

GUEST EDITORIAL

By Max M. Manchester, Exec. Sec.,
Public Employees Retirement System,
Portland

On January 1, 1956, the Oregon State Public Employees Retirement System assumed its "new look." The amendments passed by the 1955 session of Legislature became effective on January 1, 1956, and resulted in many improvements in the system.

Disability benefits have been liberalized; coverage for police and firemen has been made more equitable; the status of persons remaining in employment past the compulsory retirement age has been changed, with those employees now being permitted to protect their beneficiaries in case they die while remaining in service; contributions will no longer be accepted from employees remaining in service past compulsory retirement age and they, therefore, may not build up appreciable additional benefits through this extension of service.

Most important is the new concept which, for the first time in Oregon, permits career employees to build a retirement benefit based on total salary. In the past, the State system has offered so little to such employees that it failed in its purpose of keeping employees in the state and on the public payrolls.

For the first time, too, low salaried employees are given the right, to a certain extent, to govern the amount of contribution which they will make toward the system. In this amendment the legislature recognized that even though many of the lower salaried employees in public work throughout the state believed in the retirement system, they were unable to afford the maximum contribution and thus, with the new amendment, the employees are given the right to make their own determination as to whether they wish to make maximum or minimum contributions to the fund.

Basically, it is to be remembered that the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System is a money-purchase system and, at the time one retires, his income from the system will be in direct relationship to his account balance in the system. Thus, the more money that we pay into the system, the more we will have with which to buy our annuity and the larger sum we will have to be matched by the State in the form of a pension. Since our account balance is matched by the State, any income which we purchase will be purchased at one-half price. Because this is a money-purchase system, it is most important for all employees to realize that when they reduce their contributions either by reducing from the fixed rate to the 5 percent rate, or by reducing the amount of salary on which they contribute, they will not only reduce their own savings, thus reducing their possible annuity but, more important, will lose an equal amount of State matching money, thus reducing the pension that the State is willing to buy on their behalf.

With the new Public Employees Retirement Law in effect, and with coverage under the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program, the public employees in Oregon are in an enviable position compared to the public employees throughout the United States. It is true that some of the old well-established retirement systems have broader benefits. However, in many instances the members of such systems do not have the Social Security coverage. This coverage, especially for the younger employees who have minor children, is completely beyond that which most of us could afford through private insurance. The retirement benefits under the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program are still purchased at a very inexpensive rate and will remain inexpensive throughout the

RE MINDER. PSYCHIATRIC AIDES: Most Psychiatric Aides on the day and swing shifts are eligible for "Meals - for - convenience - of - employer" deduction on your income tax. Suggestion is made that your entry for this provision be worded, "Meals for convenience of employer" on page one of your Federal Tax Return. (This means a saving of approximately \$20.00).

working career of the majority of those of us who are now employed.

Certainly there are still within the State of Oregon those occasional persons whose benefits under the dual program will remain small and who will undoubtedly feel that they have not received the same treatment as other public employees. Only by writing an individual policy for every individual public employee in the state could every contingency be covered, and the cost of so many different types of policies is of course prohibitive for a public system.

A new and complete employees' handbook on retirement will be available for employee-members within the very near future, and it will be to the benefit of each employee-member to carefully study this handbook and acquaint himself with his retirement system.

By way of clarifying a statement regarding General Council action in the matter of retired people, the SENTINEL wishes to make this correction:

The General Council acted to extend membership to OSEA retired people without the \$2.00 membership fee. Retired folks, take notice, and consider this an invitation to become members of your state association. OSEA has labored long and arduously for your retirement and other benefits and deserves your support.

The OREGON STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION and the SENTINEL extend deep and heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Merville J. (Tommy) Thompson, Eugene, on the tragic death of their son John Paul early in December. John Paul was nine years old.

The lad was struck by a bicycle and succumbed to a skull fracture.

Letter from Chancellor Richards

In answer to Mr. Stewart's letter of September 23, 1955, Dr. John R. Richards, Chancellor, Oregon State Board of Higher Education, Eugene, wrote the following:

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Your letter of September 23 in regard to the dismissal of Mr. George M. Crooks at Oregon State College has just come to my desk.

I believe that you know that the State College has acted with considerable care in this matter in recognition of Mr. Crooks' long years of service at that institution. The matter was discussed with all concerned, and the decision of the College was carefully reviewed with all appropriate staff members.

We believe that the hearing before the Civil Service group was a fair one. You have no doubt noted that the announced decision did not recommend that Mr. Crooks be assigned the same duties and responsibilities as he had previously carried. After receiving this finding, the College authorities carefully reviewed the possibility that other work of lesser responsibility might be given Mr. Crooks. In addition, the other institutions in the state system of higher education were queried as to the availability of work for Mr. Crooks. None was found.

