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## The Dominion Lands Branch of the Department of the Interior.

The *Civilian* hereunder continues the series of articles it has in hand dealing with the more important Departments and Branches of the Canadian Civil Service. The object of these articles is in part to educate the public as to the nature and importance of the work carried on by the Service, but also to create in civil servants themselves a keener appreciation of the great machine to which they belong. The Dominion Lands Branch of the Department of the Interior is one which of late years has been very much in the public eye in Canada.

The Dominion Lands Branch deals with lands open to settlement from the time that the Surveyor General reports the completion of the survey until by the fulfilment of the necessary conditions the holders of the entries are entitled to patent, which, it may be explained is a title in fee simple.

To administer the law as provided in the Dominion Lands Act and the Departmental Regulations, a large staff is employed at the Head Office in Ottawa, with a numerous body of officials stationed at points in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and in what is known as the Forty Mile Belt, in British Columbia, that is to say a strip running parallel to and twenty miles on either side of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The provinces above named are divided into 22 land districts, and in the centre of each a main office under the charge of a Dominion Lands Agent who with a capable staff handles the business pertaining thereto. These number 229 in all. As a matter of public convenience and in order to save settlers from travelling long distances, sub-agencies seventy-nine in number are established at out lying points. These

are under the direction of the Agent to whom they report all transactions, the whole of which is periodically reported to the Head Office there to be checked and recorded. To bring the Department in touch with the actual settler, 46 Homestead Inspectors are employed whose duties are to visit the lands and report upon them or investigate difficulties that arise from time to time. This large staff is under the direction of the Dominion Lands Branch which is presided over by the Commissioner, Mr. J. W. Greenway.

The work of the Branch may, speaking generally, be described as a multitude of units, each representing a particular quarter section of land, and having its own file of papers containing its complete history. Let us take one as an example. First we find that John Smith made homestead entry for a certain quarter section. By law he is required to go into occupation and begin the performance of his duties within six months of the date thereof; but John Smith's wife is ill, or he may be employed harvesting as a hired hand, or he has some other story to tell, and begs for a little consideration, asking for an extension of time, which under ordinary circumstances