

WANTED: A CIVIL SERVICE LADY OFFICIAL REFUTES A MEMBER. LIBEL.

Undoubtedly the easiest and most effective method of bringing about a condition of serious controversy is by questions in the House of Commons. Questions in parliament, if they are skilfully put, affect heads of departments in the same manner as the scraping of a ship's side against an unsuspected rock affects the captain of a ship. It puts him at once on the alert, makes him take hurried soundings and sets him examining his chart. Questions in the house have to be answered. They cannot be ignored. It was said of the Boer gun known as "Long Tom," which dominated Ladysmith during the siege, that its shells killed no one, but that it was an infernal nuisance, because it kept everyone in a state of constant uneasiness. So it is with questions in the House of Commons. When there is cause for complaint in a department the officers' organization can drop shell after shell right on to the table of the secretary through a member who recognizes the existence of a grievance and is sympathetically inclined. In time the civil service will mount its own gun at Westminster. Once there is in the House of Commons an expert on civil service administrative matters, a civil service member sent to the house to protect the interests of the rank and file of the service the course of service agitation will be changed; when misleading and incomplete answers to questions are rendered impossible and inadvisable, and when there is on the floor of the house one who can put supplementary questions that the secretary to the treasury dare not attempt to answer, the treasury will take the initiative in bringing into existence a court of appeal by which service questions can be heard and decided. —"The Civilian," London.

"The Land of Promise," a play by Somerset Maugham, has been produced at the Duke of York's theatre in London. It deals with the lives of women settlers on the Canadian prairies and the picture drawn is said to be libellous and untruthful. However, it has not been allowed to go unchallenged. Here is what the press correspondent, "Windermere," says of the incident:—

"Mrs. M. G. Niblett, the very wide-awake lady official of the Canadian government emigration department here, has been seeing the play and she puts this view forcibly. She says:—

"No Canadian man would dream of ordering his wife about. To treat a wife in that way is absolutely foreign to any Canadian man. Whatever result he wanted to arrive at, he would take some other means. He would conquer her in some other way. If there is one thing Canadian men do well, it is the way they treat their wives. I once heard two women in Scotland say: 'When Scotchmen go to Canada they soon learn how to treat their wives.'"

"Mrs. Niblett was asked if she thought the rough appearance of the Canadian home in the play and the sort of work that the wife has to do is likely to put off any girls who may have contemplated going to Canada.

"If it does," was the laughing reply, "then that is a good thing, for they are not the sort of girls that are of any use in Canada. All Canadians must work. There is no room for those who have no taste for it, though I have known many to have a taste for it who never realized the fact or had the opportunity to develop it over here.

"The climate here in England has such a lazy effect upon many people that there are some who, though they have never seemed to possess any powers here in the way of work, have become magnificent workers when out in the bright, bracing, exhilarating air of Canada.'"

A large part of our lifetime is wasted because of our deferred decisions. It is always easier to postpone a decision than to make it; so it usually gets postponed. Nine times out of ten we could, if we would merely insist on a slight effort of will, decide matters the first time they come before us, and thus leave the future just as much freer for new duties and decisions.