

THE CIVILIAN

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THE EDITORS,

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

Ottawa, July 2nd, 1909

HOURS IN THE SERVICE.

"A rule lengthening the hours of work in the Federal Departments has awakened some disgust in Ottawa."

—Daily Paper.

Not at all—at least not in the way our friends of the press suppose. It is true that the sudden manner in which the government announced its intention may have touched the *amour propre* of some. If, too, it was intended by the government to make the lengthened hours a *quid pro quo* in view of the general increase, this was felt to be unjust, the increase being a cost of living increase pure and simple, and already doubly earned by the service in being perhaps the last class of employees in Canada to receive it. On more general grounds, moreover, the service, as we said a

fortnight since, did not see in the change a logical contribution to the solution of the problem in hand. When a machine needs oiling or a re-assembling of its parts, the first remedy suggested is not usually to work it longer. However, had the government begun by bringing to book the few departments and individuals whose hours were admittedly too short; had it then, if found necessary, when the reproach invoked by this minority had been removed, decided to make the hours in the service from nine to five, with the relaxation of an hour in the time of closing during the summer months between sessions; incorporating the change with an intelligent estimate of the equipment and organization of the service in relation to the output of work required; we do not think that any feeling save one of commendation would have been manifested in the ranks of the service. We believe, of course, that conditions both as to wages and hours should be somewhat better in the service than in corresponding occupations outside, for reasons we have set forth on previous occasions. But within the limits of this perfectly businesslike principle, there is certainly no objection on the part of the service to a proper and uniform adjustment of hours. As it is, THE CIVILIAN is hopeful that the final result will be to recognize the interdependence of such a question as hours of labour with the larger aspects of the situation.

It has been a solemn thing to see in this connection how all-wisely the newspapers can size up a proposition like the civil service. But the service should remember it is not the only sufferer. To make a noise like a specialist in any branch at ten or fifteen minutes' notice is the joy of the twentieth century editorialist. It is