

President's Message

E. F. CHIDSEY

As an old employee of the state of Oregon and one of the charter members of the employees' association, I would like to regress to the extent of reminding other old employees of the state and informing the newer employees of the state of working conditions as they existed before the Oregon State Employees Association was founded, comparing them with working conditions as they now exist, and to point out the possibility of future improvements in conditions which could be possible with proper support from the employees and our continued expenditure of effort through the association.

Before OSEA there was a lack of uniformity in salaries, vacation privileges, sick leave, and merit ratings between the various departments in state service. Some groups of employees having no earned vacation periods, sick leave or workable merit system. Salaries paid in the various departments were in many instances set by the department heads and adjusted frequently in order to meet budget demands. In some departments the spoils system was in effect and the employee was given no assurance of continuous employment therefore making it difficult to build up efficient and well staffed personnel groups in those departments.

OSEA Changes

Since the OSEA was founded it has secured a multitude of benefits for the employees which have resulted in better working conditions and improved efficiency in state service. A few of the benefits gained are: five increases

in salaries between the years of 1945 and 1949, passage of retirement and civil service laws, standardization of vacation credit throughout all departments, and to all state employees; the granting of sick leave benefits to all regular state employees in all departments, and a stronger feeling of security in state service brought about through the operation of the civil service and retirement laws. All the above gains were made through the efforts of the organization and with a membership of less than 25 per cent of the employees in state service.

Legislative Program Planned

We are now working out a legislative program for our fifth session in legislation. The success or failure of this program will depend to a great extent on the support it receives from the state employees and the amount of effort expended in its behalf. The program contains important legislation seeking to improve our retirement and civil service laws, and working conditions in general. However, this is only a part of our legislation program. Our most important function in the legislature is the prevention of the passage of bills which might cripple or repeal civil service or retirement laws, reduce our wages, or take from us some of the many benefits which we have gained in past years. This is probably the most important function of our association at this time. The war years are over and it may be that we are facing the start of another depression, in which case our function will be to preserve the gains we have acquired and to pre-