

THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE.

The President Trying to Please the Friends and Enemies of Civil-Service Reform.

President McKinley is evidently much perplexed by the turn which civil-service matters have taken. Of all men who ever occupied the executive chair he is the most conciliatory and possesses the happiest faculty of making the partisans of both sides believe that he is sincerely with them. In the war with Spain this triumph of diplomacy was carried out to perfection. In most of the peace newspapers of this country he is held up to praise as the great peace president, who with his restraining hand kept back the demons of strife to the very last. On the other hand, wherever members of the foreign affairs committees or leaders in congress have stated, as Representative Moody of Massachusetts did in the republican state convention of Massachusetts, that the president was not far behind congress in its actual war purpose, he is hailed as the great war chief.

Now, in the matter of civil-service reform, President McKinley comes very near to accomplishing the same thing. It is notorious that the actual evasions of the law have never been more widespread than today, and yet the press dispatches describe reformers as coming away from the white house satisfied that the president is heartily in sympathy with them. The newspaper organ of one member of the cabinet, in a recent editorial article, went further, and declared that Mr. McKinley was a better friend of civil-service reform than any of the persons in the country who are now presuming to urge him to stand by the existing law.

But the president's embarrassment comes about in this way. He has for months been officially "considering" whether to take the 4,000 medical examiners of the pension bureau out of the classified service or not. The civil-service commission has finally recommended that he do one of two things—either to exempt these doctors and be done with it, or suggest to his pension commissioner, Henry Clay Evans, that he pay some real regard to the existing law. As administered by Mr. Evans, with full knowledge of Secretary Bliss, the thing has become simply a farce. The statute permits the creation of an extra board of examiners at the discretion of the commissioner in any town where he sees fit to do so. In theory, this is for emergency purposes, but Mr. Evans, availing himself of a strained interpretation of the law, has established these extra boards almost everywhere. To them he gives the business, and, of course the fees, and thus starves out the regular officers, who are still legally in existence. This violation of law by indirection has been going on ever since Mr. Evans took charge of the bureau, and is no secret. Mr. McKinley has

doubtless had sufficient influence with his own administration to have it stopped any time in the last eighteen months if he had cared to do so. The civil-service commissioners are now cold-blooded enough to say that in preference to the present absurdity they would recommend that the \$950,000 annually appropriated for medical examiners' fees be directly turned into the coffers of the party workers. This is a choice which Mr. McKinley had never intended to make, and hence his delay about bringing out the much-promised order of modification.

Last Saturday another covert blow at civil-service reform emanated from a responsible officer of the administration. Deputy marshals and deputy collectors of internal revenue are nominally within the classified service, and new appointees must be taken from the eligible register. But in case a United States marshal does not do it, and selects his own men as he sees fit, what then? David M. Dunne of Portland, Ore., for instance, has paid no more attention to a civil-service-reform law and rules than to the ceremonial requirements of the Koran. The civil-service commission, in view of contemptuous violations which were steadily growing more frequent, made a formal demand upon the auditor of the treasury for the state and other departments that the vouchers in payment for services rendered by these deputies appointed outside of the merit system be disallowed, in order that a test case might be brought as to the validity of such appointments. This the auditor refused to do, politely referring the commission to the comptroller of the treasury. This means that such barriers against violation of the civil-service laws as are now supposed to exist are being rapidly swept away, and it will not be of much moment what decision the president reaches in regard to the classifications themselves. Whether he takes old offices out or puts in new ones it does not matter so long as "the boys" actually get "the jobs." Representative Grosvenor was not the pliant weakling that some persons supposed when in congress he gave up the fight against the appropriation for the continuance of the civil-service system. He simply came to the conclusion that there was nothing worth fighting for, and in this events have proved that he was too nearly correct.

There has been a little stir within a few days about the distribution of 150 railroad tickets to voters by the new head of the fish commission. The offence is acknowledged, and if a railroad ticket is "a thing of value," the statutes of the United States have been openly violated. But why should this disturb the fish commissioner? His appointment itself by the president was an equally flagrant violation, in spirit at least, of the statutes of the United states. He was the man who, instead

of possessing a scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries, would, according to Mr. Elkins, his senatorial backer, be "bright enough to catch on all right."

The civil-service commission itself now receives some criticism on the score that it is not so aggressive as in the days of Col. Roosevelt, who was feared by every man who tried to use public salaries as a bribe for political service. But how are appointees of a president, like civil-service commissioners, to compel him to pay any attention to what they have to say unless he sees fit to do so? This brings the whole subject down to a very simple basis. The proper enforcement of our civil-service law depends absolutely upon the personal attention of the president of the United States. None of his subordinates will long violate laws or rules against his will, and, on the other hand, none of his appointees can rise superior to their chief and compel him to give attention to them.—New York Evening Post.

CHURCH-BELLS. The question is sometimes asked, why every church-building has a bell upon it, which is kept in operation, as the neighbors think, a large part of the day and night; is it that in this age of the world one who wishes to worship requires to be reminded of the place and time by the ringing of a bell?

With respect to the present usage, the practice would appear to be justified by the results obtained. Bells are found attached to churches, school houses and court houses, and in precisely those places do performances begin at the hours for which they are announced.

In other kinds of public gatherings, as in meetings of lodges, city councils or committees, it is useless to attend at the set time, and one is safe in happening in anywhere within a couple of hours of it. There are even theatres, in which the curtain is supposed to rise at 8 o'clock, where the commencement is delayed until it is thought that as many are present as mean to come. From this point of view, it is clear that much valuable time would be saved to the community if bells were multiplied to the point of distraction.

But as to the period when, and the object for which, religious societies first took up the use of sonorous metal as an adjunct to their worship, it does not appear that there is any man who knows this. The practice seems to be universal. Wherever mankind is found, the ruling powers are addressed in the voice of bells, or if the worshipers are still too rude to be able to fashion bells, they contrive some other kind of clatter to answer the same end. When they began it is only known to the deity whom they all thus variously seek to propitiate. The Egyptians, for thousands of years before Moses' time, used peculiar rattles to notify their gods that they were about to be praised or petitioned in due