

Ninety-two Thousand War Veterans Are Working for Uncle Sam

Of Three Hundred and Fifteen Thousand who Applied Within Five Years, Two Hundred and Twenty-Four Thousand Have Qualified for Service in Federal Offices, Benefitted by Preferential Legislation Favoring the Veterans Who have Seen Service in Foreign Wars

THE UNATTACHED and uninformed veterans of the recent American wars who are going up and down the country assailing the public, the government and the private employer for giving preference, in matter of employment, to men who never bore arms in defense of the country should look up some very pertinent official figures from Washington through which we learn that approximately **three hundred and fifteen thousand** claims for preference in appointment to positions in the classified civil service have been allowed by the United States civil service commission under the veteran preference acts of March 3 and July 11, 1919. Of the three hundred and fifteen thousand veterans who entered examinations about two hundred and twenty-four thousand qualified and became eligible for appointment, and more than ninety-two thousand actually have received appointment.

These figures, it is officially said, do not mean that the federal civil force has been increased by the appointment of veterans. On the other hand the government maintains that there has been a reduction of more than three hundred and sixty thousand employees since the Armistice. But the turnover in a force so large as the federal civil service requires from fifty thousand to seventy-five thousand appointments each year to fill vacancies, notwithstanding the net reductions.

Veteran preference legislation and regulations are based upon the belief that men who served the nation faithfully with the colors are entitled to a certain preference in appointment to positions in the civil service. The public has on innumerable occasions indicated that the American sentiment is back of the contention that our veterans deserve and should have all possible consideration.

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A further principle upon which veteran preference regulations are based is that a veteran is entitled to receive appointment in preference to a non-veteran who is equally qualified. The veterans themselves recognize the justice of the requirements of the civil service regulations that they shall demonstrate their ability through examination to hold positions to which they are appointed. It is safe to assume that the big majority of the veterans are at least as strongly interested in the welfare of the government as any other class of persons. They have risked their lives for the good of the nation and for the maintenance of the government. They must wish the government to be conducted in the most efficient manner possible.

The principle of merit is the underlying foundation for the whole civil service system of the United States. Under the merit system it would be inconsistent if all employees were Republicans or Democrats or Progressives, if all employees were Protestants or Catholics or Jews, if all employees were soldiers or sailors or civilians. The appointees must be drawn from all classes, and the first consideration must be ability to

perform the particular work to which appointment is made. On this point the government is trying to be absolutely fair.

However, other things being equal, or approximately so, those who have faced the perils and privations of war should be given preference. An act of Congress of July 11, 1919, provides:

That hereafter in making appointments to clerical and other positions in the executive branch of the government in the District of Columbia or elsewhere, preference shall be given to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors and marines, and widows of such, and to the wives of injured soldiers, sailors and marines who themselves are not qualified, but whose wives are qualified to hold such positions.

Preference regulations promulgated by executive order under the general provisions of the law allow to the veteran many advantages.

From March 15, 1923, to June 30, 1924, one thousand two hundred and seventeen disabled veterans were appointed under the rule allowing the addition of ten points to the earned rating.

During the year ended June 30, 1924, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine appointments were made through examinations to positions of rural carrier. Ninety-one such appointments were made by reinstatement and three hundred and twenty-one by transfer. Of the total number of appointees, nine hundred and seventy-two were ex-service men. When the figures for the present fiscal year become available, they doubtless will show that the proportion of veterans was equally as great.

Positions of postmaster at first, second and third class offices are not classified under the civil service law. By executive order, however, veterans are given a certain preference in appointment to these positions. Between May 10, 1921, and July 1, 1924, the postoffice department reported twelve thousand five hundred and twenty-eight nominations for appointment as the result of examinations for postmasterships at first, second and third class offices. Of the total number nominated during this period, two thousand one hundred and sixty-four were ex-service men.

These typical figures indicate in a definite way the practical operation of the veteran preference law and regulations.

SONNET

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love,
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove;
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickles' compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

—Shakespeare