1935

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JANUARY, 1935

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Governor Lehman Hears State Employees

On December 17th, a joint committee of this Association composed of W. F. McDonough, Dr. Frank L. Tolman, Department of Education; J. Scott Nichols, Dept. of Audit and Control; Daniel E. Bellows, Dept. of Labor; Charles L. Campbell, Dept. of Civil Service; C. C. Colesanti, President of Dept. of Mental Hygiene Employees, presented to Governor Lehman at a lengthy session in the Executive Chamber, a comprehensive plan for constructive improvement of State personnel administration. Director of the Budget, Abraham S. Weber, and Counsel to the Governor, Charles Poletti, were present.

Each matter covered in the following memorandum was gone over carefully, the Governor asking many questions and joining in sympathetic consideration of the problems involved. No commitments were made by the Governor as to his final action on any of the matters presented. The following is a resume of the Association's suggestions, all of which is hoped Governor Lehman will progress favorably during the coming year:

1. Revision of the State Civil Service Law to provide fully for classification of all positions within the State service on a duties-responsibilities basis, which classification to be administered by the State Civil Service Commission.

2. Immediate attention to the strengthening of civil service administration by:
   (a) Provision for additional personnel and organization to properly care for classification-compensation and personnel questions.
   (b) Extension of competitive civil service classification to all employees in the State service excepting elective officers.
   (c) Revision of civil service rules so as to modernize civil service practices as to provisional and temporary appointments and to eliminate obsolete and contradictory provisions.

(d) Revision of examination procedure to assure that practical training and experience are considered in all ratings.

3. Clarification of State Civil Service Law to assure that principle of credit for seniority is applied in all cases of dismissals and demotions.

4. Restoration of salaries to basis effective in March, 1933.

5. Restoration of time service and other increments to employees of State Institutions.

Rates of Pay in State Service

By Beulah Bailey, President

How should rates of pay be determined in state service? Should we today, as we did in the past, rely upon the doctrine of each person looking out for himself, with the devil getting the hindmost; shall we depend upon the interest shown in us by our chief, with the hope that he will come to our budgetary aid; should it be written into the law that after so many months of service we should automatically receive an increase, or is there a better way?

These three ways have been tried and are being tried in our state service. Two decades ago the first method was in vogue and was most efficacious for the few. The lump sum appropriations in the absence of a budget made the first two methods workable. A few were in a position to profit but not the many. With the advent of the line budget these methods today are not so workable even for the few.

The third method is mandatory, statutory increases. Fifteen years ago this method seemed to the civil service employees as the one answer to this question of "pay rates." It would do away with the person with political influence getting everything and the worker with no influence getting nothing. Neither would the personal likes or dislikes of the office head play such an important part. For twenty years this Association supported groups working for mandatory increases, with what results? Today we have mandatory increases set up for certain groups but for thousands in the rank and file of service there are no definite scales. And these cases of mandatory increases apply only when the state's finances permit; for two years they have been waived.

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Rates of Pay
Continued from Page 3

Today we feel there is a better method of pay rates. A method that will provide equitable rates of pay, fair alike to the civil service employee, the administration and to society. This method is a “Classification and Compensation Plan.” This appears as the only constructive plan that will be of assistance to state employees of the rank and file.

To make such a plan possible, positions must first be classified on the basis of the duties and responsibilities of their incumbents. Jointly with such a classification must be established a pay plan, a schedule of pay for each class of positions. In determining these pay rates there must be taken into account such factors as rates paid in the past, rates for identical or similar work in other public jurisdictions and in the commercial world, the opportunity or lack of opportunity for promotion, etc.

Let us suppose that such a pay plan is established. Take a food inspector for example. The monthly rates may be fixed at $150—$160—$170—$180—$190. This means that the new food inspector is normally employed at the start at $150 a month; that no food inspector is paid more than $190 a month; and that the rate between $150 and $190 is determined by two factors—length of service and proficiency in the performance of work. The $150 rate is for the new food inspector who has “the makings” but no more. When he has served a certain length of time and gained in proficiency due to his experience on the job, but not until he meets both requirements, is he to be raised to the next higher rate of $160. If, as sometimes happens, he fails to profit by his experience and does not gain in proficiency, then no matter how long he serves he deserves no increase, and is given none. Normally, however, a person does gain in proficiency and from time to time has his pay increased until he reaches the top rate.

In brief, the reason for the graduated schedule of pay is to take account of differences within the limits fixed, of differences in proficiency. The least proficient person retained in the service gets the lowest rate, the most proficient the highest rate. Making advances without regard to improved work is contrary to the system of merit and fitness, which is part of our constitution. It is in this factor that the compensation plan differs from the mandatory, statutory plan.

We need not here go into what has been accomplished and what has not been accomplished. We at least have made a start. As we all know, the classification legislation was vetoed, since that time title changes have been made a part of the appropriation bill. But the classification, such as it was, was accompanied by no compensation plan, no provision was made for administration. For this reason criticism of the complete plan is not pertinent; the desired plan has never been tried.

