

an injustice so extreme that it ranks as an absurdity. It is impossible to imagine that the government having for the first time evolved a series of classes with definitions attached, should refuse to make the classes conform to the definitions. Misunderstanding and neglect may prevail for a time, but their rule cannot be permanent. The reorganization, as we said a fortnight since, is not only necessary; it is inevitable.

(2). There remain those of the third division who have no complaint on the score of classification, being properly classified at present, their work being entirely of a routine character. They in turn may be divided into two groups, according as they have or have not passed the promotion examination of the old regime, making the three groups mentioned above. It will be seen that a different series of considerations are involved in the position of both these groups as compared with the first. It becomes a question largely of whether their status has been impaired by the regulations to a degree inconsistent with the clause of the act which specifically declared that the status of no civil servant should be lowered by the act.

(a) Those of routine duties who have passed the promotion examination hold that by their doing so they entered into a distinct compact with the government as to their future in the service in so far as academic tests were concerned. Many are in possession of records that entitled them at the time to go forward without further test to the rank of chief clerks. These claim it a specific breach of faith for the government now to require them to undergo another and more severe test. Altogether there are 70 who have passed the examinations, but of these the great majority are ranked under (1) above, inasmuch as their

work, altogether apart from their having passed the examination, places them on a *de jure* basis in the second division. Probably 25 would represent the approximate number of the class of purely routine clerks who have taken the promotion examinations.

(b) The routine clerk who has not passed the promotion examination feels that, on the score of vested right, a difficult test has been substituted for an easy one. That he has not taken the old examination may have been due entirely to fortuitous circumstances. A year ago he had the opportunity; to-day he has not.

THE CIVILIAN makes no attempt in the above to present the arguments that may be offered against these varying statements of claim. It is merely a review of the situation designed to supply a graded analysis of the several interests involved, in the order that will probably be found the order of strength. These classes do not overlap, though another presentation may appeal to some. The contrary arguments, however, above mentioned, must be fully stated and considered before any formal action is taken and before the ground is finally chosen on which whatever representations it is decided to make shall be based. The Association must seize to the fullest the point of view of the Commissioners, the government, and the interests of the public service in the matter. In the meantime let a halt be called to the wild and generalized pronouncements that have been filling the mouths of some since the question was opened. This is an intricate and delicate problem, requiring the nicest discrimination between the points involved; and nothing but harm will result from treating it otherwise than dispassionately and with absolute clearness.