

THE CIVILIAN

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Ottawa, Feb. 5, 1915

SIR ROBERT BORDEN IN HALIFAX PLATFORM.

A thorough and complete re-formation of the laws relating to the Civil Service should be put into effect, so that future appointments shall be made by an independent commission acting upon the report of examiners after competitive examination. I am convinced that we shall perform a great public duty by establishing in this country that system which prevails in Great Britain, under which a member of Parliament has practically no voice in or control over any appointment to the Civil Service.

To use the power of filling positions in the public service as a reward for party service and without regard to the character and capacity of the individual selected is a gross breach of a solemn public trust. A private trustee so dishonouring his office would be subject to punishment by the criminal law.

There exists a necessity for a strong expression of opinion by the organized service in regard to the merit system in preference to the spoils system. The two words express each their own recommendation and condemnation. The difference is as between right and wrong. Man, in his pursuit of the higher achievements, should not compromise the right for the wrong, simply because the straight and narrow road presents more arduous difficulties of travel than does the primrose path of dalliance. Continued submission to the wrongs of the spoils system is certain to callous the will power of the sufferer, and to moderate if not wholly to destroy his powers of combativity. The recent convention, in an over-sensitive moment, expunged from the "merit" resolution, the final paragraph directing that each member of Parliament be given an opportunity to express his preference for one of the two systems. As precedents have great influence with the official mind, it will interest those who attended the convention to know that they were not being led into unblazed forests.

The Civil Servants in New Zealand enjoy the benefits of a "Board of Appeal" under an Act passed in 1912. A conflict of interpretation has arisen between the Service and the Commission, and the Service desired to be enlightened. To this end they submitted a statement of their case to every candidate for Parliamentary honours, and asked for an answer to the following question:—

"Will you advance, at the first session of the new Parliament, to the best of your powers, any legislation introduced with a view to conserving the right of appeal believed to have been granted to Public Servants by the Parliament Act of 1912 when dealing with Clause 31 of the Public Service Bill?"

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The latest development in the In-