

MERIT SYSTEM.

Chapter 559 (House Bill 240). Upon the passage by the General Assembly of House Bill 240, providing for a change in the set-up of the office of State Employment Commissioner, I decided that the best way to arrive at a proper conclusion was to approach the consideration of the entire matter with calmness, deliberation and without haste. Inasmuch as the law was not intended to be effective before June 1st, it was apparent to me that no useful purpose would be served by rushing or hastening to a conclusion. On the other hand, I felt that time given to sober reflection and review, after the more strenuous days of the Legislature, would be well spent.

I have adhered to this course and during the intervening period I have obtained data from many other States, as well as the Federal Government, concerning their set-up for the administration of Civil Service laws. I have also analyzed, to the best of my ability, the situation in this State and have undertaken to estimate the possible benefits or losses to the Merit System, which might follow from executive approval or disapproval of this measure.

In announcing my present decision I wish to state emphatically that I am not repudiating the action of members of the General Assembly who voted for this proposed change. Neither am I reflecting upon their motives, because my investigation discloses that the particular type of system which they would have instituted is working satisfactorily in other States.

Nor do I think that the members of the Legislature and other persons who favored this proposed change were intent upon "scrapping" the Merit System. Quite to the contrary, they have proven to my satisfaction that they want to uphold the Merit System because they have suggested that if the Bill were approved a Commission composed of men of the type of Charles H. Baetjer, William J. Casey, William L. Rawls and Richard F. Cleveland should be appointed, thus assuring the administration of our Civil Service Law on an undoubtedly high plane.

I am persuaded, however, that such a drastic change, as proposed in this measure, would receive an unfair test unless it were backed at the outset by the controlling power of public opinion. Such general support, if a change were desirable, will only come if this proposal receives the most careful and painstaking study, with public discussions and a full disclosure of all phases of the questions involved. It must be demonstrated that the change is not to be made for political reasons and that no attempt is being projected to reinstate the "spoils system." Our people are too far advanced in the administration of public affairs to give approval to any change