

## REPORT OF C. S. COMMISSIONERS.

The "fiscal" year of the Civil Service Commission, presided over by Messrs. Shortt and LaRoche, ended August 31st, 1912, and the 4th annual report has been laid on the table of the House of Commons. *The Civilian*, in common with all the service, individual or as organized into deliberative associations, is intensely interested in the conduct of this commission in so far as it administers the service under the C. S. Act, now complicated by its many amendments. *The Civilian* has always entertained a sympathetic attitude towards the commission and has pleaded for a liberal toleration in respect of criticisms levelled at it, on account of the difficulties with which it has to contend. Without departing from an attitude of sympathy towards the commission, truth compels us to offer certain animadversions in regard to the report before us. "For the universal good, friends and truth are both dear to us, but it is a sacred duty to prefer the truth."

The last page in the book is numbered 246, but the "report" is confined to four pages. The 242 pages are devoted to acts, regulations, tables, examination papers, etc. These are all highly interesting, but largely possible of production in the hands of a mechanically organized staff. The portion of the report for which the service has been waiting with all the interest of "the party of the first part," is confined to a few lines, as follows:—

"In view of the anticipated report of Sir George Murray on the organization of the Dominion civil service, and the recommendations which it may contain, the commissioners in their present report refrain from the further discussion of certain proposed changes in the C. S. law which have been recommended in previous reports, and from raising certain new points which under other circumstances might have been dealt with."

That is to say, a commission which has been for four years studying a

problem, lays down on its job and yields the palm of authority and dictation to a man who is a stranger to our local conditions, and who had only a few weeks of time to devote to his investigation. This is a sign of weakness which we could not have expected from the commissioners, which comes as a surprise, and is a subject for supreme regret.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the commission is at odds with many of the ministers of the crown. This is not necessarily to the discredit of the commission. It is equally well known that the service in Ottawa loveth not the commission. This lack of affection may or may not bear with it the significance apparent on the surface. The reason for all this doubt and uncertainty is the refusal of the commissioners not only in the present report, but in all previous reports, to give out the real, essential and vital information. When the service was under the direct jurisdiction of council, it was not expected, in the order of things, that anything would be "explained." In handing over the service to a commission it was certainly intended to be a public service, not a secret service commission, a department administering frank, open justice, not a Star Chamber. We find 46 outsiders appointed by nomination under clause 21. Were all these meritorious appointments? Were any of the nominations refused? If so, how many, and why? What are the principles in dispute in administering this clause? Is there any suspicion that there were men already in the service capable of filling the vacancies filled under clause 21? Fifteen promotions were refused in the First and Second Divisions. May we not know something of the principles at issue in these refusals? 331 clerks were promoted in the two higher divisions. Did any delay occur in granting these certificates, and if so must the cause remain forever a deathly secret?