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The Civil Service as a Field for Organization.

The Civilian welcomes to its columns the animated correspondence which is going forward regarding the membership of the Civil Service Co-operative Association, and to which we give a whole department of this issue. The matter is one which in the final analysis the store members must settle. We hope they will settle it dispassionately, with the most careful looking before and after, and in accordance with a broad knowledge of the facts and principles involved.

On one point of a general nature that crops up in almost every discussion of a Civil Service organization—in the present instance as in many others—we hold very strong views, and never lose an opportunity of stating them strongly. The point has to do with the Civil Service as a field for organization. We say at once that we are sick and tired of the opinion that Civil Servants as a class do not lend themselves to organized effort. For twenty years prior to 1907 we listened (*ad nauseam* in the case of a good many of us) to the critic of Civil Service *esprit de corps*—to the man who could tell us that such *esprit de corps* did not exist and could not exist, and the reasons therefore,—who could give us a thousand happy instances of how jealous-minded and chuckle-headed the average civil servant was, and how ridiculous and fore doomed was the attempt of anyone to inculcate among civil servants the spirit of stand together. Then came the shake-up of 1907, when all these antiquated notions fell to the ground like a wet bathing suit. For the truth is that talk of this kind is and always has been nonsense. Civil Servants, by and large, are exactly like other human beings. As Hosea Bigelow would say, they are chuck full of “human natur’.” They eat and sleep, marry and die. “If you tickle us, do we not laugh?” They probably don’t manage their affairs, personal or corporate, as well as others could advise them, but who does? They don’t even take out life insurance until the agent gets after them, but who does? As a field for organization, however, exactly the opposite of what our critic is so fond of telling us is the case, especially in Ottawa. The service offers on the whole a decidedly better field for organization than the usual profession. Consider the mere physical aspect of the situation. Practically the whole service works in a dozen buildings within a radius of half a mile. The names of the whole four thousand of them are written down and classified in a Government publication. Where else can such preliminary advantages be found? The “spade-work” is all done. Of course, organization is not like spontaneous combustion. It presupposes the organizer. A good many seem to think that sending out a circular is “organizing.” But even so, where else will you find that the organizer has accomplished so much with so little effort. Where are the eyes and ears of the people who do not perceive this? Take our local Civil Service Association: it enrolls at least fifty per cent. of the Ottawa civil servants, and yet this is practically the work of a single officer acting through subsidiary and automatic boards. Take the Civil Service Loan and Savings Association: it will handle business this year to the tune of \$15,000; yet this was launched by a newspaper editorial, and a few cap-