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The Theory and Practice of Promotion.

[As is well known, the United States has the advantage over Canada, in matters pertaining to the civil service, of an alert and educated public opinion. It has a Civil Service Reform League which by no means confines itself to indefinite aspirations — the best our Canadian newspapers, our only articulate members on the subject, can do—but grapples with the concrete details of the civil service problem in all their minutiae.

At the recent annual convention of the League, a feature of the proceedings was the presentation of a report by a special committee under the chairmanship of Chas. W. Eliot, late President of Harvard, on the difficult question of Promotion. The report certainly constitutes the most lucid and comprehensive treatment of this subject that has yet appeared. Though written with United States conditions immediately in mind, it is applicable in the main the world over. *The Civilian* reproduces it hereunder in abridged form, shorn of purely local references. Civil servants whether they agree with it to the letter will find the breadth of view with which these daily and absorbing questions of theirs are treated, both interesting and stimulating.]

A promotion system is essential to the development and success of the service, and such a system must apply to the higher as well as to the lower grades. It is essential in order to attract men of the right calibre to the service, and in order to provide them with sufficient incentive to remain in the service and give to it their highest mental efforts with a view to making it a life career. It is well recognized that it is the best of the new appointees who resign after a few years of service and at the period of highest usefulness to the departments, because private business offers them better opportunities of promotion and a more satisfactory career. One marked result of the introduction of the competitive system has been that it has produced men of such high capacity that they are willing to remain but a short time.

The plan followed both in England and in Germany is to create separate and distinct classes within

the civil service, with practically no opportunity to advance from a lower to a higher class. This would be regarded here as undemocratic. A system can certainly be constructed which will provide that men of sufficient education and personal initiative shall reach the higher administrative positions before they have passed the age of highest mental activity, and will at the same time allow the advancement to the highest posts of those who having entered the service at the lower grades prove their capacity to fill the higher.

The objection that competitive examination is not suited to the filling of positions of such high character cannot be sustained in the light of present experience. New methods of examination have been introduced which are everywhere proving their sufficiency as tests of administrative ability. Candidates are judged not on written answers to set questions, but on experience, on proof of the character of the work they have ac-