

# THE CIVILIAN

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE OF CANADA

## An Open Letter to the Prime Minister

(From F. W. Patterson, President Federal Union No. 66.)

*Readers of The Civilian will understand from the following letter that affairs at headquarters are in an upset state. The situation in regard to civil service administration is at this moment very confused and some time may elapse before events are fully developed. On this account material that had been prepared for this number in accordance with questions asked and promises made in the December number, are withheld for the present. The open letter from Mr. Patterson to the Prime Minister indicates that the Board of Hearing, of which Commissioner Jameson is chairman, is under fire. There is also printed a letter to the Ottawa Citizen from Mr. Geo. E. Bull, ex-secretary of the Board of Hearing.*

A board of inquiry, composed of three competent and independent men, to investigate the method of administration of the Civil Service is asked for by Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa in an "open letter" to Premier Meighen.

The sole object of such a request, says the letter, is to preserve the merit system, and it states that anything less "will only intensify the feeling that still more serious incompetency and maladministration remain unexposed." The letter follows:—

"Right Hon. the Prime Minister of Canada.

"Sir:—

On more than one occasion within the last three months, the Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa, Federal Union 66, have endeavored to secure consideration of certain charges made by them involving the impartiality and the competency of the Board of Hearing.

"In our communications to you, we stated that we had not the slightest desire to cause the least embarrassment to your government or to yourself, and asked, in a very respectful way, that the matter be given your early and most careful consideration.

"This consideration you promised to give, but so far, all that has been done is that the defendants in the case have been in possession of our memorandum to you preferring the charges, for some two weeks, have endeavored to sit as judges thereon, and have taken certain ill-considered steps which put the whole matter of civil service administration, as now carried on, before the public in a most undesirable light.

"Again, sir, we repeat we do not aim to cause the present government the slightest embarrassment; what has been caused so far has been by the ill-considered, contemptuous and tyrannical action of your civil service commissioners.

"We do demand, sir, a full, public and impartial enquiry into the whole method of administration of the civil service; the board of enquiry to be composed of three competent and satisfactory men, connected neither with the service nor with the government, assisted by a representative of the civil service selected by itself.

"The Civil Service of Canada and the people of Canada will be satisfied

with nothing less. Any private and partial enquiry, solely into the charges brought forward by us, can only intensify the Dominion-wide feeling that still more serious incompetency and maladministration remain unexposed, and the service will know that they so remain.

"In closing, may we say publicly, as we have already said to you in more than one communication, that the sole object we have in asking for an investigation as distasteful to us as it must be to you, is to preserve the merit system in the Canadian public service, to prevent the renewal of patronage in its worst and most insidious form, and to provide an administration of the service which will be able, democratic and fair to all. In this, we feel sure we shall have your sympathy and aid.

"Upon your return to Ottawa to-day, may we ask for immediate action looking towards the formation of this board. Before this board, the Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa wish to appear with counsel.

(Sgd.) "F. W. PATTERSON,  
President, A.F.E. of O."