

EDITORIALS

I see a world without a slave. I see a world at peace; adorned with every form of art, with music's myriad voices thrilled; while lips are rich with words of love and truth—a world in which no exile sighs, no prisoner mourns; a world on which the gibbet's shadow does not fall; a world where labor reaps its full reward; where work and worth go hand in hand.—Robert G. Ingersoll.

FREE SPEECH

The agenda of the Civil Service Federation Convention as originally drawn contained the item "Free Speech" as a subject for discussion. Objections were made to this item, and it was withdrawn solely for the purpose of conserving harmony in the ranks. As promised in our editorial page last month, we now contribute what appears to be very lacking—a little free speech on the subject of "Free Speech."

To the objectors to this item on the agenda we attribute sincerity, unsupported by understanding. We affirm that there is no such thing in Canada, either in the Civil Service or out of it, as "free speech." "Free speech" in support of the feudal system of profiteers is fairly universal, though somewhat disguised, but freedom of speech on behalf of the wage earner is heard only in muffled tones. The daily press with an occasional exception is shackled, and parades under the standing orders of The Grain Growers' Guide's 42 feudal lords. The pulpit, that medium of boundless publicity possibilities, has always been compelled in the battle for survival to confine its attention to living conditions in the world beyond the grave, neglecting remedial reforms in this one. A member of the clergy who nobly broke away from this old tradition of the church, and uttered a protest in favour of the hungry majority in this country, was recently called to time by one of the economic feudal lords and threatened with the withdrawal of further donations from the magnates of feudalism. The Federation officials who objected to a discussion of "free speech" either considered that this great attribute of freedom was not desirable, or that we are all in full enjoyment of its glorious benefits in the Civil Service. Let us talk about that.

It must surely be assumed that the objectors are in favour of freedom of speech, but that they felt that our liberty is untrammelled in this respect in the Civil Service. We affirm that civil servants have been in the past incontinently afraid to open their mouths. Amidst all the diabolical prostitution of the King's and the Queen's Service in the past, reckon up the number of indignant protests that have been uttered, either by organizations or individuals. Departments are not alike, but take as an instance the great Post Office Department. The members of this department have endured with ignoble toleration the brutal tyranny of officials such as the present Deputy P. M. G., and the controller of the Railway Mail Service. The editors of this journal have seen tears in the eyes of their splendid comrades in the postal service as they

told of the brutalities to which they had been subjected. The only excuse for failure to rebel against the Coulter-Armstrong régime is the absence of morale in our ranks. Yet the members of the postal service have been in the past too fearful to give publicity to their conditions by means of "free speech." The great Inside Service Association has been the weakest sister in this regard since its foundation. To the best of our recollection the executive of the Civil Service Association has never passed a cogent resolution of protest against the countless horrors to which some members have been subjected. To the members of the present executive of the Civil Service Association of Ottawa let us hasten to point out that if this is taken as a criticism of their administration it is also a criticism of the author of this article, who has served on the executive of this association for as many years as any man at present holding a position on it, and is therefore as culpable as any for the old time lack of courage in exercising the right of "free speech."

This is intended as a heart-to-heart talk. Insofar as *The Civilian* is concerned we do not propose to surrender the right of "free speech" which we put into effect in these columns over a year ago. And we must say in all brotherly love and kindness to those who did not care to discuss freedom of speech at the convention that the sooner they begin to talk "free speech," and to practice it, the better it will be for us all.

This subject cannot be brought to a close without bestowing a full measure of praise upon all our organizations for the manly, courageous part they played just a year ago, on May 7, 1918, when the great Merit Bill was trembling in the balance. Certainly on that occasion the red blood in our organizations came to the surface. The result of the action taken at that time will remain stamped upon our national system of public ownership for all time.

INDEMNITY OR BONUS ?

The *Ottawa Citizen*, always a worthy champion of our cause, has deserted us, only temporarily we hope, and gone over to the support of the members of Parliament in a well substantiated argument for an increase in the sessional indemnity from \$2,500 to \$4,000. The *Citizen* has a simple and unanswerable argument to present and does so in its usual good form. For instance, it is shown that \$2,500 five years ago is only worth \$1,000 today. This is very true about the sessional indemnity, but how does this *reductio ad absurdum* touch the class of citizens who wear the King's civil uniform? On the basis that \$2,500 has shrunk to \$1,000, the average salary of federal civil servants, viz., \$1,125, has shrunk to \$450. And this is the only source of income the civil servant has or is allowed to earn while members of Parliament have their private business and investments. \$450, upon which thousands of men are trying to support thousands of wives who committed no greater crime than having the hardihood to marry a man in the employ of the Government, and trying to support more thousands of half-starved children who are the involuntary victims.

The Government owes to each civil servant an average of over \$1,500 to meet the increases of the past five years. The Government gave nothing to those over \$1,800 and \$175 to those under that amount; except that