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The United States Civil Service Retirement Association Protests Against the Employees Asking for "Straight Civil Pensions."

The members of the civil service of the United States are in the throes of a discussion as to the nature of the superannuation they will ask of the government. On the fifth of April some 159 delegates, representing 10,000 of a classified service of 300,000, met and decided in favour of a system of non-contributory pensions. On the same day there was issued a letter to President Wilson by the C. S. Retirement Association, urging the contributory plan. The contents of this letter are of interest. The letter is as follows:—

Washington, D.C., April 5, 1913.

The President,

The White House, Washington,
D.C.

My Dear Mr. President:

As you are aware, a number of employees of the classified civil service have been in session in a conference which has eventuated into a convention for the purpose of organizing another retirement association.

Today this new association was organized and a declaration was made in favor of what is known as "straight civil pensions," where the entire expense for the support and maintenance of such a retirement system is to be paid wholly from the public treasury, without any contributions, directly or indirectly, upon the part of the employees who would be the beneficiaries of such a system.

We wish, Mr. President, at this time to place the membership of the United States Civil Service Retirement Association upon record as unalterably opposed to any such system. We believe that it is neither popular with the Congress of the United States nor with the American people.

Furthermore, we do not believe the employees under such a system, with

the present inadequate wage scale in many branches of the public service, would be long content with any such system. Besides, in the light of the history of a straight civil pension system, such as was given to the employees under the English Government, we believe a similar system in this country under our form of government would lead to wholesale abuses and to class legislation of a most objectionable character.

We wish to say, Mr. President, that an effort was made at this recent conference of civil service employees to induce them to favor the enactment of civil service retirement legislation where the burden would fall somewhat equally upon the employees and the Government in providing the annuities.

We wish in this connection to call your attention to the recommendation of the Efficiency and Economy Commission as embodied in the message of Ex-President Taft addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives on May 6, 1912, and to the following language contained in that message:

"STRAIGHT PENSIONS NOT
ADVISABLE."

"I am firmly convinced that the