

Civil Service Pensions.

By *Hon. Franklin MacVeagh*,
(Secretary of the U. S. Treasury.)

(The following is the text of an address on the Superannuation issue by the Hon. Franklin MacVeigh, Minister in President Taft's Administration of the Department employing the largest number of clerical workers in Washington. The address was delivered a few weeks ago before the American Academy of Political and Social Science. It deals with the broad principles of superannuation, not with the details of any particular scheme, and hence is as applicable to the Canadian as to the United States situation. Particularly interesting to civil servants is Mr. MacVeigh's comment on the need of agreement among those who stand to benefit most directly by any pension arrangement. In Canada, fortunately, we have our plans matured and the debating period passed.)

This is considered to be a materialistic age, and it is considered so because, beyond any question, it is so. But it is also a spiritual age. We have made such tremendous material strides in this country and age—and do it so continuously and conspicuously—that we are apt to overlook the spiritual activities of the time, which are really far more extraordinary. Indeed, they are the most exceptional spiritual activities the world has ever seen. We are not usually compared favorably with the great period of Greece, nor with the early Renaissance of Italy, nor with the times of Elizabeth; but, after all, it is perhaps right to say that none of these great times of the spirit had such general life and activity as this particular materialistic age of ours.

The general interest in this subject of industrial insurance and retiring allowances is itself a concrete instance of the intellectual and moral activity—spiritual activity—of our immediate time. A very broad matter it is, this question of preventing the bread being taken away from the latter end of our lives. It is a great conception and purpose to complete civilisation on that imperative side. It is a great conception of civilization, and it is a great conception of human obligation, this

idea of providing industrial and other insurance, like protections and rewards. It is not merely humane; it is an uplifting of character and human standards in its promotion of thrift and foresight in the world. The widespread and acute interest in this question is very evident, and the activities in its behalf are also very widespread. In civil life, in industrial life, in the whole of the varied phases of our life this movement is taking root.

The one place where it is neglected, where the movement has no place, where as yet it has no life, is in the United States Government, and it is of that feature that I am going to speak to you for a few minutes. The situation in the National Government is, so far as retiring allowances or any allowances or pensions are concerned, that we have a perfectly enormous war pension list, a list that is not even a credit to us. It never had a scientific or acknowledged basis from the beginning, although it had a very worthy purpose. It, however, has lost a great deal of that purpose, lost its patriotic quality to a great extent, and has become largely a political pension list. This amounts to from \$150,000,000 to \$160,000,000 a year. Outside of that list, which is mainly, of course, right, just and proper, but