

# THE CIVILIAN

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## The Seed Branch

### A Hardworking and Efficient Organisation and How it Helps the Public.

This is the second of the series of articles on separate parts of the Civil Service begun in the last issue of *The Civilian*. The object is to set forth exactly what the thousands of people who work in the public offices of the Dominion do to earn their pay. If these articles as a whole have the effect of causing each branch of the Service to know the others better and appreciate them more highly, that will be a good thing. If they teach even a few of the public, our employers, some of the details of their own business, that may be even a better thing. We give only the facts, stating those facts in such a way that all can understand them.

There are some branches of the public service whose usefulness to the public can be understood only after some explanation. But the way in which the Seed Branch of the Department of Agriculture helps to promote the good of the country is set forth in its very name. There is no part of the Service whose work is done more directly for the people or the results of whose work are of greater practical benefit.

The Seed Branch has for its special business the administration of the Seed Control Act, but the enthusiasm of its officers has made it also a public man-of-all-work for the promotion of good farming in all matters that pertain to seeds.

Two main evils are to be guarded against in regard to seeds. In the first place, weed seeds must be kept out. There are actually parts of Canada—few and small, it is true, but to be seen by anybody none the less—in which weeds have gained so strong a hold upon the soil that the fight against them for the making of a crop costs more than the crop is worth when it is harvested. This is the reason why farms are abandoned in

some cases. The second evil to be guarded against is the use of seed which either will not germinate at all or will produce plants that are so weak and spindling that the land and labor devoted to their cultivation are wasted. Besides these evils to be guarded against there is one good thing to be promoted and that is the production and use of seeds of the best and most vigorous strains, because such seeds, other things being equal, give the greatest yield. How the Seed Branch fights against the two evils indicated and promotes the good result that all farmers are seeking is here briefly told.

The most direct service rendered to the public by the Seed Branch is in the testing of seeds. Any farmer or seedsman in Canada can have seed tested by the Branch under rigidly scientific methods on sending a sample. This service costs nothing: the authorities figure that it pays the public to have this done for everybody who applies rather than run any avoidable risk of bad crops.

Though the tests are strictly scientific, the methods followed are such as anybody could use if he had