

New Ideas and Improved Methods

By FLOYD QUERY

The dignity and importance of the individual is one of the cornerstones of our democracy. The progress of this country has largely been due to the recognition of the individual and the encouragement of individual initiative and enterprise by rewarding those who demonstrate unusual capability.

The old adage of "two heads are better than one" is not all malarkey. It is impossible for any executive or administrator to think of everything. These men recognize this fact and consequently surround themselves with the most competent help that they can obtain. Successful administrators then make the best use they can of the talent at hand, with the ultimate purpose of creating an efficient, smooth-running organization. This should be as true in government as it is in industry.

However, human nature has not changed, and the problem still exists of how to get employees to put forth their best efforts. It has been a common, whether just or not, criticism of governmental employees that they are the type of people who are interested in a job where they do not have to work too hard, and where they can get a regular pay check. The truth in this criticism springs from the old practices of hiring employees. A purely political employee who knows that his job can expire with the next election certainly has no incentive to render superior or outstanding service.

Oregon as a state has gone beyond that category with the enactment of the civil service law at the last legislative assembly. The men and women of this assembly rendered the state an outstanding service when the act was passed. It is one of the really important pieces of legislation now on the statute books.

The most ardent civil service advocate will admit though, that getting the enactment of the law is only a part of the whole idea. Administration is vitally important, for under the administration will be developed the form, color and character by which civil service in Oregon will be known.

From a state employee's viewpoint the law can mean several things, somewhat dependent on the age of the employee. Older employees who have proved their worth are protected, but the young employee will probably be more interested in the features of the law and administration which provides or restrict possibilities of advancement. To attract the best type of new employees and to encourage older employees, it is necessary that the law and the administration of the law offer well defined opportunities for advancement in grade and salary to those who demonstrate unusual ability.

The idea of "Incentive Pay" is not a new or untried theory. The new civil service plan for Federal employees has greatly improved and broadened this feature. One of the fundamental principles of "Incentive Pay" is to keep alive and active the spark of initiative and creativeness in employees. State employees will watch with considerable interest the development of this phase of our civil service law.

The city council of Reading, Pennsylvania, has adopted an ordinance recognizing a local of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees as bargaining agents for city workers and providing paid vacations and holidays, time and one half for overtime, and grievance procedure for protection against dismissal without cause.