

Quote and Unquote

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The Maine State Department of Personnel has established an advisory council on personnel as a means for developing better relations with state departments and other groups. The council includes representatives of the Governor's office, the House and Senate, operating departments, employee groups, the Budget Office, and the public.—*Civil Service Assembly Newsletter*, January 1947.

An ordinance adopted by the Portland, Oregon, City Council establishes a standard work week of forty hours for all city employees, effective January 1, except for the uniformed personnel of the police and fire bureaus. Under the ordinance, employees will receive time and a half off with pay for all work in excess of eight hours per day or 48 hours per week.—*Civil Service Assembly Newsletter*, Jan. 1947.

Administrative and clerical workers in over half the 933 cities with more than 10,000 population now work less than 42 hours a week, and the percentage is steadily growing according to a report by the International City Managers' Association.

Dayton, Ohio, where an ordinance was recently adopted placing all city employees on a five-day, 40-hour week, is exemplary of the trend. In general, larger cities have shorter work weeks for white collared employees than smaller cities, recent surveys indicate.

St. Louis has established a minimum work week of 38 hours for all city employees in the classified services, with 1½ days cumulative vacation and two days sick leave for each month. Baltimore recently decided to give a four-month trial to a five-day week with work hours from 8:45 a.m. to 4:20 p.m.—*From Journal of State and Local Government Employees*, Dec. 1946.

An article in the September 1946 issue of the *Monthly Labor Review* shows that there is a steady increase in the number of states which have enacted civil service laws. "By the middle of 1945, 22 of the 48 states had civil-service systems, established by law, which apply to all branches of the state government. In six of these states such legislation was adopted in 1940 or later. (This includes Oregon). In the remaining 26 states some departments, for example unemployment compensation, employment service and welfare divisions, operate under a merit system." These latter are departments which receive part of their funds from the federal government. "Merit systems of appointment are much less prevalent in counties, municipalities and smaller units of local government than in state governments."

"You can't fire a civil service employee," an argument often used by opponents of the merit system, is given little support in figures released recently by the Michigan State Civil Service Commission. Thomas J. Wilson, State Personnel Director, has directed public attention to the fact that 2232 state employees have been discharged during the last six years. Of this number, only 63 were reinstated after appealing to the Civil Service Commission. More than half of the discharges were on the grounds of incompetency. In calling attention to the discharge figures, Mr. Wilson contrasted present conditions with those which prevailed prior to the establishment of the state civil service program. In the old days, he said, efforts to discharge inefficient employees were frequently blocked by the political sponsors of such employees. Even after employees were discharged, they were often reinstated when appointing authorities succumbed to political pressure.—*Civil Service Assembly Newsletter*.