

THE CIVILIAN

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receive careful consideration.

Ottawa, May 16, 1913

SALARIES ADJUSTMENT.

The Minister of Finance, in his Budget speech on Monday last gave some figures which must cause every Canadian to rejoice. Two stood out in prominence. One represented the foreign trade of Canada—practically a billion of dollars, the greatest by far ever known in the history of the country. The other told the surplus on ordinary expenditure — \$55,000,000.

These figures show the tremendous growth and prosperity of the Dominion. But that is not all that is indicated by these figures. One reason why these figures are large is that the prices of goods are high. A shipload of goods that would have been entered in the trade returns at \$100,000 even five years ago would be entered at nearly if not quite \$150,000 in the columns which total our magnificent billion of foreign trade. And, for the same reason the valuation of goods for customs is high, and therefore—to

name only one reason—the figures of revenue and so the figures of the surplus are higher than they would have been on the same quantity of goods entered a few years ago.

The very thing that swells the figures of the Dominion book-keeping makes it harder and harder for the men who live on salaries to live decently. This applies to everybody. But wage-earners in the field of industry or commerce get the benefit of a competition among employers which makes it relatively easy for them to secure increase in their wages. Pick up any newspaper, and you read of wage-workers or other earners improving their condition. To take a couple of items at random: Twenty-three contractors in Ottawa have agreed to increase the pay of their men. The rates on the Ottawa-Aylmer line of cars are not to be reduced this summer because the company has recently increased its employees' wages and so must keep up revenue.

There are people, however, who are hurt by the increased prices of goods and yet are deprived of the benefit of competition for their services. For thousands of civil servants there is no possible change of employment to be made a lever to raise salaries. There is only one post office system in this country for instance, and so there is no use in a post office employee saying that he will look for another employer. Unless he can change his trade,—no easy matter for a grown man—he must take what the post office will pay him.

Attention has already been called by *The Civilian* to the gratifying fact that there have been some increases in salary among the employees of the post office. So highly do we approve these changes that we earnestly desire to see them extended and multiplied not only in the post office, but in other departments.

On the same day as the Budget, a motion was carried to increase the salary of the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners from \$10,000