

Oregon's Citizens Urged to Know Their Government; State Employees Invite Investigation

By VIRGIL G. O'NEIL

Since the beginning of time, the subject of wages has been of concern. Throughout man's struggle for self-improvement, the rewards of service have increased but not entirely apace with other advancements.

Oregon's state financial problems are closely linked with its state wage scales. Until the wages of State employees become proper, there can be no real progress made in improving the State's governmental services.

In spite of transitory relapses to selfish interests, the precept that "the servant is worthy of his hire" has common acceptance, although not always has its real meaning been evident. The Oregon State Employees Association voices its position by saying "State employees should receive wages equal to those paid by others for like work, in the interests alike of employees and the State."

Some Employers Are Weary

Employers get tired of hearing that same old cry from their help that "we want more pay." Some of them are inclined to think that no matter what they do or what they offer, their employees are never satisfied. Of course, all employers do not get tired of this perennial question, for some know the value of proper reward for good service. A few employers have exclusively selfish interests, some are indifferent to their employees' welfare and many profess their interest "to do more later;" these are they who hear the complaints!

Many Employees Are Getting Tired:

Employees also get tired! They hear that same old story "We are sorry, but we haven't the money to pay you more." Employees are told they don't under-

stand business and finances; that they don't know when they are well-off; that they wouldn't be satisfied regardless of what is done for them. Ah yes! The employee also gets tired, and in more ways than one.

In these days, labor as a group has largely organized itself to fight pigheadedness with stubbornness, to point the light of truth on selfish interests and to present sufficient strength to give them bargaining rights equal to those with whom they bargain. The OSEA—the state employees—now are contemplating the use of some of the successful tools of organized labor, if need be, to gain their proper status in Oregon's state functions!

The Public Is Apathetic

Oregon's 1,500,000 citizens are not receiving the State services they are paying for. They are not paying for the services they hope for. They are not asking for the full services they are entitled to. True, the framework for proper government is established, but how is it working? The answer is found in comparison with other States, in the private records of State Departments and in the locked-up opinions of State employees who know.

Present Situation in Oregon

Oregon, here spoken of as a sovereign State representative of all its people and all its resources, has had a State wage problem since 1859. Nothing much was heard about it, however, until about 1932 when its State employees were required to give part of their low wages to some State relief activities which, even yet have not completely exhausted the employees charity fund created from the given-up part of their pay of 1932-33!