

# THE CIVILIAN

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## The Question of the Hour.

### No Increase.— The Point of View. — Re-organization of the Service.—The Deputy Ministers: Their New Powers and Present Duty.

A great misfortune has overtaken the civil service. When the final appeal which filled this space a fortnight ago was written, the blow was imminent. With the closing days and prorogation of Parliament, it fell. There is to be no relief of the conditions which for three years past have made the lives of hundreds of civil servants vexed and miserable in the unceasing and often losing battle with their straightened circumstances. No discussion of the future will be possible until at least a word is said as to what it behoves us to think and to do under the immediate impact of this stunning mishap.

#### The Point of View.

THE CIVILIAN believes that the present is a time when one should speak *à cœur ouvert*. It is a time of bitter disappointment and sense of wrong from end to end of the civil service. It is a time, therefore, when the language heard on every side is the language of unqualified complaint. As we have said many times, the prayer of the civil service has never been the prayer of disaffected selfishness; from the first it has stood on no other basis before the country than the increased efficiency which a readjustment of salaries to the increased expenses of living would, on the most impartial authority, result in. The government, in withholding the expected, — we might almost say the promised — in-

crease, has not only done a grievous injustice to a deserving body of employees; but it has woefully impeded the very movement for reform of which it so conspicuously stands the sponsor. Coming as the refusal has at a time when the contented and enthusiastic help of the service would have been in a peculiar degree an asset — the time of transfer from the old to the new conditions — it has given a set-back of the most unhappy character to a force by no means the least powerful in the direction of those changes of which the country and the service are alike desirous.

Now, what, under the circumstances, is to be the point of view? Is the service to be beaten down by this utter and disheartening miscarriage of events? Is it to lose that new-found interest in itself, that sense of corporate existence, above all that self-respect which has been so marked a development of its various activities within the past year? Surely not. This is a time for indignation, if you will, but the righteous indignation which implies ceaseless effort till the wrong is righted. It is a time, more than ever, for calm thought and the marshalling of energies. The salary question is not dead. It may cause a smile to say so, but the service has won a great moral victory at every point of the line in the recent stubborn contest. It is not the will of the Canadian people that its employees be underpaid or their scale of wages