

State Pay Scale Stays Low; Public Workers' Losses Run Into Millions since 1942

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While an exhaustive report on pay of state employees as compared with industry and other service is not intended, we are presenting a few comparisons and an outline of what the Oregon State Employees Association is trying to do.

The table below shows average monthly earnings, 1938 through 1947. Figures for industry were secured from the Unemployment Compensation Commission. Figures for state employees were secured from information published by the Budget Director, and from state departments who keep a record of average monthly earnings. Amounts are those as of the end of each year.

Average Monthly Rates of Pay

End of	Industry	State	State Difference
1938	\$108	\$117	+\$ 9
1939	109	120	+ 11
1940	113	118	+ 5
1941	127	125	- 2
1942	190	144	- 46
1943	212	159	- 53
1944	216	172	- 44
1945*	196	180	- 16
1946	220	194	- 26
1947	245	202	- 37

* The sharp drop in industrial rates at the end of 1945 reflects the post war adjustment period; shifting of workers, loss of overtime pay, etc.

How Have State Employees Fared?

If one calculates the comparative earnings of state employees as a group with those of industrial workers in total dollars, some startling facts show forth! In the table which follows, the comparative status of state employees is arrived at as follows: End of year dollar differences are averaged and applied to the average number of state employees for that year.

Comparative Gain or Loss to State Employees in Wages

Year	Gain	Loss
1939	\$ 840,000	\$
1940	672,000	
1941	126,000	
1942	-----	2,016,000
1943	-----	4,158,000
1944	-----	4,074,000
1945	-----	2,520,000
1946	-----	2,520,000
1947	-----	3,780,000
Totals	\$1,638,000	\$19,068,000

Number of employees estimated as 7,000 1939 through 1945. 10,000 in 1946 and 1947. The number of state employees from July 1947 through April 1948 varied from 10,269 to 10,852, with 10,663 employed in April.

Employees who carried on state functions during the war took a financial beating. Their relative position was improved to some extent by the \$20 cost of living adjustment effective from June 1 to December 31, 1948, but they are still considerably below their counterparts in industry. The *Engineering News-Record* building and construction Cost Indexes show a 20-city average for July 1948 of \$1.386 per hour for common construction labor and \$2.298 per hour for skilled labor. Getting closer home, we find that Tillamook County pays \$1.20 per hour for common labor. Compare this with the \$1.05 per hour paid by the State of Oregon, and that amount only since June 1, 1948 prior to which the rate was \$0.94!

Perhaps the large financial loss sustained by state employees who stayed with the State during war years and since is part of the burden of being a public servant, but on the other hand, state employees can state with justification that the last appropriation voted