

Do Unto Others

An Article by MARYBETH GREEN, Director of Public Relations of the California State Employees Association and Published in the July Issue of *The California State Employee*.

(Editor's Note: Here is an article full of suggestions that we, as public employees, should read and endeavor to practice at all times. Courtesy is one of our duties and should never be forgotten, for while it costs nothing it pays high dividends in public appreciation and respect.)

"Every working day of our lives the majority of us participate in instances, where we, as public servants are called upon to do business with our fellow-citizens of the state who are in a situation that to them is unfamiliar. From each of these encounters, people carry to their families and their neighbors a definite impression of state service and the people whose salaries are being paid from their taxes. Whether their reaction to state service as a whole is favorable or not often depends largely upon how you or I greeted them, whether we were helpful or indifferent, whether we went out of our way to explain a routine procedure, or left them confused as to what to do or where to go next.

"Courtesy in our every-day contacts with the public is an all-important foundation for public relations. The objective of any publicity program is to create a favorable impression in the minds of the public in relation to our organization. But the best program can be nullified as far as an individual is concerned, if that person has had unpleasant relationships with an employee in state service. Multiply this by a number of similar experiences of other individuals; add the friends and families of these people, and sooner or later we are faced with a problem of unfavorable public relations that has grown in size and importance as rapidly as a rolling snow-ball. Such a situation cannot be counteracted by a good press-

agent, or even by the best intentioned program of "good works" outside of office hours. It must be met on the job in our daily contacts with the public, at which time we are, each of us, serving as a public relations representative of the state.

"Such a situation is not a figment of the imagination created for the purpose of discussion: It is a fact which we must all face. The public will base its judgment of state service primarily upon individual experiences with state employees. If these experiences have been pleasant, the public is then receptive to favorable publicity regarding state employees; they will have every reason to believe, and will want to believe in the ideals and objectives which we hold as part of our organization, and which are being so ably expressed by so many CSEA chapters in their civic and war-service programs.

"The challenge of individual responsibility is obvious. How best can we meet it as individuals? What are the fundamental 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' which will help us all in our daily relationships with the public which we serve?

Do—Remember that pleasant, friendly mannerisms — a well-modulated voice, a smile, an unhurried attitude—can be acquired, and are the first things to impress the person with whom you are dealing.

Do—Make an effort to become genuinely interested in the problems of the person you are serving. In addition, your work becomes more interesting to you, if you are interested in the "other fellow."

Do—Familiarize yourself with the working departments other than your own to the extent that general questions of location, juris-

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