



THE STATE EMPLOYEE

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Numbers 1-2

The Civil Service System Necessary to Good Government

Richard Washburn Child writing recently about growing Federal activities, stated: "It is not so much the drain upon the taxpayer's pocket as the multiplying of dangers of corruption, of intrigue, and popingjay control of those who know nothing about the business. Let us have quality in public servants rather than quantity."

Here is a direct invitation to apply not only in the State but in the Nation the principle laid down in the New York State Constitution that "appointments and promotions (in public service) be made according to merit and fitness."

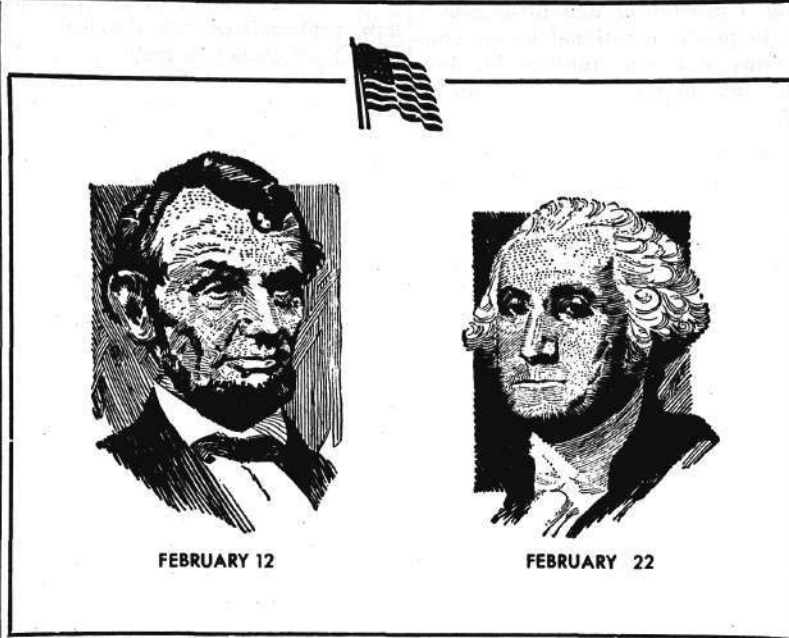
No emergency in Nation or State is so great that the merit and fitness of public workers can be passed over lightly or hastily. Selection through well organized civil service departments is not a difficult or long drawn out process, and it is only in this way that equal opportunity of every citizen to serve his Country or State, regardless of race, religion or political party, is safeguarded. In addition, every civil service department has at hand lists of eligibles from which may be recruited even more quickly than through routine examination highly efficient forces for every possible emergency.

The cry against bureaucracies is raised largely because of fear of incapable servants to run them. Such servants where they exist are the result of failure to utilize the sound principles of employment inherent in the civil service system.

The civil service system has a dual virtue in that it supplies an efficient personnel and frees the appointing officer from deference to the "spoils system." In Lincoln's day before the advent of the civil service plan, the great Emancipator once said of the "spoils system," "Here is something which in the course of time will become a greater danger than the Rebellion itself."

The success of the civil service

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FEBRUARY 12

FEBRUARY 22

Holding High the Torch

Washington and Lincoln will stand throughout the ages as the great exponents of government as the practical medium leading to the progress of humanity in its pursuit of happiness.

Their accomplishments still readily visible to the present generation, and recorded in many volumes, touched upon practically every subject vital to individual, family or national endeavor.

It is pleasing to record here, and we know there will be no dissenting voice, that every word and act of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln marked them as the ardent apostles and the practical defenders of the application in public service of the civil service principles for which this Association of State Civil Service Employees stands so earnestly today.

Page Washington, page Lincoln, if you will! They will answer in a thousand ways that they stood for—

- High standards in public employment
- Selection of public servants on basis of merit and fitness
- Equal right for every citizen regardless of race, religion or political or personal favoritism to qualify for civil or military service
- Stability of employment
- Fair hours of work
- Adequate compensation
- Just right of appeal

February brings to us their birthdays. But every day brings to us the inspiration of their lives, their hopes and their accomplishments. Let us not disappoint them. They wished the Nation to endure. They labored and sacrificed and died that it might stand for unselfish, humane ideals. Public service affords still the greatest opportunity open to mankind for high achievement and noble living. We have but to remember that "He who would be the greatest among you must be the servant of all."

