

‘NIGHT HAWK’ ON ‘MERIT.’

The signs are not wanting that the patronage system will shortly receive its death blow. Nearly all public men are opposed to appointments to the Public Service through influence and, with the reorganizing of the country's affairs, almost certain to take place after the war, there is no doubt but that the Civil Service will not escape the reformers' zeal. The fault we find with most Civil Service reformers is their belief that university graduates are the only people fit to manage the affairs of the Civil Service.

While the Postal Clerks' Association is unanimously in favour of the abolition of patronage and the introduction of a merit system to govern the Service, we wish it to be understood that when we speak of a merit system we do not mean that the higher situations of the Service are to be filled with men whose knowledge of the classics will enable them to pass some higher educational examination and consequently overstep men with a much greater knowledge of postal work.

The post office is a business institution and should be run on entirely business lines. In successful business houses a man is not appointed manager because of his knowledge of Homer, but by his ability to "deliver the goods."

Appointing young men with a fairly good elementary education, there is no reason why the Service cannot develop them into future postmasters, assistant postmasters, post office inspectors, etc.

Our association is in favour of all applicants passing the qualifying examination before being admitted into the Service. This examination we believe to be all that is required to satisfy the Department that the applicant has an average education. It is certainly enough for the usual business institutions, such as banks, etc., and surely will be good enough for the post office.

We find no fault with the university men in the service, but we do find fault with a system of examination for the higher situations that by reason of the subjects gives university men an advantage over clerks who have worked their way up through the Service.

We should then ask that all the higher situations be given to clerks according to their years of service and their ability in post office work, as shown by their records or by examination in such work. Perhaps the best way would be to examine clerks in order of seniority; where the senior man fails to make good the next clerk in order of seniority be given the opportunity.

It has been said that a highly educated man can meet the public better than one

promoted from the ranks. This we dispute. When the public wish to interview the postmaster, post office inspector, or other official, they usually want information on post office work, and who is better able to give such than the man who has given the best part of his life to post office work.

We wish the Service to be run on such democratic lines that a young man who has ambition and ability will be able to reach the top rung of the post office ladder. Such a system we believe will give the clerks an added impetus to perform their duties better and thereby increase the efficiency of the Service.

We realize that it will be difficult to arrange a perfect system. Reforms that are intended to place the Service under a merit system are inclined to place too much power in the hands of officials, who like all human beings have pet ideas, and in some cases favouritism will be shown.

Some of the so-called merit systems are no better than at present. Therefore it behooves this association to be prepared. Let us have some definite object in view and urge upon those in authority the advisability of including them in future Civil Service reforms.

Good Government demands that the Civil Service be placed on a merit system, then let us do all in our power to have introduced a truly merit system.

NIGHT HAWK.

ALL IS WELL.

Where are you sleeping tonight, my lad,

Above ground — or below?

The last we heard you were at the front,

Holding a trench and bearing the brunt—

But — that was a week ago.

But this we know, dear lad—all's well

With the man who has done his best,
And whether he live or whether he die,

He is sacred high in our memory—

And to God we can leave the rest.

—John Oxenham.

The great trouble with family jars is that they are never hermetically sealed.