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Only 15 months ago, when state employees were receiving their first increased pay checks after the early January 1, 1965, implementation of the Civil Service compensation plan by action of the Emergency Board, state pay conditions were looking fairly bright. The picture became even brighter when the 1965 legislature voted to continue the plan for the 1965-67 biennium and appropriated \$1.3 million to the Emergency Board for emergency salary adjustments to be made after July 1, 1966, a departure from the pre-1963 practice of giving pay raises only every two years.

Now we are approaching the July 1, 1966, date, and a plan for use of the \$1.3 million plus an almost equal amount from dedicated funds for emergency adjustments shows the amount to be completely inadequate. An unexpected amount of inflation, Viet Nam war effects, and decreases in take home pay because of increased social security contributions and a changed income tax withholding system have resulted in state pay being in a worse comparative position than it was before the December, 1964, Emergency Board action, with employees taking home less money than last year with which to try to keep up with rising living costs.

With full awareness of the dismal financial picture that faces low and middle income employees, and the crisis in recruitment and retention faced by state employers, especially in the greatly underpaid clerical and institutional classes, the question remains as to what can be done at this time. Funds available will not help the situation much when distributed to only about a third of the employees, and if they were divided among all employees in a "cost of living" increase instead of the emergency adjustments specified by the legislature, the increase to each individual would be so small as to be hardly noticeable.

Recent announcements of a \$32.6 million surplus of state funds make state employees feel like the hungry man looking longingly at a delectable meal through a restaurant window, without any means to go inside and do anything about his situation. The money for needed increases is there on the other side of the glass, but the chances of getting at it at this time are exceedingly remote.

Because of the Emergency Board action of a year and a half ago, some employees are asking why the Board cannot now reach into the surplus and take similar action. The Board is only an arm of the legislature. It has no authority to vote funds unless they have been appropriated to it. In 1964 the Board had unexpended salary authority which had not been used because of the October, 1963, "tax rebellion" election. An improved financial picture during 1964 made it possible for funds to be voted. This time the Board has available to it only the \$1.3 million appropriation which it is expected to vote to spend in accordance with the Civil Service recommendation.

The legislature is the only body which could bring the \$32.6 million surplus out from behind the glass. To do so this year would require a special session called by the Governor. When two legislators on March 14 proposed a special session to deal with other financial problems, OSEA urged that such a session also deal with state salaries. The Governor, for understandable reasons, did not follow the suggestion of the legislators. It is not likely that a special session would be called for the primary purpose of adjusting state pay.

The most promising development which seems possible of taking place would be for the legislature in January to make state salaries a first order of business and implement the next pay plan at that time instead of waiting until July 1, 1967. All of the factors which were discussed at the beginning of this column, plus the fact that the proposed new Federal minimum wage law is expected to set a figure for February 1, 1967, that will exceed some of the lower state salaries, would justify this course of action.

When the OSEA state executive committee meets with Governor Hatfield on May 27 to discuss the salary situation, January implementation no doubt will be one of its proposals. It is hoped that the Governor, if he does not call a special session of the legislature this year, will include such a recommendation in his next budget message.

Correspondence

Dale E. Leach
 Editor
 Oregon State Employee News
 1515 State Street
 Salem, Oregon

Dear Sir:

I wish to publicly thank OSEA Assistant Executive Secretary Edward L. Wilson for the assistance he has given me in applying for my disability benefits under the Public Employees Retirement System. With his aid and cooperation, I was saved from making many trips to Salem which was very helpful, especially at a time like this.

Sincerely,
 Ralph R. Crook
 Grain Division
 Chapter 62
 Milwaukie

Smith Appoints Committee Heads

Chairmen of the OSEA District Nominating Committees for this year's district director elections have been appointed by association President R. M. "Hoad" Smith. Those appointed were Charles Thompson, District No. 1; William J. LaClair, District No. 2; Edward G. Bowers, District No. 3; Harry Marshall, District No. 4; Cal Fouts, District No. 5; John Michaud, District No. 6; Curtis H. Duval, District No. 7; Kurt Tonjes, District No. 8; and Eddie Kahut, District No. 9.

The committees, which are made up of chapter presidents and secretaries within each district, have the responsibility of selecting and screening potential candidates. A minimum of two candidates for each office must be selected.

The names of the nominees must be sent to headquarters by August 10.

Field Representative C. D. Johansen said the nominating committees would also be responsible for securing a picture of each candidate plus a 40-word resume of his experience and background in OSEA and state service for use in the NEWS.

Johansen said each nominee would receive space in the NEWS for a 15-word campaign statement. Receipt of this material from each district committee by headquarters is August 5, he said.

New District Council Near

Plans of eight OSEA chapters located in Southwestern Oregon to form a District No. 3 Presidents' Council came one step closer to reality on May 14 when chapter representatives met in Roseburg.

Director of Membership Dale E. Sturmer, District No. 6 Director Helen Towne and Field Representative C. D. Johansen also attended the meeting.

Sturmer stressed the importance of a presidents' council in coordinating membership activities of the chapters within the district.

Mrs. Towne outlined the organization of the council in her district. She discussed the proposed council and the constitution and by-laws, including in her address such subjects as the meeting place, frequency of meetings and the purpose of the organization.

Johansen said the District No. 3 chapter representatives will meet again in Roseburg sometime in July. It is expected that they will then form a council and elect officers.

