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Civil Service Government by Commission

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(*Third Instalment.*)

The first article of this series appeared in *The Civilian* of Dec. 12th, and the second on January 9th. The present article, after discussing some underlying principles, enters upon an analysis of the administration of the Shortt-La Rochelle Commission. "Publicity" and "Relations with the Service" are the subjects ventilated in this article. In the following number of *The Civilian* the record of the Commission as regards the Third Division, Section 21, Transfers, etc., will be discussed. The attention of the members of the Outside Service, as well as of the Inside, is invited to these articles.

Government of the people by the people is an arduous and difficult operation. One group of men obtains power and will resort to every means to retain it. Another group desires power and will resort to every means to obtain it. Governments have gifts of public office at their disposal. There is a clamor for these gifts by many men. Most of them want more than they require or deserve. The distribution of the gifts of office causes worry to a government, and not infrequently leads to inefficiency in the public service. It was in order to overcome this worry and inefficiency in the Canadian service that the Commission was established.

In order to appreciate the difficulties of the problem of governing a public service by a commission, let us discuss two aspects of the proposition that present themselves at the outset.

(1) The method of appointing members of the commission.

(2) Their tenure of office.

Civil Service Commissioners, under all governments, are appointed by the government of the day. An exception

to this general statement exists in the state of Colorado, where the commissioners are elected by the people themselves. Having regard to the nature of their duties, both of these methods of appointment are objectionable. The functions of commissioners are largely judicial in their character, and as the parties between whom the commissioners are called upon to adjudicate, can only, and must always, be the government on the one hand, and the servants of the government on the other, it is manifestly essential that the appointment should not be vested in the government. The government must always be one of the parties in every matter brought before them, and their appointment should be vested in an absolutely independent body, such as, for instance, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Commissioners chosen upon some such plan as that just mentioned would remove a very troublesome matter from the arena of party administration, and would command the confidence of the great body of civil servants, whose every