

would be the eliciting of ideas of reform from the members of the service themselves.

I venture to think that, if the Ministry were to invite suggestions from the service generally, a number would be forthcoming from the more thoughtful members, many of which would prove valuable to any commission which might be appointed to study them. It is the perfection of organization and routine that results in economy of men and time, and no one should be better qualified to advise upon this than those who are up against actual conditions of service life every day.

And what a variety of talent is concentrated in the civil service! Ideas may come from messengers, clerks, university graduates, technical men, college professors, and deputy ministers. And as a stimulant, if it were required that suggestions should be made in the form of an essay, money prizes could be given for those containing the most valuable and practical ideas.

The symposium could be further extended by inviting the criticism of the general public on those services with which the public comes into daily contact, and prizes could also be given as suggested above.

MARTELLUS.

Ottawa, Sept. 20, 1912.

U. S. Justice.

To the Editors of *The Civilian*:

On the 25th day of July last a foul murder was committed on one of the ferry boats plying between Windsor, Ont., and Detroit, Mich. The victim was a Civil Servant of Canada, Mr. H. G. Herbert, one of our Immigration Inspectors, who made his headquarters in Ottawa and was well known to a large number of members of the service, particularly those who served the Government in the Yukon Territory.

The assassin was a immigrant named Ferguson, whom Herbert had

rejected on account of his being a cripple and indigent. The murder was most deliberate and cold blooded and had it taken place in Canadian waters. Ferguson would unquestionably now be occupying the condemned cell, awaiting execution.

As a matter of fact, what happened? The vessel was an American bottom and the point at which the deed was perpetrated was found to be Michigan waters. Michigan has abolished capital punishment, but on account of the murder having taken place on shipboard, Ferguson was amenable to the U. S. Federal law, which still punishes murder with death.

At the trial which concluded last Friday in Detroit, Ferguson coolly admitted having slain Herbert and justified the deed on the ground that he had been improperly rejected. The United States District Attorney, who corresponds to our Crown Prosecutor, acting for the Federal and not the State government, in addressing the Court, stated that he did not desire the full penalty of the law, but merely a life sentence. Consequently the jury obediently brought in a verdict to this effect, as they have power to do under the constitution.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater miscarriage of justice. It amounts, practically, to an official intimation that murders may be committed on these ferry boats at will, with no fear of extreme punishment. We would not have wondered so much if this had happened in Kentucky or South Carolina, but in an old established State like Michigan, peopled by many French and English Canadians, it is incredible.

With the present somewhat strained relations over the action of Congress in the Panama Canal matter, we can well imagine that the Herbert decision will but tend to increase our contempt for American justice and American legislation.

JUSTICE.

Ottawa, Sept. 30th, 1912.