Simplify and Clarify This Law

Wherever it is necessary to circumvent wrong or injustice, or, to put it in a positive way, to assure that right shall prevail, a clear, simple law is plainly the best remedy which society knows how to apply.

The civil service law, following out the good employment principles of thousands of years, sets it down as just that when it becomes necessary for economic or other reasons to abolish a position that the old and faithful employees who have borne all of the vicissitudes and trials of building up an office or a bureau or a department and who have sacrificed most to attain high efficiency to serve shall be the last to be dismissed. In other words, the State through this law recognizes the age-old principle that seniority in service coupled with loyalty and efficiency should win the reward of continuity of service.

State departments under the stress of economy are passing through the ordeal of many changes in personnel, changes which involve not only dismissals but demotions. In the matter of demotions, the letter of the present law is silent as to seniority. There is not the slightest doubt in the mind of any thought-giving person but that the spirit of the civil service law founded upon universally good practices in personnel administration, public and private, justifies the application of the principle of seniority in demotions as well as in dismissals. Without such an interpretation the black hand of religious, racial, political or personal intolerance reaches in to replace recognition of faithfulness with unfair privilege and special favor. Appeals to the courts would, we are sure, uphold the Association's contention that seniority is the only proper basis for demotion as it is for dismissal. But appeals to the courts are costly. There is no

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Forward or Backward?

C. C. Colesanti, President, State Hospital Employees

The State of New York can no more stand still and fill its niche in the ways and duties of government than can the individual fail to develop to meet his responsibilities in the things of life. In government as in life it is a case of progress or disintegration.

Is the State of New York opposed to the New and Square Deal? Does the State of New York wish to take the position of an obstructionist in relation to the principles involved in National Recovery? Is the State of New York to stand with reactionaries, in the matter of institutional hours of labor?

The question—"Shall the State of New York take the socially good, economically sound, and morally right action and provide definitely in the law of the State that men and women shall not be required to work abnormally long hours in State institutions?" is now squarely up to the Legislature through bills introduced in the Senate and the Assembly at the urgent plea of this Association. And in their treatment of these bills the Legislature says yes or no to the fundamental question as to the position of the commonwealth on the proposition of a square deal for labor generally.

Senator Wagner's clearcut statement on another page of this issue exposes the actual hypocrisy of public laxity in this matter. Warden Lawes' practical viewpoint contained in last month's issue is important because it comes from a man with as great experience in and as patriotic loyalty to State service as that of any living citizen. Senator Desmond and Assemblyman Ostertag have called for an aroused public interest and expression because of the apparent justice and wisdom of the plan as a State policy.

We are beholding monumental efforts by the President and the National Administration along lines actually necessary to preserve our Democratic form of government. Wilson declared war "To make the World Safe for Democracy." Good citizens are now engaged in a fight to make the United States safe for Democracy. No one of rational sense doubts the seriousness of the issue.

In the truthful analysis of present hopes, unselfish statesmen of all beliefs and faiths understand

the need for starting at the base of society if we are to build for permanent good. It is again the individual, the family, the community, that must be made prosperous if the larger structure of business and industrial life is to serve its honest purpose. And the prosperity of "the forgotten man" and the forgotten man's family will not be complete or ever permanently useful until it is certain that those in positions of power seek consistently and progressively to promote rational living conditions and opportunities for better and better home and social life.

The long day in State service is unfair to the State, and a distressing example to business and industry. With thousands of citizens without work and with millions being spent to assure them employment, other thousands of citizens work twelve hours or longer each day, and have not suitable home or social life. Marriage, children, desirable home conditions and the maintenance of decent standards of family life, are made difficult or impossible.

This Association believes that the money voted by the people for unemployment relief will afford such relief if used for permanent construction at State institutions and thus make possible the establishment of a maximum eight hour day, with the permanent employment of several thousand worthy citizens at an additional insignificant annual outlay. Every cent expended by the taxpayers in this work would return to them many fold through increased purchases and business activity within the State.

The maximum eight hour law is a vital necessity to the preservation of the honor and well-being of the State. With the passage of this bill, if it is deemed necessary, let us have a planning commission or agency composed of progressive citizens, to study and devise a suitable and economically sound plan for home building for institution workers. The two go hand in hand. The facts are now in the open. What will New York State do about it?

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Expediency Must Not Defeat Justice

This Association, while dedicated primarily to things related to State service, and holding firmly to this principle, is pledged by the common cause of salaried people in every walk of life, public and private, to raise its voice always for fair play and humane and enlightened consideration of employee interests.