We all know that changes do come slowly. Someday we are going to have a “just compensation plan,” a plan that will set up proper provisions for those entering the service and protect the status of those already in the service; and the status of those groups who are already functioning under statutes providing for mandatory statutory increases. Such a plan has worked out in the Federal government, why can it not in our state?

Shall we as state employees cooperate in securing properly conceived legislation which would in time make this plan possible, or shall we act as individuals or groups and let our vision be limited by our present personal interest with no thought of the future. As we look in retrospect upon the so-called “classification” as we have or do not have today, we can see that some of its most glaring faults are resultant from pressure brought to bear by certain interested groups.

What we want is a properly designed and administered “Classification and Compensation Plan.” Shall we work together to get it or shall we work separately; lose what we have and return to “those days when political considerations and selfish pulling and hauling were the ways to determine pay rates?”

Looking Ahead
W. F. McDonough

Note—The comments which will appear in this column from time to time have not all been passed upon by the Association. Members of the Association are asked to comment upon any new proposals made and their letters or a synopsis of same will be published as far as space will permit.

Make No Mistake
Whether we agree that the Federation of Labor of the State of New York was right or wrong in failing to observe the pleb of the civil service workers that the Federation endorse the maximum eight-hour day project of the State hospital and prison workers as one of their own projects, we learn at least a plain truth and we learn it bluntly. The truth is that State workers must fight their own battles for good working conditions just as the private workers through the Federation are fighting their battles. No one is going to step out in front to bear the brunt of progressing matters of adequate salaries, fair hours, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, or any other problem of State workers while ten thousand State workers sit back in disgusting self-complacency, disregarding the fact that has become commonplace to every thinking person throughout the world, namely, that no group gets any recognition that is not intelligent enough to employ wise and thorough organization.

The National Government has preached organization for over two years to workers and to employers, and with success for the wise. Workers who fail to organize and to present their plans for economic and social betterment in a united way are condemned to as hopeless slavery as the helpless African negroes of years past.

How long will State civil service workers resist complete organization? How long will they cling to selfishness, and through it to uncertainty as to employment, living wages, retirement safeguarding, unemployment insurance? How long will they walk headlong in their own self-complacency, disregarding the fact that has become commonplace to every thinking person throughout the world, namely, that no group gets any recognition that is not intelligent enough to employ wise and thorough organization.

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Progress of the Albany Center of New York University

The first semester of the Albany Center of New York University is drawing to a close. The Center, sponsored by the Civil Service Employees Association in cooperation with New York University has offered a varied program, appealing to adults of different interests and diverse aims. This fall it was decided to start the Center with a relatively limited number of subjects for which there had been a definite demand, then, as and if, interest was evidenced in additional courses, they would be included in the succeeding programs. The range of subjects now offered extends from the purely practical, such as Accounting and Study of Statistics, to those that provide for a more enjoyable use of leisure, such as Modern Literature.

The enrollment this first term indicates that many here in the Capitol District are eager to enjoy the benefit of New York University supervised instruction conveniently at hand. There is afforded an opportunity to broaden one’s horizon and develop abilities to find in daily living interests and enthusiasms that color our existence and make it an interesting and purposeful experience. It is truly said that “Knowledge is Power” even though the Power be no more than a better equipment for the encounter with the emergencies that this life is sure to bring.

Registration for the second term will be from Saturday, January 26th, to Saturday, February 2nd, both inclusive, in the State Capitol, Room 155. In order to attend the classes the second term, all students, both new and old, must register during registration week and pay the fee required. Registration fee is $5 per course, one semester.

The following courses are open to new students for the second term. In these it is not necessary to have a knowledge of the first term’s work in order to intelligently follow and enjoy the second term meetings.

**General Art**—This is open to both inexperienced and experienced art students. Class is divided into groups and comment and instruction given as the abilities shown require.

**Business English**—Remedial English grammar exercises, essentials of letter writing—reports—are some of the subjects to be covered.

Both **Elementary and Advanced Interior Decorating.**

**Modern Literature** — Survey of English and American novel and drama from 1895 to the present.

**Psychology**—A brief review of the first term’s work will be given at the beginning of the second semester.

**Better Speech and Public Speaking**—Permission to take these courses will be given new students who have sufficient background to be able to carry the work successfully.

Miss Slattery, New York University Resident Secretary, is at the office of the Civil Service Employees Association, Room 156, State Capitol (telephone 3-4610) every day, except during the period December 24th to January 2nd. She will be glad to answer any questions regarding the program and will welcome suggestions regarding the Center.

Unemployment Insurance

Recently the astounding statement was heard that civil workers would not be cared for as to unemployment insurance as would private employees in the case of adoption of a plan for compulsory unemployment insurance in this State.

By what mystical reasoning is this weird idea projected before a society intent upon perfecting a fair plan to deal with salaried and wage earning people? Does the unemployed one-time public worker and his dependent family survive upon some ethereal bread? Do the bodies of such need no protection from the elements? Do they not need a place to lay their heads at even tide?

Every citizen is a potential liability of the State—the worker in the military and civil arm of government as well as the worker in private fields.

Let state workers see to it that no selfishness writes a provision into the laws of the State of New York so ignominious or so unjust as to exclude public employees from the security of unemployment insurance.

