

A Few Notes on the New Law

(The following notes are from the pen of Mr. J. C. O'Connor, chairman of the Legislation Committee of the C. S. Association of Ottawa. Mr. O'Connor is the author of the articles in recent issues of The Civilian dealing with the amendments to Bill No. 53, and the Editors desire to acknowledge with appreciation his valuable assistance.)

The new Civil Service Act has been law for some weeks and civil servants are doubtless anxious to know how they will be affected by its operation. A study of some of the salient features of the Act will assist in arriving at some idea of its scope and meaning.

Section four enlarges greatly the duties of the Commission, while section thirty-seven gives the Commission the power to draw up regulations, with the approval of the Governor in Council for the carrying out of the Act. So the Commission will control all appointments and promotions, besides taking over such other duties as are necessary for the proper development of the Service. The fear expressed that the Commission may become a sort of a "family compact" is quite groundless, for the right to vote or refuse supply for the Service is still in the hands of the Government and Parliament.

In time the law will probably tend to bring about some uniformity in the Service. This need for uniformity is dealt with in section nine, which is one of the most important sections of the Act. In reading section nine it is important to note that a "plan of organization," as well as a "classification" is provided for. The "plan of organization" will naturally deal with the work while the "classification" will deal with the "officers, clerks and employees" who are to do the work. The following extract from section sixteen regarding promotions emphasizes this point: "No person shall be promoted unless he is to do work that is in the opinion of the Commission of greater importance and responsibility than he has hitherto done, or

unless his work is in the opinion of the Commission such as to justify the promotion." It may be accepted then that the plan of organization will allow the classification of like services in like grades whether Inside or Outside. As to any particular classes of work, such as technical work, accounting, and so forth, these classes of work have various grades and must be classified by the importance of the work in each position. Difficulties are at once apparent, but difficulties were never insurmountable. The simple solution is that each position should be graded in accordance with the current commercial rate of salary for such position. Why should the Dominion of Canada pay more and how in common justice can it pay less? The plan must be flexible then. It must provide for present abnormal conditions as well as for a return in post bellum days to a peace time service. Superannuation, in some effective form, must be introduced to give these ideas a fighting chance. Salaries, or grading under the schedules provided, must take into account present and future economic conditions in Canada, and even a casual study of economic conditions in Canada to-day is sufficient to convince one that the large sized dollar of 1914 is not likely to appear again in this generation, in peace or war.

As regards the Inside Service, the situation appears more definite than as regards the Outside Service, though this is only partly true. The scale of salaries enacted by section forty-three will not come into force "until the Inside Service is reorganized," therefore it cannot be said that any person will be placed in such and such a grade or division except in so far as subsections four and five of section nine preserve his present status. For the present the