The reorganization of government now contemplated for the City of New York cannot be truly successful unless it is founded upon a decent respect for the natural rights and the economic needs of its own servants.

Because of its concern for the welfare of the civil service, teachers, firemen, policemen and other workers of the City of New York, the Association addressed a strong appeal to every Senator and Assemblyman in the Legislature on January 20th, and has exerted and shall continue to exert all proper efforts, to safeguard the incomes and civil service status of these municipal workers. The letter to members of the Legislature follows:

"This Association looks with grave concern upon any legislation relating to the salaries of New York City workers which does not contain specific safeguarding of fair and adequate scales of pay.

"The rank and file of civil service employees in federal, state, city and county service, and the teachers, firemen, policemen and other employees doing the everyday work of government, have been paid very moderate salaries generally during the past years. As the years of high salaries continued in private employment, attention was given to increased compensation of judges, heads of departments, and various other groups in the higher grades of public service. When the depression began, this attention had not yet reached the lower paid public workers to any adequate degree.

"For this reason, it seems to be well within the province of sound economy and just treatment of civil

service employees that in making any necessary retrenchment in the budgets of New York City or other cities and units of State Government, the civil service employees, the teachers, the firemen and the policemen should be exempted from salary reductions, furloughs or other arrangements which would reduce their incomes now so badly needed to support themselves and their families and to continue the very substantial aid which they are extending to many thousands of the needy through personal care and contributions, as well as generous help extended to public charities. Nothing whatever can be gained by Nation, State or City in lowering the spending power of moderately paid salaried and wage-earning people. Taxes which go toward salaries of workers performing these essential services to society are inconsequential in the economy which citizens are demanding. The reduction of such salaries is directly opposed to the National Recovery program, the success of which is vital to the actual preservation of the fundamentals of our government.

"We earnestly protest the approval of any legislation which does not assure adherence to civil service principles of protection of the stability of employment, or which does not provide definitely for adequate salaries and sound pension plans. These matters, especially at this time, may not be left safely to hasty attention, however well meaning, nor to the mercy of political or personal expediencies. Dealing as they do with the human element and with the compensation of carefully chosen, efficient and able public servants, these considerations should be weighed very carefully. To do anything that would bring disrepute upon the State or the City by reason of an unwise employment policy would interfere greatly with fair play for workers in private industry also and react unfavorably upon the whole plan for recovery.

"Sincerely yours,

"W. F. McDONOUGH,

"President, The Association of State Civil Service Employees"



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The New Deal for Institution Workers

An outstanding friend and champion of fair play and sound social policies in the United States, United States Senator Robert F. Wagner, Chairman of the Labor Board, in a letter to the President of this Association on January 6th, 1934, gave unqualified endorsement to the maximum eight hour day policy for institution workers of this State, as advocated by the Association for the past three years. The letter reads:

"I cannot refrain from expressing briefly my interest in the reduction of the working hours of the State civil service employees in New York and elsewhere. There has always seemed to me to be a fundamental incompatibility between the efforts being made by the Government to induce private employers to reduce hours and the persistence of excessively long hours in the Government service. There is no reason why any employee in the United States should have to work more than eight hours a day. And I think that in the vast majority of cases an even shorter working day should be speedily sought.

"I assure you that I am always ready to participate in any rational campaign for the reduction of working hours.

Very truly yours,

"ROBERT F. WAGNER."

A Successful Campaign

Officers and members of the Committees and Counsel of this Association, who labored so tirelessly to prevent the cuts in salaries of State employees receiving less than \$2,000, which reductions were urged by a majority of the members of the Budget Advisory Committees, were highly pleased with the action of Governor Lehman in recommending to the Legislature that no reductions be made below \$2,000.

Members of the Association who took a personal interest in seeking to advise against such reductions, and there were very many who acted on advice contained in the Special Bulletin sent by Association headquarters to every office and institution in the State immediately upon obtaining copy of the Budget Advisory Committee's report, have every right to feel that they rendered a distinct service to themselves and to every employee of the State.

