

NEW SPENDING SPREE ON THE WAY

From *Good Government*

It is in state and local government that special watchfulness is in order. The recent report of the National Civil Service League warns that the number of employees in these governments, which decreased 3½ per cent since Pearl Harbor, will increase substantially as new public projects are undertaken on an enlarged scale after the war. In a great many instances unfilled vacancies will be filled whether or not they need to be.

"It is estimated," says the report, "that the total number of employees in all branches of government five years after the war may approximate five million, with an annual payroll of eight billion dollars."

"Predatory political machines," the report warns, "will be tempted to use a large part of these five million public places for partisan patronage, and all the more so if opportunities for employment lessen in private enterprise."

This is putting it mildly. Predatory political machines already are tempted, are now wasting public funds in prodigious quantities to "take care of" friends and relatives, and have ever-present plans to use every situation for their selfish advantage.

Many comparatively well informed

persons are prone to believe that the appetite for political spoils has diminished, and they cite the impressive spread of the merit system in civil service, the council-manager plan, the career ideal in public service and similar specifics. Unfortunately, it just isn't so. The truth is that there is widespread evidence of the shameless misuse of public funds. It is done more artfully than in "the bad old days" and the political bosses don't talk out of the corners of their mouths any more. A great many of them have graduated from college instead of the corner saloon.

No less an authority on state government than A. E. Buck of the Institute of Public Administration contends that "political jobbery is still rampant in more than half of the states" and

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