As you know, the law does not require the College to follow explicitly the findings of the Civil Service review committee. It seems clear that the intent of the law is to allow each department concerned discretion in a matter of this sort. At its last meeting, the Board of Higher Education reviewed the steps taken by the College in this matter and arrived at the determination that the College had not overstepped its authority. For this reason, the Board decided against hearings in the matter.

It seems to us that we have been very careful to protect this employee's rights. However, the State College cannot go so far as to yield entirely its authority to discharge for incompetence.

Let me assure you that the Department of Higher Education is well aware of its responsibilities to all of its employees and intends to continue to use great care before exercising its authority to discharge employees.

Sincerely,
John R. Richards,
Chancellor.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMMENDMENTS

Your general council delegates instigated a few changes in the document by which the organization of OSEA is guided. Before any constitutional alteration can take effect it must be ratified by a majority of the chapters within 120 days of the time the amendments are transmitted to them. To facilitate membership understanding of those items on which they will vote, a brief explanation of the issues concerned is offered here. Further clarification, if needed, can be secured from your chapter delegates or district director.

In the interests of simplification and better organization, and since no change in meaning was thereby effected, a special committee headed by Dr. J. Lloyd LeMaster, Director of Law and Legislation, took the liberty of reversing the positions of sections 3 and 4 in Article VII of the constitution. New section 4 will read as follows, if ratified as amended:

Section 4. "The officers, except the Junior Past President, are elected at regular sessions of the General Council from the active members of the Association, and the district directors are elected prior to the regular sessions from active members of chapters in their respective districts. The president becomes Junior Past President upon the installation of his successor.

"The vice-president, directors of civil service, retirement, law and legislation and the directors of districts 4, 7, 8 and 9 shall be elected in odd numbered years while the secretary-treasurer, directors of public relations, membership, insurance and the directors of districts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 shall be elected in even numbered years."

The purpose of the proposed amendment was to secure greater continuity of experience on the board of directors by electing half the officers and directors in alternate years. In that manner, fifty per cent of the board members will have had at least one year of experience, a factor which should promote smoother year to year progress of the organization. The provision to elect directors of civil service, retirement and law and legislation in odd numbered years gives those officers a year in which to prepare a program to take to the legislature.

To provide limitations and to insure that the organization has a chance to get new people on the board at reasonably frequent intervals, a proposed amendment to Article VIII of the constitution would add sections 9 and 10 which read as follows:

Section 9. "Any member elected as president of the Association shall serve in that capacity not more than two one-year terms during any five year period beginning with the date of first election.

Section 10. "Board members other than president and junior past president shall serve in the office to which they have been elected not more than two two-year terms during any six year period beginning with the date of first election."

Article III of the constitution was regarded by members of the General Council as needing amendment to provide membership for retired state employees. Affirmative action was taken on such a proposal but later study reveals that no change in the constitution is needed for that purpose. In order to clarify the matter and establish uniform procedure in all chapters, the first paragraph in section 5 of By-Laws Article VIII has been changed in accordance with the vote of council delegates to read:

Section 5. "Each chapter is required to pay the Association \$6.00 per annum for each yearly member, or \$3.25 for each one-half yearly member, except that a member in good standing who separates from state service by reason of retirement, and who requests and receives chapter credentials of associate membership, shall be exempt from association dues. Each chapter shall in addition thereto, pay the association \$1.00 for each new member, except a charter member or a re-instated member."

No chapter vote is needed on this issue since it concerns the By-Laws and received unanimous approval by council delegates.

Employee Suggestion Awards Made

At a recent meeting of the State Employee Suggestion Awards Board, 11 cash awards and three certificates of merit were issued to state employees whose suggestions had been approved by various state departments.

Largest cash award was made to Edith Page who is employed by Fairview Home. Her award amounted to \$75.00 for a suggestion concerning the development of a cart-table combination to carry children.

Lois M. Davis, also employed by Fairview Home, received \$60.00 for a suggestion about a safety device for bathing facilities at the institution.

State Highway Commission employees came in for three awards. G. N. Raymond was awarded \$25.00 for revising a manual; Violet LaMont, \$10.00 for shortening an inter-office memorandum form and Paul Davies, \$10.00 for eliminating names of personnel from divisional mail.

John Rose, employed by the State Penitentiary, was awarded \$35.00 for cutting inmate stationery waste. Gordon Ellis, also of the Penitentiary, received \$25.00 for suggesting a method of waterproofing tennis shoes as a means of increasing length of wear.