When the thirty thousand employees of the State acting solidly and unitedly, and aided by their families and friends, exert themselves on behalf of a sound or just proposal or in protest of an unfair or uneconomic public action, they cannot fail to be successful to the de-

gree where success is possible. Scarcely a member of the committee of the Association which spent three hours with the Governor arguing against such cuts, and proposing restoration of salaries reduced last year and provision for increased living costs during the seventeen or eighteen months ahead, would have been affected by the proposed six per cent reduction in salaries below \$2,000, but this made no difference in zeal and ardor with which they fought this proposal. This is the sort of accomplishment which is possible only where the State employees everywhere throughout the service and in every branch of the service are united in spirit and in action, not selfishly within the confines of their own department, profession or group, but singly and with one mind for the good of all.

A single state-wide, all state employee association, with every employee enrolled as a member, with an unselfish program devoted to improvement of the fundamental policies of selection, promotion, compensation, retirement, continuity and stability of service, and due protection against removal, is the intelligent and only practical employee way of meeting present and future problems of State employees.

"Will the Salary Dollars Suffice?"

This headline is similar to one in the last issue of THE STATE EMPLOYEE. The question asked is just as serious now, and it has not been answered by the Governor's budget requests. The cost of living and price trends covered in the Association's booklet issued in November, have not changed materially as yet. There is every indication, however, that they will advance. Budget provisions for salaries of New York State employees cover a period of twelve months from July 1st next. "Will the Salary Dollar suffice?" or in other words will it enable the State worker to pay his bills, meet his obligations, during the long period ahead when under present provisions he could not possibly get any relief though the cost of living doubled or trebled?

The Salary Committee of this Association urged upon Governor Lehman that he include in the budget a sum of sufficient size to care for increased living costs to the extent that they might affect State workers, permitting the Governor and heads of the Legislative Finance Committees to increase the salaries of workers by five, ten, fifteen or whatever other percentages the well established and carefully compiled indices of living costs showed to be fair during the coming fifteen months. Taxes would have to be provided for this contingency fund, but if the needs of the situation did not demand increases, the State would not have to expend any of the sum so provided and there could be no possible abuse or loss of public funds to the State.

It is felt by the Association that Governor Lehman left the way open to legislative action along this line when he cited in his message the lack of power to foretell with even fair accuracy what the price level of commodities will be over the next eighteen months. This frank observation on the part of the Governor carries full appreciation of the contention of this Association that the arbitrary fixing of State employees' incomes so long in advance is out of line with common sense and with any possible capacity to meet new price or cost of living conditions. The flexible contingent fund, to be used only when required and justified, is a simple, straight-forward, business-like way of meeting the situation.

Your Salary Committee will urge this plan with all possible vigor upon

the Governor and the Legislature during the weeks that the Legislature is in session. The estimated financial condition of the State is such that the appropriation required would not be burdensome. The plan and the appropriation could be cared for in a measure supplementing the annual budget bill.

Useful Monuments

The present needs of State institutions call for a building program. To care for an increasing number of patients and a maximum eight hour day, the State requires new construction. Elsewhere in this issue we have cited the desirability of individual homes built by the State, perhaps to be paid for by the employees throughout their years of service; homes which would make possible good living conditions and promote efficient service and a fine community life.

But the pertinent point to this article is the unemployment relief possible through such building. Including the \$60,000,000 approved by the people at the last election, the State's total for unemployment relief will reach \$110,000,000. Lacking wise planning and efficient direction of effort, this money will be expended largely without any substantial permanent monument remaining. On the other hand, if legal ways are provided, the needed buildings can be erected and one of the greatest practical needs of the State satisfied. At the same time skilled and unskilled workers in great numbers will find employment. Further than this it will be inspiring employment; all workers will be builders, creators, of useful and lasting things.

Will the wording of legal phrases or community selfishness deprive the State of this splendid opportunity to use at least a part of the new \$60,000,000? We do not believe that any citizen would wish this, and we urge civil service workers to contact their representatives in the Legislature, and the Governor, to plead for such utilization of the funds as they are needed for state institution building. This is of especial importance to those workers in the divisions of government where the building activities would bring additional employment and where employees are now threatened by lack of appropriations for State construction. Your Association is giving this matter earnest attention.

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State Employees' Retirement System

F. B. Holmes, Director, N. Y. State Employees Retirement System

There is considerable newspaper talk at this time due partly to the changes of administration in the different municipalities. These changes have been followed by a few retirements of higher paid officials.

The granting of service rendered prior to first date of eligibility to membership in the Retirement System free of charge, which has happened when all systems were established, is one of the material factors in producing large retirement allowances. Sometime in the comparatively near future all of the service granted to members of all retirement systems free of charge will have become a thing of the past. Some argue that those with large salaries should not be eligible to membership in the retirement systems. This seems to have no weight when one will eliminate the free of charge credit for prior service.

