

# THE CIVILIAN

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## Our Advocates Multiply.

One of the most important developments of recent times in Canada has been the movement in Western Canada looking to the public ownership and management of the interior elevator system of the three prairie provinces. Some time ago the Western Grain Growers' Association was invited by the Government of Manitoba to submit a detailed plan in the matter. This the Association has done within the past few days. Nine-tenths of the plan has to do with the problem of financing and managing so large an undertaking. It seems probable that the matter, insofar as Manitoba is concerned, will finally be placed in the hands of a Commission. The arrangement, of course, if it goes forward, means a very large addition to the number of Government employees in the Provinces concerned. Very significant, therefore, is a rider attached to the memorandum which the Grain Growers' Association recently submitted in the matter to the following effect: that for the regulation of this large body of public employees a regular system of promotion by merit be inaugurated and that a pension fund for their benefit be established from the beginning. That the farmers of this great country show so high a degree of appreciation of these two prime requisites of a civil service is a most encouraging sign of the times.

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The Chicago Record-Herald, the leading Republican journal of that great city of the middle west, is one of the latest advocates of superannuation for government employees. It bases its argument, too, as civil servants like to see it based, on business principles:

"Both the President and Secretary MacVeagh have earnestly discussed the question of what may be called old-age pensions for federal employes. Both have pointed out that the question has been under discussion for years and is therefore ripe for action, and both have naturally referred to the practice of other governments and to the tendencies among the great corporations and the educational institutions.

"If civil pension proposals rested entirely or even chiefly on considerations of humanity the old objections to 'paternalism' would apply with full force. Why, it would be asked, should the government, which does not overwork or exploit its employes, add old-age pensions to the other attractions of the civil service? And why cannot intelligent employes who draw living salaries provide for their own future? Have we no savings banks, no endowment insurance, no annuity policies, no secure investments? But the considerations of humanity are not the principal ones in the argument for civil pensions. It is the effect of pensions on the efficiency of the whole service that stress is laid on by the administration. Old employes are retained long after their usefulness is ended because of the cruelty of discharge without any provision against destitution. Pensions, it is urged would enable the heads of the departments to demand better work and obtain it.

"Congress, of course, is bound to deal in a practical way with its own phase of the problem, but it is permissible to observe that civilization will find it necessary to concern itself more and more with the welfare and security of all civil and industrial workers. The efficiency argument is of universal applicability. Corporations frankly say that old-age pensions are 'business propositions' and not philanthropy; more and more of them will act voluntarily; and states and Congress will probably have to deal with the problem in one way or another at no distant time."