

## Graduates of the Merit System

When President Roosevelt in his 1944 budget message to Congress, called on critics of government employees to look behind the personnel statistics to the work the employees do, he may well have had in mind not only the anonymous workers who do the routine, unglamorous, but indispensable tasks of government, but also some of the almost equally anonymous engineers, scientists, technicians and administrators who have never sought either money or publicity, and who are known only through their achievements.

The Reclamation Bureau of the Interior Department has been served by many men of this type. The present Commissioner, John C. Page, rose through the ranks during 30 years' service from topographer to the post of chief administrative assistant in the construction of Boulder Dam. Since his appointment as Commissioner in 1937, he has been responsible for 60 reclamation and irrigation projects, 165 dams and 28 power plants in 17 Western states.

Two key men of the Reclamation Bureau, with a world-wide reputation in engineering circles, but almost unknown by their employer, the people of the United States, are John Lucian Savage, chief designing engineer, and Frank Arthur Banks, chief construction engineer.

Mr. Savage, since 1903 a government employee, has built 60 major American dams and thousands of other structures and has been lent as consultant to the governments of Australia, India and Mexico and many states and cities. He designed such mammoth structures as the Shasta and Friant dams in California, the Norris dam and Wheeler dams and power plant for TVA, and the Boulder and Grand Coulee dams, largest water-power plants in the world.

Nearly 5,000,000 persons in 17 states are dependent in one way or another on facilities he has designed. He is the first engineer in the world to have designed a billion dollars' worth of structures. Yet his salary has never exceeded \$10,000 a year.

Frank Arthur Banks is junior to Mr. Savage in the government service by only three years. He went to work for the Bureau of Reclamation upon his graduation from the University of Maine in 1906. He helped build small dams and irrigation projects throughout the West and was gradually entrusted with more and more important structures until, in 1933, he was appointed chief construction engineer and assigned to the Grand Coulee project in Washington. Situated in an area where supply difficulties were as great as those of commander of desert armies; where all supplies, from food to cement, steel and lumber, had to be hauled in from 50 to 100 miles away, construction of Grand Coulee involves new problems of every kind. With the largest artificial lake in the world—151 miles long—at its back, with horsepower four times that of the great Dnieperstoy dam in Russia, and with a final cost estimated to be \$404,000,000, its construction engineer is content with an annual salary of \$7,500.

The unthinking who lump all public employees together as "payrollers" and "tax-eaters" probably do not know that John C. Garand, inventor of the Garand rifle, is an ordnance engineer at the Springfield, Massachusetts Armory; that the Hollerith tabulating machine, used by thousands of business establishments, was invented by a clerk in the Census Bureau; that the inventor of radar is Dr. A. Hoyt Taylor, a physicist at the Bellevue Research Laboratory of the

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