For example, let us say that an employee is appointed by the State at age 25. Some day he may be disabled or become too old to work and however remote that time may seem when he commences work, the State immediately begins to make provision for it. Let us say that his salary is \$100 per month. Immediately after appointment, he must begin to contribute 4.37 per cent of his salary to the Retirement System to provide for his own retirement. Immediately the State begins to contribute 3.09 per cent of his salary to provide for his retirement. These two contributions are paid to the Retirement System and are set aside until he leaves the service. If he resigns he is entitled to a return of his own contributions with interest but he gets no part of the State's contribution. If he is disabled, dies or reaches old age in State service, he is entitled to benefits from the Retirement System. The benefits vary in amount depending on the age of the employee, his salary and the years he serves the

public.

This shows that when the prior service credit has all been paid for and out of the way, the cost of operating the New York State Employees' Retirement System will be about 7½ per cent of pay roll, the greater part of which is paid for by the employee. This is not true relative to all retirement systems and for this reason all retirement systems are at the present time before the public eye and are subject to criticism.

There are no retirement systems in and for and about the state in the municipalities operated at a lesser rate per cent than the New York State Employees' Retirement System. Some of the systems, if they were on as sound a basis as is the New York State Employees' Retirement System, would cost anywhere from 15 to 30 per cent of pay roll for operation, with such per cent always on the increase. This means that, sometime, the systems, if they continue to operate, will cost more than 100 per cent of pay roll. Yet the New York State Employees' Retirement System for member service costs 7½ per cent of pay roll, with no thought of the same increasing but a definite plan that the same will be reduced to one-half the present cost. In most of the localities of the state, studies are being made of pension plans that appear too expensive.

Our System, the State Employees' Retirement System, can stand inspection and its reasonableness can be defended at all times.

Relative to the talk about maximum retirement allowances, where is the line to be drawn on salary factors for retirement purposes? If the member contributes 4.37 per cent of salary himself on a \$1,000 salary while the State contributes 3.09 per cent on the same salary and for the same member, is it not reasonable that a member on a \$1,500 salary should be permitted to contribute his proportionate amount, and likewise on a \$2,000 salary and a \$3,000 salary, and so on? Where would the line be drawn? Furthermore, when it is a fact that only one-third of one per cent of the 3,000 annuitants of the State Employees' Retirement System receive a retirement allowance over \$2,500 per year, even a consideration that salaries over \$12,000 shall not be used as salary factors in determining retirement allowance would have such an inappreciable effect on the appropriations requested from the State that the expert would not recognize that a reduction had been made.

Give Non-Competitive Class, Competitive Class Protection

This Association believes that whatever of virtue attaches to laws and rules affecting the State workers now listed in the **Competitive Class** should apply to those in the **Non-Competitive Class**. It has so stated on previous occasions and has sought support of this proposal from civil service groups in the various branches of the service. Obviously, inasmuch as the present situation exists and has existed for a number of years, there are reasons why the non-competitive class was first established and since continued.

The way to action is to bring all facts into the open. The Association has written to the State Civil Service Commission as per the following letter, and will advise through these columns what steps are taken and what aid can be rendered by workers generally toward extending greater civil service protection to the over 11,000 State employees now listed in the non-competitive class.

"State Civil Service Commission,
"Albany, N. Y.

"Dear Sirs:

"This Association believes that all protective features of civil service law and regulations should extend to all classes of permanent civil servants of the State. The large group of employees now listed as non-competitive and without protection of seniority rights or any guaranty as to hearing or opportunity to present their viewpoint in cases of removals, indicates an obvious shortcoming in civil service functioning and one at variance with seemingly just general employment practices.

This is a plea for consideration by your Commission of the proposal to extend the good inherent in the rules and administrative practices now applying to the competitive class to the non-competitive class. If new laws are needed, if new rules are required, will you not initiate or propose them, to the end that all civil servants of the State may enjoy the maximum of protection under sound employment practices, and the State be placed in the forefront of progressive employers both public and private with reference to all of its civil servants.

"Sincerely yours,

"W. F. McDONOUGH,
"President."

