

THE FRENCH CIVIL SERVICE.

The advent of the brilliant Poincaré Ministry is of general interest to Civil Servants on account of the intention of the new government to make a drastic change for the better in the status of the French Civil Service. In the language of the ministerial statement of policy, "it is intended to confer upon officials as soon as possible a definite status, which shall protect them against arbitrary treatment, and which shall clearly lay down for them rights and obligations." The precise policy is not yet outlined; but as far as it is possible to speculate, the intention seems to be to protect the Civil Service from the "lobbying" and the corruption which goes on unchecked in France. The situation, which has existed in the Civil Service since the birth of the Third Republic, arises out of the statutory powers vested in the president, which give him the right to fill all civil and military posts under the Republican government. In practice, the powers of the president have been purely nominal. He exercises them through the medium of the ministry of the day, which is politically responsible to the chamber of deputies, and which forms a council over which the president usually presides. That is the formal state of affairs. But the continual chaos in French politics, leading to a succession of administrations, has meant perpetual chaos in the French Civil Service. Political patronage abounds, and civil servants are appointed by favour of minister and deputies, absolutely regardless of officials already in office. In its essentials, the French system approximates to the American "spoils" system, with its supersession of civil servants on the overthrow of an administration. When it is remembered that a new French government is an affair of no very great importance, due in

fact to the perfect instability of the French body politic, the position of the French Civil Service can be judged pretty accurately. One great anomaly in the land of *égalité* is curious. Aspirants to civil service privileges. The civil service policy of the new government will be watched with interest by civil servants in this country. If it means death to corruption, it will be welcome.—*The Civilian*.

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