New York City Chapter Elects Officers

At a regular meeting of members of this Association held at the State Building, 80 Centre Street, New York City, on Thursday, December 6, the following civil service employees were unanimously elected:

- **President**, Mr. John Ferguson, Department of Taxation and Finance.
- **Vice President**, Mr. J. P. Folkoff, Executive Department.
- **Secretary**, Miss M. J. Johnsen, Department of Social Welfare.

After a discussion as to ways and means of stimulating interest and activity amongst the civil service employees of the New York offices toward a 100% membership, it was finally determined to employ an Executive Secretary for a temporary period, at least, with a definite assigned place where information could be obtained, personal civil service matters taken up and the interest of the individual member be adequately served thereby.

At a committee meeting held in Room 887, State Office Building, New York City, December 13, 5:00 P.M., Miss Marjorie I. Hirsch was selected for the above position. She has the 1935 membership renewal cards already made out and is ready at all times to receive new members.
Visiting New York

Note—Much of the information contained in this article was furnished through the courtesy of Mr. Burdge, Advertising Manager of the Hotel Lincoln. The Hotel Lincoln is a popular stopping place for State employees visiting New York for short or long stays. This hotel has favored THE STATE EMPLOYEE with advertisement since its first issue.

Very frequently people who visit New York for the first time are embarrassed by its magnitude. They do not get the full benefit of its resources for pleasure or enlightenment.

Among the principal cultural points of interest are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Natural History, Museum of the City of New York, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, Trinity Church, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Riverside Drive Church.

Theatres abound around the Times Square section and tickets for these, hockey, etc., are best secured either by writing to friends in advance or through the ticket agency in the hotel where you are stopping. Radio Center which consists of a mammoth music hall and moving picture theatre, radio broadcasting studio, and the Center Theatre is now the most popular point of interest in the City.

Probably the most popular supper dance place at this time is The Hollywood with Rudy Vallee, which is not expensive and the entertainment is excellent. Special dress is not needed. Five dollars is a good estimate as to the average cost at most supper dance places as The Hollywood, which would include food and drinks. The Central Park Casino and the Place Piquale are smarter, more expensive and formal dress is required.

Dinner dancing and supper dancing at the Hotels Lincoln, Ambassador, Lexington, Commodore, Baltimore, Pennsylvania and New Yorker, where splendid orchestras change from time to time, is popular with many visitors. Dinner clothes are not required in most places for dinner or supper dancing. A dark business suit for the gentleman and traveling costume for the lady are alright. Dinner jacket for the man is appropriate for even the most "snooty" places and dinner gown and small hat for the lady.

Unescorted ladies may go to places to dine such as hotel dining rooms or to the Hollywood or other Broadway clubs for supper dancing. It is not advisable to go unescorted to the more smarter places. Women may not properly dance together in any public room.

Men without ladies are welcome at most places if reasonably quiet and do not attempt to pick up acquaintances. At some Broadway dance halls, which cannot be missed by reason of bright signs, men can pay ten cents a dance and professional hostesses are always on hand. Care as to undesirable acquaintances must be exercised by the visitor at such places.

The question of tips or gratuities is a worrisome one for many. One may feel entirely free and unembarrassed about this if they tip the waiter at supper clubs and hotels. Dining rooms a little more than ten per cent of the total bill, and if they give fifteen to twenty-five cents for checkroom, bell boy, and ordinary services of this type.

New York Harbor is one of the great and interesting places of the world. Sightseeing boats are available at the Battery, and a trip to the Statue of Liberty, or ferry trip to Staten Island from this point gives excellent opportunity to note the famous City "sky-line" view of Manhattan.
Governor Lehman
Hears State Employees

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6. Abolition of the long day in institutional service and substitution of maximum eight-hour day or forty-eight-hour week.

7. Establishment by the State by statute of a comprehensive compensation plan which would assure:
   (a) A minimum wage high enough to make possible a reasonable standard of living.
   (b) Salaries equal to normal rates paid by private business for similar work.
   (c) Definite increments paid to employees in proportion to administrative ability in service.
   (d) Pay in the higher brackets commensurate with executive skill and ability.
   (e) Adjustment of salary scales at regular intervals to the value of the dollar and the cost of living to insure definite real wages.

8. Appointment by the Governor of a representative committee of civil service employees to present to executive, legislative and administrative departments of government the needs and viewpoints of employees with reference to all personnel matters and working conditions. Such a committee would represent the employees at cabinet meetings, civil service commission meetings and appropriate budget conferences and hearings. At the present time, employees have by direction of the Governor or otherwise, no official recognition or entrance to meetings of the character mentioned and not only experience difficulty in securing attention to personnel problems but the State is also deprived of valuable suggestions and advice which proposed representation of employees would furnish.

9. At present there is lacking proper uniformity of attention to vacations and sick leaves, both of which are closely related to health and morale in the service and it is desired that the Governor by direct order having at hand the recommendations of employees through the committee referred to, establish minimum rules to govern departmental and institutional service employees. Minimum rules would make it possible for department heads to exercise reasonable discretion in extraordinary cases.

Graph Showing Cost of Living in Relation to Salary Reduction.

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