

valuable threads of broken evidence into a coherent whole has after much research found a remedy for the correction of existing conditions.

It will appear in a future number of THE CIVILIAN, and will surely be awaited with great interest by all civil servants from pole to pole from shore to shore.

In the meantime the service is offered the following flattering unction administered by a civil servant whose name does not appear in the Supplementary Estimates to a fellow-passenger on a steamer during a storm in the Bay of Fundy: "cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come!"

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## A DEPARTMENTAL BUREAU OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION.

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By Fred W. Babington, Analyst of the Department of Customs.

The need for a Bureau of Information on the technical work of the service is daily becoming more apparent. At present, the work of this character which any particular Department performs is done for its own purposes, and is not placed at the disposal of other Departments, which might with great advantage utilize the results. The consequence of each Department considering its own particular objective point only is that there is an unnecessary over-lapping: much work is duplicated, and much time and money is lost, which could be saved if such a Bureau as is here proposed were provided for. The additional labor entailed would be very slight, and the result would be that any Government officer, importer or manufacturer, who desired such information for the purposes of the Government or of his own business, as the case might be, would, upon application to the Bureau, be informed what officers could give him the information thus desired.

I would suggest that the Department of Trade and Commerce receive a monthly report from each technical head, to embrace a brief account of such work as might be thought to be of use and importance. The actual record to be kept by the Department of Trade and Commerce might well be of the briefest nature consistent with clearness, as, in any event, the person seeking information should be referred to the officer who had conducted the investigation. The Department to which the inquirer might be directed to apply should retain a discretionary power of refusing information, if it saw fit, and no additional work should be done in any case except upon general order to that effect.

As an example of the over-lapping which now occurs in technical work, I may give one instance: the Inland Revenue, Customs, Inspection of Canneries and Experimental Farm all have cognizance of adulterations. But between these departments, or branches, there is no sharing of results upon this subject, and no correspondence or other co-operation.

It will, no doubt, immediately occur to everyone who notes this proposal how useful it would be, both for public and private purposes, to have the results of past work made thus available. As an instance, let me cite the following case: Having occasion to analyze a high-grade ferro-silicon, I discovered that it was so high in silicon as to resist the action of acids and of all ordinary solvents. I thus lost considerable time in an attempt to get the ferro-silicon into solution. Finally, I hit upon a very simple method of attack, which proved effective, and the analysis was practically finished in one day. Now, had I the means of ascertaining whether other technical officers had grappled with the same problem, and if so, what processes were employed by them, I might have communicated by telephone or otherwise, and considerable time might have been saved.