

Memorial

of

The Civil Service Association.

To the Honourable the Royal Commissioners, appointed to enquire into matters pertaining to the Civil Service of Canada:

Gentlemen:

The members of the Civil Service Association desire in this way to testify to their satisfaction upon the appointment of a Commission to deal with matters affecting their general interests, as well as to their confidence in the sincerity of purpose and in the instincts of justice which will mark the conduct of your work. They appreciate the difficulties of your task, and cheerfully proffer any assistance which they may be able to render in the gathering of the vast mass of information upon which you must base your final judgment.

The Civil Service Association is composed of members of the so-called "Inside Service" residing in Ottawa. On its roll of membership it has 1784 names, representing all classes in the various Departments of Government at the Capital. The recommendations in the subjoined memorandum have not only been prepared with patient care by the Executive Committee, but have also the specific approval of the members of the Association. Throughout it has been the aim of the Association to make no requests which were not founded in reason, and to present its views in a spirit of moderation and, it is hoped, not without dignity.

It may not be amiss at the outset to emphasize the somewhat unique, and generally misunderstood, position of a Civil Servant. He practically gives up his life to the service of the country. The training which his work gives him, instead of increasing his marketable stock of skill, practically unfits him for other employment, although rendering him increasingly valuable to the State. Hence, unless he has some technical accomplishment, the loss of his position in the Civil Service is most serious. He cannot go to other governments and present his credentials of experience. Once having given up the earlier years of his life to the Civil Service he must remain there, or face the world heavily handicapped. The recognition of these important facts should therefore underlie any consideration which may be given to his case, and should at the same time preclude ordinary comparisons. These facts should suggest the need of such amelioration of existing conditions as would make the Civil Service a career attractive to the young and gifted.

The Civil Servant, it must not be forgotten, is also a citizen, and as a citizen must assume his proper share of the burdens and responsibilities of the civic community. The income of other citizens has increased with the increased cost of living, but the salaries of Civil Servants have remained the same for practically the last forty years, except for a slight adjustment in 1903. He, therefore, finds it increasingly difficult with each succeeding year to take his proper position as a citizen, to discharge his obligations as such, and so to preserve the respect of the community of which he is a component part. Should this condition of affairs be continued, the result will be that the Civil Servant, hitherto identified closely with the public and private life of the City, will be debarred from such positions and activities as are becoming to an intelligent and cultured citizen.

As things are, the Civil Servant not only gives up his life to the service of his country, as has been said, but he must provide for every contingency, as well as for the best interests of those who may be dependent upon him, out of what is paid to him from the public treasury. It is only by the exercise of prudence and, sometimes, rigid self-denial, that he can do this in a modest way. Under existing conditions, having regard to the continuous increase in the cost of living, he finds the struggle growing harder and harder. Is it, therefore, surprising that he should view with deep personal interest the creation of a Commission to inquire dispassionately and thoroughly into matters affecting his material welfare?

The operations of The Civil Service Act are best understood by Civil Servants; they know both its advantages and its drawbacks, as the result of daily experience. The members of the Civil Service Association, therefore, accepted with gratitude your