Association Pleads for Restoration of Workers Scales of Pay

A committee of the State Hospital Employees Association including President C. C. Colesanti, Middletown; F. J. Keating, Vice President, Central Islip State Hospital; Lucy Baumgras, Secretary, Marcy State Hospital; H. Redmond, St. Lawrence State Hospital, and President W. F. McDonough, conferred with Dr. Parsons, head of the Mental Hygiene Department, and a number of members of the Legislature, on January 22 and 23, with regard to restoration of time service and other mandatory increments in hospital, social welfare, prison and other services. Steps were also taken to bring the matter again to the attention of the Governor and of the Director of the Budget. This Association believes that these increments constitute with present scales the actual salaries of the workers affected and that their suspension as increases is not therefore sound, and in many cases with these low paid employees it works a severe hardship.

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Publicity for Public Good

With the firm belief that full publicity of all facts relative to civil service examinations, appointments and promotions is a distinct aid to good civil service administration, this Association will answer all questions as to reasons for appointments or promotions or manner of selection or examination which are addressed to it covering any such matters from this time on. On receipt of any inquiries along these lines, it will call upon the State Civil Service Department to state its reasons for final action in the cases in question and will print the statements of the State Civil Service Department in THE STATE EMPLOYEE or in special bulletins issued by the Association. The records of the State Civil Service Department are open to the citizens of the State and there is no mystery surrounding any appointment, promotion or examination held for State service. Only inquiries relating to State civil service positions will be considered and only those affecting cases occurring from this time on.

Full, frank, accurate statements as to reasons for examinations, appointments and promotions are properly available. THE STATE EMPLOYEE goes into every library of the State. Every citizen is interested in the facts as to public functioning and public servants. High efficiency and high morale are the particular aims of the civil service system. They cannot be attained by back-door, grape-vine, fog-ridden practices. The best way to preserve the best sort of public service is to keep wholly in the open all matters relating to the personnel in public service, for it is upon the human element that the laws, the regulations, the machinery of government, and the ultimate success or failure of these to minister to public welfare, depend entirely.

Public Construction

The value to the State of a large construction program both as to buildings and highways is tremendous. This Association urges in the interest of every citizen of the State the great desirability of permanent construction in connection with temporary unemployment relief measures.

The Association is interested also from the standpoint of civil service employees in the various divisions of State government whose employment and consequent social and economic well being are dependent upon such a program. No selfishness attaches to frank and honorable approach to leaders and representatives in Federal and State Government in the interest of increased appropriations to carry on construction work of a necessary and permanent character, and which is as plainly for the interest of public welfare as is this.

It is strongly urged that you write or wire immediately to your representatives in the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives urging strongly that conditions warrant a further grant for highway construction in the Nation of \$400,000,000, with allotment to New York State on the basis established in the case of the similar previous grant last fall. This would enable the employment of very many unemployed persons throughout 1935. Unless this is done it is estimated that 1,000,000 men will be thrown out of work by September 1st of this year.

This matter is of tremendous importance to the engineers and others engaged in highway work. In addition to your personal plea to your United States Senators and Representatives in Congress, your association will file a similar plea at once. All State civil service employees may well join in this effort regardless of whether affected directly by the final decision or not. This is truly a great public welfare need at this time and all should stand unitedly for it.

Simplify and Clarify This Law

Continued from Page 1

good served by obliging the worker to go to court to secure a naturally recognized right.

The bill in question is an important one, exceedingly important. Without it the grape vine route to dismissals is wide open. Curtailment of State functioning at present in progress in certain lines but emphasizes the merits of the bill, the important section of which reads:

"Whenever, for reasons of economy, curtailment of activities or otherwise, a person holding a position in the competitive class of the state service is, through no inability or fault of his own, reduced in class, rank or salary grade, such reduction shall be made in the inverse order of original appointment in the service and he shall have his name entered upon a preferred list, together with those who, as heretofore provided in this section, may have been separated from the same or similar position or any other position having the same or similar requirements for entrance." State employees must get back of this bill to insure that its importance is understood.

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Over one hundred and fifty members of the Department of Public Works staff of District No. 8, gathered in the Campbell House, Poughkeepsie, on the evening of January 24th, exchanged greetings, enjoyed a good dinner, sang many songs, heard praise of their work from District Engineer Bixby, and were urged to cooperative effort by G. C. Noble, President of the local group and W. F. McDonough, President of the Association of State Civil Service Employees, in the interest of good State service and good employment practices generally.

It is doubtful if any more intelligent or progressive group of citizens could be gathered together than this Public Works Department group. With the loyalty to public service and to superior officers evidenced by this large body of professional and highly skilled workers, New York State may be justly pleased.

