

Here and There among Public Servants.

Edited by "Snap."

Among the many civil service conferences of this year in England, a recent gathering of the delegates of the United Kingdom Postal Clerks' Association is noteworthy. Held at Bradford, Yorks., and representing 7,000 members in all parts of the United Kingdom, the delegates, 150 in number, sat for two days discussing the many things affecting their interests. "It has long been recognized," says the British Civilian, "that the various associations of the Post Office have been by far the most militant organisations within the civil service, a fact, perhaps, which largely accounts for the serious and, it may be said, sympathetic attention they have been able to command at the hands of the authorities."

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The New York Evening Post paid the following graceful compliment the other day to the official language of the Province of Quebec:

"Quebec's timber regulations are bound to work us injury; but from a purely literary standpoint, we cannot refrain from expressing our hearty admiration for the language in which the regulations are couched:

"All timber cut on crown land after May 1, 1910, must be manufactured in Canada; that is to say, converted into pulp or paper, into bales or boards, or into any other articles of commerce or merchandise as distinguished from timber in its raw or unmanufactured state."

"Here actually is a bit of official phraseology that does not require to be read a half-dozen times to catch its meaning, that is neither verbose nor redundant nor archaic, that actually reads as if emanating from one human being who wished to make himself comprehensible to another human being. The high level is not kept up all through the clause, but the general effect is still pleasing:

"There shall not be considered as manufactured within the meaning of the present regulations, timber merely cut into lengths; or logs piled up, barked, or otherwise worked preliminary to the fabrication of pulp or paper; or deals, or boards, or any other articles of commerce; nor any timber nor poles; but actual square timber and railway ties are considered as manufactured."

"Can it be the French spirit in Quebec that makes even a timber regulation paragraph clear, vigorous, and graceful?"

The employees of the British Post Office Department have been subjected from time to time of late to elaborate red-tape orders governing trivial matters of procedure. On the first of April last the following travesty was posted where all might read in the main corridor of the Department, and it was some hours before the higher officials discovered it and tore it down:

NOTICE TO THE STAFF. — GENERAL ORDER NO. 199,072.

It is observed that when a pencil requires to be sharpened a great diversity of method is pursued by the staff. In view of the fact that the provision of pencils is a significant cost on the department, it is desired that uniformity of procedure should be followed with regard to their sharpening. The following rules are laid down for the guidance of all concerned, and it is incumbent upon the Superintending Officers to see that they are carried out:—

(a) Hold the pencil firmly in the left hand, and with the right draw the blade of a pen-knife smartly across the wood in a diagonal direction, starting about three-quarters of an inch from the outer end, taking care not to cut the lead, or a waste of pencil will ensue.

(b) Repeat this operation several times, moving the pencil in a circular direction with the fingers of the left hand.

(c) When the lead is laid bare especial care is needed with regard to its pointing. Hold the pencil point downwards on a pad, making sure, of course, that the pad is first turned over so as not to spoil a message form.

(d) Draw the knife carefully downwards on the lead in a vertical direction, turning the pencil as before with a rotary movement until a point is obtained.

(e) The question of the disposal of the residual lead now presents itself. Do not blow this away recklessly, as some have been observed to do, but carry it carefully to the nearest waste paper receptacle and deposit it therein. It will be to the interest of the staff to see this carried out by others.

(f) Should it be necessary to borrow a pen-knife from a colleague, the borrower should be careful to see that the colleague is not busy at the time. It is advisable, however, for every member of the staff to provide himself with this article, and the provision or otherwise will be taken into consideration when the question of promotion arises.

The perpetrator is still "unknown" and at large.

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The question, 'What is temporary employment?' is apparently a difficult one to answer in the British service. There are men at Devonport Dockyard who have been in 'temporary employment' for the last 20 years. 'Temporary employment' appears to be a convenient phrase for relieving the Gov-