

## Louisiana Repeals Civil Service Law

In defiance of protests from citizens in every walk of life and every part of the state made through civic, labor, religious and professional organizations, and in spite of pre-election pledges to support it, the Louisiana legislature has voted to wreck the state's fine civil service system by striking out several provisions of the 1940 civil service act which insured non-political administration.

The bill (known as the Madden bill) changing the Civil Service law, gives the governor control of the Civil Service Commission by providing that he shall appoint the commissioners directly, instead of from among nominees selected by the presidents of five universities and colleges within the state, and by removing the personnel director (administrative officer of the commission) from the classified civil service. Because the state civil service commission appoints a majority of the members of the New Orleans commission, the bill would give the governor a large amount of authority over that commission also. It eliminates the present requirements that dismissal of state employees be made for "just cause"; gives to the personnel director authority (now vested in the commission) to hear appeals from employees on dismissals; and strikes out the present requirement that the employee be reinstated if it is found that his dismissal was based on political or religious reasons.

In a letter to the members of the legislature, the state civil service commissioners warned that the Madden bill "will substitute for the present state civil service system the most completely politically controlled patronage-dispensing system the state has ever seen." They stated: "If this bill is passed and becomes law the members of the legislature, having received this statement of our opinion in the matter, will be fully informed with regard to the results

they will achieve." The commission describes the results to be expected from adoption of the bill as follows:

"1. The complete emasculation of the present employee appeal procedure so that individuals holding civil service positions may be dismissed for political or religious reasons or for no reason at all and have no recourse whatsoever.

"2. Concentration in the hands of one individual of the power to decide employee appeals solely and entirely on the basis of his whim or caprice without regard to evidence which not only grants far too much power to one person but also eliminates any chance for a fair and impartial decision.

"3. The change in the method of selecting the members of the commission which makes possible and probable the control of the commissioners by the political faction in power now or in later administrations.

"4. Transferring to a politically appointed civil service commission the authority to appoint a majority of the members of the Civil Service Commission of New Orleans, which gives the governor a considerable amount of control of the civil service system in that city. (This same condition will exist in Shreveport and Baton Rouge after the next census.)

"5. Elimination of the requirement that the state director of personnel be in the classified service and appointed through competitive examination, which makes possible and probable his selection on the basis of political allegiance rather than technical knowledge and experience."

—*Excerpt from Good Government*  
(July-August)

---

Established at Salem in 1842, the Willamette University, founded by a pioneer missionary, Jason Lee, who came to Oregon in 1834, is the oldest institution of higher learning west of the state of Missouri.