

In most cases it will be found that the principle of pension in proportion to term of actual service works out equitably. The cases in which it will be well to make a grant to an official in excess of what the general rule allows will be so rare that they can much better be dealt with by Parliament in the form of special votes, than by a resort to executive action that opens the door to danger. Where such special consideration has to run the gauntlet of Parliamentary criticism before it takes effect, it is likely to be confined to really deserving cases. Where the thing can be done in the privacy of the Government offices by men who, however good their intentions may be, are in positions which leave them open to illegitimate pressure, it offers strong temptations to those who regard political pull as an easy way to success. In the particular case to which the attention of Parliament was called, the propriety of the extra allowance was challenged by one of the Government's strongest supporters. For their own protection, as well as for the prevention of discontent in the Civil Service, the Government should not have revived this obsolete section of the pension law.

### The Real League of Peace

PEACE is, of course, much to be desired. "Blessed are the peacemakers." But for peace movements, as for movements of other kinds, there are proper seasons. The many associations throughout the world formed for the promotion of peace on earth and goodwill to men do well to keep up their organization, so that they may at the proper times exercise their influence for good in their respective communities. No well-wisher of humanity would desire to see them disbanded. But the wisest of them will see that the true peace of the world can best be promoted to-day by the winning of a complete victory by Great Britain and her allies over the forces of Germany and her allies. The New York Peace Society recently proposed to elect as a member of its Advisory Board Mr. Calvin Tomkins, a prominent citizen of New York, who thereupon addressed the following letter to the Secretary:

Mr. William H. Short, Secretary,  
The New York Peace Society,  
70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sir,—I will accept the honor of membership on the Advisory Board of the New York Peace Society, provided the Society elects me with full knowledge of the following opinions which I shall maintain:

First.—I believe that industrial and commercial freedom is the antithesis of war.

Second.—I maintain the principles set forth in the "Reform Club's Presentation—War or Commercial Freedom," dated February 10th, 1915, a copy of which I enclose.

Third.—I believe there will be one dominion of the sea and the roads leading to it which will ultimately control the international relations of all the dominions of the earth, each of which must relinquish some of the attributes of sovereignty.

Fourth.—I believe that United States preparedness will be best secured by a post bellum maritime alliance with Great Britain, France and other co-operating nations to maintain the freedom of the seas by international guarantees.

Fifth.—I am convinced that Pan-Americanism must include English and French interests in North and South America.

Sixth.—I believe that the real league to enforce peace now consists of the armed forces of Great Britain and her Allies, and that the league which ex-President Taft heads, and of which I am a member, will in the end, only ratify their accomplishment.

Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd.) CALVIN TOMKINS.

### British Columbia's Way

Under the system of Responsible Government, the Public Accounts Committee is an important body, the services of which are available for the procuring of information respecting the public expenditures. Sometimes, perhaps, members of the committee manifest excessive zeal, and are prone to place an unfavorable construction on expenditures made by their opponents, but notwithstanding this possibly weak point, it must be admitted that the maintenance of an efficient organization of the kind is necessary and that it is one of the wholesome checks upon corruption and extravagance. We have said that such a body is deemed necessary in nearly all Parliaments and Legislatures. The exception appears to have been British Columbia. It is reported from that Province that on the eve of the last general election for the Legislature, the present Premier, Hon. Mr. Bowser, "admitted that a Public Accounts Committee had not met for seven years, but assured the audience that the interests of the taxpayers had been so zealously safeguarded by the government that no inquiry by such a body was necessary." If that is the principle upon which the public business of British Columbia was conducted one need not be surprised by the recent manifestations of hostility to the Bowser Government in the rejection of two of the chief Ministers by overwhelming majorities in the cities of Vancouver and Victoria. There has been little or no opposition to the Government in the Legislature for some years, but that fact should not have paralysed the Public Accounts Committee. When the system of party government is carried so far that the members of the dominant party want no inquiry into public expenditures, and are content to let the Government have an absolutely free hand in everything, clearly the system becomes indefensible. The very fact that the Legislature was so one-sided should have made the governing party more careful to observe all rules which were designed to protect the public. It would have been better if the McBride-Bowser Government had themselves insisted on the Public Accounts Committee meeting at regular times and examining into the expenditures generally. A Government should, for its own protection, see that some such inquiry into the public accounts takes place. One good result of the recent by-elections is that the Public Accounts Committee has again been organized by the Legislature.

The action of His Majesty the King in handing over half a million dollars from his private funds as a gift to the service of the Empire is one which sets a fine example to his subjects as to duty in war time.

### Costly Railway Stations

ATTENTION is being drawn in the United States to the extravagance exhibited by station buildings. A very notable example is the Pennsylvania station in New York, a palatial structure, erected at enormous cost, and producing very little income. A new station in course of erection at Chicago for the use of three lines, (one of them the Pennsylvania), is estimated to cost the colossal sum of \$60,000,000. The new Grand Central station in New York is probably the most luxurious railway station in the world, but in defence of its cost the claim is made that the yards have been so arranged that buildings can be erected over them, and that ultimately the whole investment will yield a fair return. In a number of cities stations have been built at heavy cost that yield little or no revenue. Mr. Reginald Gordon, writing in the Engineering Magazine, New York, says that the railways of the United States have expended for new passenger stations in the last six years more than two hundred and fifty million dollars, and have in contemplation for the same purposes an outlay of seventy-five millions more within a short time.

Comparisons are being made with the character and cost of the principal English stations. There are railways in the old country which handle quite as much traffic as any of the American roads, and which are able to afford all necessary accommodation at a cost that is small in comparison with the outlay on some of the American stations. The English stations are built for utility rather than for beauty, and they serve their purpose well. They are not behind the American stations in their facilities for the prompt and convenient handling of the traffic.

Perhaps the Englishman takes too materialistic a view of these things. Something is to be said, of course, for the desire of the American railway men to contribute to the architectural beauty of the community. But it seems that this desire is being carried too far in many instances. The expenditures of a railway must in the end be borne by its traffic. If too much money is locked up in marble palaces the cheaper transportation for which producers and consumers are always looking cannot be brought about.

Hon. Mr. Power's effort, in the Senate, to induce the Post Office Department to provide a real three cent postage stamp is to be commended. We wish we could hope for its success. It took many months of hammering to get the Department to supply any kind of a three cent stamp, and then a stupid and incomprehensible device was adopted. It is amazing that the public should have been so long annoyed in a matter in which their convenience could easily have been met.

#### A CORRECTION.

By a grave error in the mechanical department of the Journal of Commerce in our last issue, Dr. Adam Shortt, of Ottawa, was credited not only with his own article on "New York as a World Exchange Centre," but also with the article which followed it, on "The Future Condition of Labor in Europe." The latter article was not the work of Dr. Shortt, but of Professor W. W. Swanson. We owe apologies to both writers for the blunder.

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