should participate in the discussion, at least in its initial stages, wherein so much depends upon the thorough understanding of all that is involved. The remarks which follow have been thrown together with the intention simply of directing the discussion along logical channels, and of suggesting, after due consideration, the adoption of a definite line of action both inside and outside the association. I need not add that they make no pretence to newness or orig-