

THE CIVILIAN

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Communications on any subject of interest to the Civil Service are invited and will receive careful consideration.

Ottawa, Feb 22, 1912

COST OF LIVING, AND CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES.

The latest estimate of the Department of Labour shows that prices are on a higher level at the present moment than at any time probably within the present generation. Not since 1873 have conditions approached those which now exist. Everyone is familiar with the steady rise which continued from 1897 to 1907 and which was checked temporarily by the financial panic in the autumn of the latter year. Since then we have more than recovered the ground lost by the recession of 1908 and are now forging ahead more rapidly than ever. Wholesale prices during the past year have risen by at least 3 per cent., while retail prices have risen the country over by at least 5 per cent. These are not guesses, but are estimates based on comprehensive data and prepared by thoroughly scientific methods.

No class in the community is more injuriously affected by a movement

like this than the civil service. Salaried officials in general suffer, and no salaries are so inelastic as those of civil servants, which require a law to be passed and the whole country to approve before change is possible. An impersonal employer like a government is always hard of heart to the mass of its employees, popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. It is safe to say that no single employer in the length and breadth of Canada has taken the attitude during the past ten years of the Government of Canada towards certain branches of its outside employees. It is almost unbelievable that a movement which has revolutionized salary scales throughout the world should have been disregarded by the one employer who above all others should set an example in humanity and just dealing. The inside service, it is true, has received an advance in the classification scale amounting in most cases to \$100 per annum as well as a special grant enabling the maximum to be sooner reached. The amended scale, however, was never liberal and under existing conditions it is bearing hardly upon those in the lower ranks. Quite apart from the various other features that make up the "Third Division situation" the maximum of \$1,200 in these days is ludicrously low. No solution can be satisfactory or permanent that does not raise it to at least \$1,500. But the Royal Commission might well consider the whole question of scales under the Act of 1908. That they will do so for the outside divisions goes without saying.



THE THIRD COMMISSIONER.

The Government is now pledged to a third Civil Service Commissioner. On the Board as it now exists the scholastic and the legal are well represented. It would seem a common-sense suggestion that the third commissioner be one having direct ex-