Association Urges Healthful Activities

Sincere praise is due to the progressive and energetic groups throughout the State service who have sufficient initiative and energy to organize and conduct the various athletic activities conducive to good health and that vigorous spirit attendant upon wholesome physical exercise.

In Albany and among many groups of State employees throughout the service, basket ball, bowling, boxing and other sports are in progress. An Association interdepartmental basket ball league is affording weekly pleasure to many State employees. A picked team representing the Association will play the unbeaten Hudson River State Hospital team on February 17th at Poughkeepsie.

In a spirit of constructive criticism, the Association suggests that executive and administrative leaders of State work may benefit the morale and consequently the fruits of daily work if they will give active support to the present limited amount of athletic activity within State service. Here is an opportunity for investment in the employees' field which will bring good results.

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Education Activities of Association Assure Better State Service

Economical and efficient carrying on of public functioning is the concern of every State employee. Any organized effort on the part of public workers that does not have this goal as its highest objective, fails in its vision and will fail ultimately in any program for employee betterment. Stability of employment, advancement in service, adequate compensation, and desirable working conditions are possible only where the business conducted is on a sound and efficient basis. The State's business is the business of every citizen, but it is peculiarly the anxiety of the State employee.

If the State employee will think and act intelligently with regard to his or her own efficiency in the operation of the machinery of public service, the happy results from the functioning of that machinery will not be in doubt. Good government depends upon the merit and fitness of the entire personnel, and the personnel depends more than anything else upon its attention to advancement and progress along the lines of greater efficiency. The slogan in the future as in the present, will be "Quality in public service".

This Association is proud of the splendid response on the part of hundreds of employees in the Albany area toward the Syracuse University Extension courses established by the Association and now entering their second semester of the year. It is likewise proud of the hundreds of individuals throughout the State who, hearkening to the urgings of the Association, have taken up local university extension courses or correspondence courses to the end that they may better serve the great State of New York and more surely merit the rewards which must eventually come to public and private workers under a new and square deal.

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Uniform Sick Leave

As stated in the last issue of THE STATE EMPLOYEE, the matter of extending the uniform sick leaves proposed by the Governor's cabinet to all branches of State service, was referred to Governor Lehman in conference with the Governor on December 22nd, 1933, and cited in communication left with him on that date. The plea was made that the uniform rules be established as the minimum in all departments.

No action has been taken by the Governor on this question so far as the Association is informed. The State Civil Service Department has no jurisdiction as to sick leaves. The matter is entirely in the Governor's hands. The desirability of some generally applicable minimum sick leaves, with flexibility to permit administrative and executive heads greater privileges in extreme cases, was apparently the motive inspiring the action of the Governor's cabinet at the time the question was first considered. One of the grave shortcomings where there is lack of uniform minimum sick leave allowances is that single departments or bureaus of State government may actually reduce the salary of an employee to the extent that he is absent because of illness over which he has no control.

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Next to the Public School

Theodore Roosevelt believed that the civil service system of selection and direction of public personnel was—"as democratic and American as the common-school system itself." Grover Cleveland thought likewise.

Are we ready to abandon the civil service system? Does the dark shadow of the "spoils system" threaten the success of the President's great program? This fear was expressed by the National Civil Service Reform League in June last. The January issue of *The Forum* carries such subheads in a long article on the subject of bureaucracies and civil service in the National Administration as, "Sabotage of Civil Service," "Plum Pudding" and "Planned Plunder."

When the civil service system weakens, the Government itself weakens. Luther C. Steward, President of the Federal Civil Service Employees wrote in November: "Serious inroads are being made into the merit system by spoilsmen representing the largest army of political job hunters in the history of the Nation."

Every man who applies for work in the recovery activities is not a Franklin D. Roosevelt. For this reason an orderly system of selection of personnel on basis of merit should prevail. The President, Congress, well written laws, do not create men. Only God can do that. But men can select the best fitted to do the work of our millions of citizens who wait helplessly the outcome of the recovery program. The only known practical and successful way to select the men and women who can render the highest type of service is through a well planned, entirely politics-free civil service system. Some of the greatest men in the Nation's history worked long and zealously to bring this great gift to the people. There is no mystery about the civil service system. Thousands of instances in Nation and State, and lesser jurisdictions, have proved beyond a doubt that the civil service system is the common-sense, business-like, honest way of choosing and directing public personnel.

