

the position, consisted of officers of standing in the inside and outside service of the Government, with Mr. Martin J. Griffin as its secretary, has performed the duty entrusted to it in a most satisfactory manner. The root of the evil of the present system is the political patronage which Canada inherited from England, but which was almost completely abolished in the Mother Country some thirty years ago. In the United States the evils of this system have long been generally acknowledged, but there is great reluctance on the part of the influential party politicians to apply a remedy. In referring to the United States system we should not fail to notice an important difference between the two systems, it being understood that every public officer in the Civil Service of the United States holds office strictly during pleasure, and is liable to dismissal at any time, while the rule in Canada is that the tenure of office in the Civil Service is during good behaviour, and that a cause must be assigned for dismissal. It is true that, notwithstanding this rule, cases have occurred in which dismissals have been attributed by the rival political party to improper motives, but, even on the assumption that such charges are well-founded, the percentage of dismissals on disputed grounds is small. Unfortunately, such cases are precisely those which are calculated to create irritation in the minds of the leaders of the opposition, and to give them an excuse for acting in the same way. When the liberal party succeeded to power in 1873 great complaint was made of the distribution of valuable patronage by the Government which had virtually been compelled to resign, to avoid a vote of want of confidence. There were, however, numberless English precedents for the course then followed, and it was quietly acquiesced in. Shortly before the resignation of Mr. McKenzie, in 1878, he appointed Mr. Buckingham, who, having been a clerk in the department of Public Works, had acted as his private secretary, to the office of Deputy Minister of the Interior, which had become vacant, but, when the new Government came into power, this appointment, although made in strict accordance both with English and Canadian practice, was revoked, and Mr. Buckingham felt that the only course that he could take, with any self-respect, was to retire from the public service. On the whole, however, the Canadian inside service contrasts favorably with the outside. With hardly an exception, the Deputy heads, and the principal officers under them, are gentlemen of long stand-

ing in the service, attentive to their duties, and free from reproach. In the outside service there has been more cause for complaint as to the exercise of political patronage. There has been no consistency in the practice. When the late Mr. Delisle was superannuated, as Collector of the Port of Montreal, that important office was not given as a reward for political services, but was conferred on Mr. Simpson, the Collector of Kingston, an officer of long standing, and who had risen by gradation. It seems now to be the settled policy of the Government to treat the chief offices of the outside service as rewards for political support, instead of for faithful services in the department. If this system should be perpetuated, it will not be the fault of the Civil Service Commission, which has pronounced its opinion in the following unmistakable language: "The efficiency of the service so largely depends on a good system of promotion, that we feel it necessary to emphasize the importance of avoiding such injustice as we have mentioned, and which cannot fail to be injurious to the best interests of the service. Men whose just claims are thus passed over become discouraged; they lose their self-respect, and they lose hope for the future. Such injustice destroys all incentive to emulation and all desire to excel." Again we find in the report: "The remedy it is believed can only be found in completely eliminating all traces of political patronage, and this involves the substitution of some other mode of regulating entrances." The remedy which is recommended by the majority of the Commission is the application to Canada of the Civil Service Commission of the United Kingdom, which the report states to be the outcome of vast "experience, and the details are the result of more than 30 years of cautious attentive action, and the beneficial results have ceased to be questioned." The essential principles of the English Civil Service regulations are "open competitive examinations and promotion by merit." The mode of giving effect to their suggestions is the constitution of a Board of Civil Service Commissioners as free from political influence as the Judiciary, and the members of which should hold office on the same terms as judges. Now, there is a serious difficulty to be encountered on the very threshold of this new edifice. Judges as a rule are political partisans at the time of their appointment. Their duties do not involve them necessarily in political affairs, and whatever their private feelings

may be, they are not brought on the political arena. It is much to be feared that a Board of Commissioners appointed by a party Government to decide on the merits of candidates for the Civil Service would be viewed with suspicion by the Opposition, and especially if they were selected from the same class as judges have always been. We do not mean, of course, members of the legal profession, but persons belonging to a political party. Whether any mode of obviating such a difficulty as we have suggested can be found we are not prepared to say. A plan has occurred to us which would be calculated to remove any apprehension of partizanship. This would be either to leave the appointment of the Commissioners to the principal members of the Civil Service itself of at least ten years standing, and of a high grade, or to render eligible for the position of Commissioners those only who had been at least ten years in the Civil Service, and who had attained in it a high position. The first-named plan would have the advantage of giving a wider field of selection, and it is highly probable that the most eligible persons for such a Commission would be found outside the service. The main point would be to render it impossible that the Civil Service Commissioners should be selected in such a way as not to command the confidence of the public at large irrespective of party politics. Unless this can be secured, the object which the Commissioners have had in view in preparing their report will not be attained. We shall look with interest for the report which Mr. Taché has promised, although we believe that there will be a general concurrence of opinion as to the desirability of devising some mode of putting an end to the exercise of political influence in making appointments and promotions in the public service.

THE BANK RETURNS.

The bank returns for February do not present any material variation from the preceding month. There is an increase in the Dominion Government deposits and a decrease in those of the Provincial Governments, a slight increase in the amount loaned in the United States, and a considerable increase in the discounts. The available assets are about one and a half million less than on 31st January. There is scarcely any change in the Dominion note circulation, and until the time arrives when the prohibition of the \$4 bills of the Chartered Banks comes into force there is not likely to be.

	Feb., 1881.	Jan., 1881.
Capital authorized...	\$57,466,666	\$57,466,666
Capital subscribed...	54,539,334	54,539,333
Capital paid up.....	53,353,464	53,351,334