

Personnel administration in our State is a big job and calls for technical competence, as well as understanding of the problems involved. There are more than 5,500 State employees in the classified service, of whom 589 have been added since I became Governor. It is in the interest of this large number of employees that the Merit System functions. They are thereby assured of permanency, as long as they perform their duties creditably. There is thus produced an incentive for good work and, in addition, an incentive that they make a career of this service. I have realized full well that greater efficiency would result from State employees if they were not compelled to worry about whether their positions were in jeopardy for political reasons.

Accordingly, you have not heard during this administration, of cases where employees have been moved around from one part of the State to another, at serious inconvenience to themselves, for the thinly veiled purpose of forcing their separation from the service. You have not heard of State employees being hounded in order to force their resignations, under the present administration. And I intend that you shall not hear it.

I propose that, under our administration, no advantage will be taken to use any loop-holes in the Merit System law or its rules to exclude qualified persons from the State service.

I, also, am determined that our administration shall adhere to the intent of the law, which in its essence provides for an orderly inquiry into the qualifications of applicants for State service and protection of employees in their positions as long as they discharge their duties in a competent manner. I said before that the operation of the Merit System is in the interest of State employees but there is, also, another consideration. I desire to add, with emphasis, that its operation is, also, in the interest of the taxpayers who are paying the salaries of us all. With the protection and safeguards that are afforded to employees of the classified service it must be borne in mind that there is a corresponding duty and responsibility. The public is entitled to receive faithful and efficient service from you. The higher you raise the level of public service the more credit will there be to attachment to the service.

Let us be careful in carrying out the intent, as well as the letter of the law, that no interference be given department heads in personnel administration within their respective agencies. Every effort should be made so to conduct the administration of the law that employees will feel responsible to their departmental and institutional heads. Transfer of allegiance to any other official or outside interest does not, in my judgment, make for good administration.

I have taken occasion to state the intent and purposes which I had in this regard, upon assuming the Governorship. I think it in order to cite just what has been accomplished in order that it might be realized whether we meant what we said. Not by way of boasting but simply as a factual report, let me cite the following accomplishments since January 11, 1939, as proof that we are sincere advocates of the Merit System:

1. Extension of the Merit System to approximately 600 employees of the Unemployment Compensation Board, bringing the total of State classified employees to well over 5,500.

2. Passage of a Salary Standards Act, passed on the principle of "Equal salary for equal work," and the appointment of a Board to place it in effect.