

P.C. 3281.

PRIVY COUNCIL, CANADA.

At the Government House at Ottawa.
Monday, the 1st day of January, 1917.

His Excellency the Governor General in Council, under and by virtue of the provisions of section 6 of the War Measures Act, 1914, is pleased to order that section 22 of the Civil Service Amendment Act, 1908, as amended by chapter 8 of the Statutes of 1910, relating to the appointment to the position of messengers, porters, sorters and packers, and to certain other positions, shall be and the same is hereby further amended by adding thereto the following section:

3. Any person who has been on active service overseas in the Military or Naval forces of His Majesty during the present war may be appointed either temporarily or permanently to any of the said positions upon his satisfying the Deputy head of the Department in which he is to be appointed that he can read and write and also that he has the usual qualifications required with respect to character and health

There are two significant things I might mention, first, people in Ottawa, it seems to me, should not have a special claim on Government positions as if the Dominion Government's offices in Ottawa were a local industry. We hold our examinations from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and everybody is equally entitled to compete.

By Mr. McCurdy:

Q. The Johnny on the spot always has the advantage?—A. In a patronage way, always. If there are qualified returned soldiers up and down the country who have taken their examinations, and who have taken the training offered them by the Military Hospitals Commission, and have shown themselves in passing these tests able to hold these positions, why should inferior people be taken when the others are available? The same applies to this other question of holding them over. Moreover, these tests are very elementary, the lower grade examinations being simply writing, spelling and the first four rules of arithmetic.

By Hon. Mr. Murphy:

Q. And reading?—A. No. The spelling and the arithmetic are such that if they can spell the easy words they can pass, and if they can add and subtract they do not need to know how to multiply and divide, because they can get enough marks to qualify. It is not a serious test, but it has this remarkable advantage. Lord Macaulay, Sir George Trevelyan, the Marquis of Hartington, after Duke of Devonshire, and other advocates of the Civil Service reform in Britain, pointed out that if a man will undertake to go up for these tests, it is a more valuable test of steadiness of character, of habits, and of general ability than any value

of the test itself, and that is what we have found works out here.

Q. It is that elementary test that the amendment to Section 22 of the Civil Service Act breaks down?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Ross:

Q. A man who could not do any of these things could be appointed by the head of a department under that section to any of these positions?—A. Yes, in the lower grade.

By the Chairman:

Q. If he was a returned overseas soldier?—A. Yes.

Q. What are you doing towards qualifying and fitting returned men for Civil Service employment?—A. Well, of course, we have no such function, except to test them when they profess to be ready to be tested.

Q. The Military Hospitals Commission are giving training at a number of points, I understand, under your advice?—A. Well, we have talked the matter over with the different centres. What I have said is this: These men come back to you covering all grades and subjects for all kinds of employment; you will find some who show by their character and industry tendencies which will be suitable for Civil Service positions; it should be your function to find—

Q. Certain selected men?—A. Yes, to go in for these positions, and then there are others who should go in for manual training or some other occupation. Because of your knowledge of these men, you have the opportunity to give suitable advice to them, and to give them the training. Then, when you declare them ready, we provide the machinery for examining them and certifying to the various Departments of the Civil Service that these men are qualified up to the various standards.

Q. In a normal year how many people are absorbed in the Civil Service?—A. In the Inside Service, about, probably a hundred in the third division; between forty and fifty in the second division, and perhaps about the same number in the other divisions.

Q. That is in the Departments at Ottawa?—A. Yes. And in the lower grade probably about one hundred.

Q. So that three hundred a year is about the normal absorption in Ottawa?—A. About that.

Q. And throughout the country at large, do you deal with the Outside Service?—A. We simply hold the examinations, but we have no knowledge of the number appointed.

Q. Are the returned soldiers to have the preference in the Outside Service as well?—A. Yes.

Q. I am trying to find out how many returned soldiers could be absorbed annually in both the Inside and Outside Service, how many would you think?—A. In the Inside Service, probably as you say, about 300 of all grades.

(To be continued)