

THE CIVILIAN

Devoted to the interests of the Civil Service of Canada.

Subscription \$1.00 a year;
Single copies 5 cents.

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THE CIVILIAN,

P. O. Box 484, Ottawa

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

Ottawa, Oct. 17, 1913

"The law pertaining to the civil service should be honestly and rigidly enforced, to the end that merit and ability should be the standard of appointment and promotion, rather than service rendered to a political party."

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"Entrance to the civil service should be at the bottom, and the custom of securing men from outside the ranks and placing them ahead of old employees should be discouraged, and only resorted to when public interest demands. Civil service protects employees in their positions, but it holds them there in stagnation unless a method be found to not only secure the time of its employees, but to stimulate and reward their ambition."

THE MERIT SYSTEM.

The merit system is always in danger, is always subject to attacks from the pot-hunter who desires to achieve the unearned increment, to attain glory without effort. The civil service is peculiarly a target for the pot-hunter. In the Inside Service he gets his prize through Section 21; (though that clause was ordained for a different and much better purpose) and also through so-called special competitive examinations. The latter method is a very subtle and insidious method but one that is dead easy for the intelligent pot-hunter.

In the Outside Service, the pot-hunter can get in and grab his unearned prize at almost any point. Appointment and promotion seem both to be assailable positions in this service when the pot-hunter desires to obtain an undue advantage over the dead bodies of "merit and seniority." Perhaps the wall of least resistance is the "Preventive Service" of the Customs Dept. But there are other gates and alleys to the civil service system and it is deplorable that modest merit must so often blush and hide its head at the affronts of the monster "Privilege."

Thus in both Inside and Outside services, special privilege grants its unearned boons to pot-hunters at the expense of the worthy and the fit. The only limit to the extent of these free gifts is possibly the appreciation, on the part of Ministers of the Crown that the civil service is flesh and blood; that human hearts being the pawns in the game, intense suffering is wrought at every act of injustice done in arranging or re-arranging its personnel. As is well known ministers are so pre-occupied that it is very doubtful if their minds have absorbed this important feature. Moreover, it is likely that, granting the necessary appreciation of the humanity involved in promotions, ministers are unable to repel the contumacious importunities of the pestilential bearing pot-