As citizens of New York State we are still part of the United States and as much interested in good Federal administration in Washington and other parts of the country as we are in New York State. And do not think that the

hand of greed and partisanship may not reach out to stultify our own State's civil service system. Already there are threats and rumors of it.

What can the State Civil Service employee do about it? He can prevent it if he will. He knows the need of equal opportunity in qualifying for public service. He can point out this need to his family, to his intimate friends, to his neighbors, to his fellows in every club and organization in the State, to his church heads, to his representatives in executive, legislative and administrative branches. Every single youth in the State has in any weakening of civil service a direct menace to himself and to his government because the civil service system well conducted is the only known guarantee that exists that the young men and women of the State will have a free and equal opportunity to qualify for public service regardless of their political affiliations, their racial inheritances, or the church in which they worship. The civil service system is the very foundation of good, clean, honest, efficient government. The stain of scandal often found in public works does not rest upon the civil service group. The continuity of good government in times of political change depends entirely upon the civil service employee. And only the most uninformed of political leaders will fail to recognize that the civil service employee chosen upon his merit and successful in his work is the greatest political asset that any political party can possess.

Begin your personal campaign today and take active part in supporting the civil service system, and the State Civil Service Department, in the interest of good government and decent public personnel administration.

If our civil service system needs improvement—and this Association feels that it must be continuously alert to the possibility for improvement—or, if the administration set up is not the most efficient form—then let these matters be treated openly and frankly by the friends of good government and not in the counsels of those who oppose the civil service system because it interferes with selfish personal or political ambitions.

Your constructive criticism on these points will be of help to your officers and committees. Let us have them now.



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Civil Service System

Continued from Page 1

system was recently attested by Professor Lindsay Rogers, one of the President's advisors, who in an address delivered in Albany, stated that civil service employees might well have been called upon to take over many emergency functions to which less well equipped men and women were called. Commenting editorially upon these observations by Professor Rogers, The Albany Knickerbocker Press said:

"There is a tendency to disparage the work of civil service employees, of whatever rank or department. This is perhaps the mental hangover of the era of a complete spoils system, in which competence was incidental to appointment. But the new requirements for given posts indicate that most modern appointments follow the application of fairly rigid examinations. The result is a gathering of men and women whose competence is beyond serious challenge. In the research posts, particularly in the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, Interior, Labor and Justice, professional ability is of a high standard."

"It is of particular interest to have a member of the NRA, an extra-civil service appointee, thus pay tribute to governmental employees of the regular branches. It is both a healthy and a decent thing to do."

Remarkable praise of civil service employees was made by Judge Coleman in connection with a recent trial for tax evasion in which the Government obtained a verdict of \$80,000. Said Judge Coleman: "The government employees, men on small salaries, who unquestionably could have received fabulous sums of money had

they been willing to deviate from strict lines of duty, accomplished the collection of this evidence. As to the government it is my firm conviction that never in this court nor in any other court has there been such fine work done, either on behalf of the government or on behalf of any private client."

The great mass of State work falls to civil service employees and the commendation of Governor Lehman in his recent budget message was fully merited. Said the Governor: "I feel it both a personal responsibility and a public duty to bring this fine spirit of loyalty (of State workers) to the attention of your Honorable Bodies and of the citizens and taxpayers of the State."

The crisis in economic affairs has not passed. As nothing so lessens human respect for government as inefficiency on the part of those in public service upon whom the rank and file of citizens rely, so nothing so strengthens confidence and wins support of government as the ability, courtesy, and unselfish interest which are natural attributes of the civil service employee who has won his appointment in a fair and square way through competitive qualifying tests.

Civil service employees should study the underlying principles and the everyday practices of the civil service system, and lose no opportunity in their various clubs, among their friends and acquaintances and through any publicity they have available to urge public support of the system and of the State Civil Service Department. To assure watchfulness of the preservation of good, clean civil service, if for no other reason, employees should rally to the aid of their own Association, which has done and is doing so much to win respect for civil service.

Albany Employees Can Help

One of our readers asks us to call attention to the Child's Hospital where there are numerous children afflicted with infantile paralysis and other physical disabilities. These little folk are in need of entertainment and greatly appreciate any small gift. So if you have any toys, dolls, children's books or picture puzzles and will deliver them to Sister Lydia at the Child's Hospital, Cor. North Hawk and Elk Street, Albany, it will do much to pass the time and help them return to normalcy. The institution is non-sectarian and free to those unable to pay. Adult visitors are welcome, visiting hours being from 2 to 3.

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