Secretary of State employees included Violet Bickell who was awarded \$10.00 for reducing the number of vehicle duplicate titles needed and Ruth M. Warren awarded \$10.00 for revising motor vehicle dealer license procedures.

Eric Carlson of the Civil Service Commission was the recipient of \$25.00 for suggestions offering solutions to some of the parking problems existing in the Capitol area. Maude King, Public Utilities Commission, was awarded \$10.00 for suggesting a return telephone call system.

Certificates were awarded to Clara Leveque, University of Oregon Medical School Hospital for an idea relative to visitor information; W. R. Stanard, Department of Agriculture, for development of central mailing and Howard J. Akers, State System of Higher Education, for a suggestion regarding disposal of state automobiles.

Awards issued at the meeting brought the total amount of money granted to \$395.00. Since the beginning of the program 14 cash awards and five certificates have been issued.

At an informal gathering of the personnel of the Claims Division of the Industrial Accident Commission, Chairman William A. Callahan presented to John Wesley Taylor, the first Employee Suggestion award to

be made to an employee of the commission. Wesley's suggestion had to do with re-allocation of usable space on a form making the form easier to read and to use.

OSEA urges its members to use the Employee Suggestion System as a means to effect better management in state administration.

START THINKING. YOUR idea may win an award for YOU!

For further information contact the secretary, Warne Nunn, PUC. Address Employee Suggestion Awards Board, 200 Public Service Building, Salem.

INDIVIDUALS DEVELOP IN GROUPS

Others are interested in what YOU think and what YOU have to say. If you have an idea, an opinion or a constructive suggestion, voice it. Every time you rise to your feet to express an opinion, or even ask a leading question, you are showing qualities of leadership. For leadership is not always a natural talent. It can be acquired. Participation engenders enthusiasm. Groups are now more discussonal with full member participation being the solution to the problem of how to create more enthusiastic attendance.

Thought-provoking ideas such as these sparked the Portland district assembly of Delphian chapters at their fall meeting at which chapter speakers participated in the seminar program.

Your editor found this program so packed with matters of interest to OSEA chapters and members that it seems timely to gist it for you.

In their study of group dynamics social science investigators have come up with some refreshing lines of thought on such subjects as leadership, member participation and individual development.

Full Participation

Everyone, the Delphian assembly was told, is better for participating; that formerly the leader was too much relied upon—the many depending upon the few; that groups now being more discussonal, fuller participation is the goal and that the greater the enthusiasm the more successful the meetings.

Crux of the situation is that the solution of the general problem of how to get better and more enthusiastic attendance is to get everyone to participate.

Advice to members was to follow through on each assignment. Members were told they should check frustrations and personal worries at the door and give full and undivided attention to the meeting and the issues.

Self-Analysis Helpful

Dependability, promptness, cooperation and enthusiasm were stressed as being qualities desirable in each individual. The positive, constructive attitude is of vital importance and self-analysis is helpful in revealing to the individual his worth and importance to the group.

Each member, it was brought out, has something to contribute and everyone should welcome the opportunity to speak. This develops self-confidence and in this way leadership is developed.

"Leaders got there because they participated," was the way one speaker put it. And all should strive for leadership.

Delphians Practice Democratic Principles

Inform yourself, is another piece of sage advice. Anything you know well you discuss intelligently. There is no need to be afraid to express an opinion. People are more tolerant than you think. Remember, others too may be reticent about expressing themselves. When you speak up you help them as well as yourself.

"Democratic principles are the rule. Every time we express ourselves we stimulate others," another leader told the Delphians who, practicing their own precepts, participated enthusiastically in the program.

Budget appropriated by 1954 General Council for the 1955 General Council was \$5000. This figure was exceeded by \$645.95. Broken down the cost per hour figures to more than \$200.

CHECK YOUR "PRESSURE"

By William G. Hughes
Chairman Membership Com.

There's still time for good New Year's resolutions. Why not add this one to your list:

"I hereby resolve personally to gain one new member for OSEA in 1956."

There are big plans ahead for 1956. OSEA has a fine program prepared. The only problem that stands between us and the realization of our goals is membership.

We must gain approximately 3900 new members in order to make our program click. Why this number? There are two reasons. We need both the financial and numerical support these members would provide.

There is no gimmick to building membership. It takes plain old fashioned hard work and perseverance plus salesmanship.

We need to initiate a system of "Constant Pressure" salesmanship. In other words, all non-members need to be constantly contacted and sold on the values and benefits of OSEA. You may not gain a member on the first contact, or even the second, but by the third or fourth time your salesmanship should result in bringing a new member into our organization. You will then have the satisfaction of having helped a fellow employee to help himself.

Why not select some employee who works near you who isn't as yet an OSEA member. Make him your target for '56 and apply "Constant Pressure."