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T H E S I S

The Merit System as Applicable to the Various
Administrative Departments of Minnesota.

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of M.A. in the University
of Minnesota.

Rupert Eichholzer,
1908.

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T H E S I S.

The Merit System as Applicable to the Various
Administrative Departments of Minnesota.

Chapter I.

Introductory: The growth of the Patronage and Spoils System in the administration of government in the United States.

The marvellous growth and development of the United States during the first century of its existence as a nation has had a marked effect upon the formation and workings of its governmental machinery. After the close of the Revolutionary War, the attention of the people was directed to the great national resources and possibilities of the country. Political freedom and the offer of free lands by the government, attracted thousands of the thrifty and industrious people of

Europe, to make their homes here. The rapidity with which the country grew and became settled is without a parallel. With this rapid growth the functions of government were correspondingly multiplied. Vastly increased numbers of governmental employees were necessary to carry on these increasing duties, and the patronage at the disposal of the national officials was greatly extended. The idea of political patronage was not new to the people. They had been familiar with it in colonial times, under the Royal Governors, and after independence had been gained, the practice continued under the State and National governments. The practice in itself was not an evil under the first *few* Presidents, who aimed to appoint men of merit, regardless as to what their political opinions might be. But with the rapid growth of the nation and the great increase of the functions of government, political parties grew more distinct and party spirit more pronounced. The enormous patronage at the disposal of the national Executive began to be used purely for party interests.

The common motto was "to the victor belongs the spoils" and whichever party came into power turned out of office all those of the opposite political faith and filled the places thus made vacant with the faithful followers who had been instrumental in getting the successful candidate into office.

Technically, one must assign to Jefferson the introduction of the "Spoils System" into the national service, for under him party service was first recognized as a reason for appointment to office, and party dissention as a cause for removal⁽¹⁾ This was, however, not a pronounced policy and the "Spoils idea did not become a national party issue, till the administration of Andrew Jackson. Public opinion was by this time largely in its favor, and upon the election of Jackson to the presidency, his friends and supporters became clamorous for a clean sweep. The party managers of 1828 were quite confident of the course he would take when they said: "We know not what line of policy General Jackson will adopt. We take it for granted, however, that he

(1) Fish, Carl R. "Civil Service and the Patronage" p.51

will reward his friends and punish his enemies."⁽¹⁾

That Jackson was in favor of this policy was well understood by his followers, and in his first annual message December, 1829, after his policy had been revealed, he formulated the principles which had guided him, as shown by his statement that, "In a country where offices are created solely for the benefit of the people, no one man has any more intrinsic right to official station than another. Offices were not established to give support to particular men at the public expense. No individual wrong is therefore done by removal since neither appointment to, nor continuance in office is a matter of right. --- He who is removed has the same privileges of earning a living as the millions who never had office."⁽²⁾ In the same message he also says, "I cannot but believe that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally to be gained by their experience."⁽³⁾

The "Spoils" idea now became fully entrenched as a national political policy, and each new administration

(1) Fish Carl R. "Civil Service & the Patronage, p.107

(2) Richardson's Messages & Papers of the President, Vol. 11, pp.448-449

(3) Ibid.

was marked by more or less wholesale removals, from offices, which were meted out to party favorites and supporters. Each incoming President was simply forced to adopt a proscriptive policy by the enormous pressure brought to bear upon him. On the occasion of an inauguration, the city of Washington was thronged with thousands of office-seekers from every part of the country and from every walk of life, including, as Mr. Fish puts it, "trimly dressed gentlemen of the old regime and farmers from the West, with the hack politician of New York."⁽¹⁾

The climax of the "Spoils System" was reached in the period between 1845 and 1865. "The old traditions of respectability had passed away, and the later spirit of reform had not risen." "The victors divided the spoils and were unashamed. The general interest was turned almost completely from attempts to limit the patronage of the executive and to improve the service,⁽²⁾ to the rival fortunes of the official beggars."

The most thoroughgoing and complete sweep ~~that~~

(1) Fish, "Civil Service & the Patronage," p.109.

(2) Fish, "Civil Service and the Patronage," p.158.

had ever been made was that made by President Lincoln in 1861. Lincoln, however, did not use his patronage for any personal aggrandizement, or only to reward party loyalty. His object was to serve his country by solidifying the Republican Party and surrounding himself with men whom he could trust and depend upon. Southern influence had for years been predominant at Washington, and in order to carry out his policy, concerning the preservation of the Union, this must be replaced by an influence truly northern, and opposed to the action of the South. To better attain this end he balked at nothing and at times offered good offices to certain Congressmen to secure their vote, when some measure of importance seemed doubtful of passing. "Lincoln showed to what use the Spoils System could be put by a statesman, but he nipped in the bud a further development of the system, which was threatened.⁽¹⁾ It was due to Lincoln that the popularity of this rotation in office first received a decided check and he eventually turned the tide against it. As usual after his second

(1) Fish, "Civil Service & the Patronage," p.170-2. American Historical Review, VIII,53-69.

Inauguration on March 4, 1865, the Capitol was filled with office seekers who demanded an entire reallocation of offices, but Lincoln unwilling to go through the worry and labor which this involved, made a conclusive announcement that the administration would remain unchanged throughout. ⁽¹⁾ This was a positive step in a new direction. It started the people to think about the existing conditions of the National Civil Service, and gave birth to a movement which aimed at the abolition of spoils and the introduction of merit as a standard.

During the Civil War there was an immense expansion of Presidential power. This tended to heighten the distrust of the Senate, and when President Johnson began to use the extensive patronage at his disposal in an unwise and injudicious manner, by removing faithful Republicans and putting into their places *despised Copperheads*, it precipitated an open warfare between President and Senate. The Senate therefore ⁽²⁾ in 1867, passed the Tenure of Office Act restricting

(1) "Six Months at the White House with Lincoln," by F. B. Carpenter.
 " Fish, Civil Service & the Patronage, p.172
 (2) Congressional Globe, 39th Cong. 2nd Session, 17.
 Fish, Civil Service & the Patronage, p.193.

the presidential power of removal. This act gave the Senate great power over the President and was ^{entirely} not re-pealed till under the administration of Garfield, though its repeal was repeatedly asked for. Two fundamental errors characterize this method of reform; first, it aimed rather to hinder removals than control appointments, and second, it shifted the power from the shoulders of the President to the Senate, thus dividing the burden and doing away with all sense of personal responsibility.

CHAPTER II.

The Reform Movement in the National Civil Service.

The Spoils system was violently attacked from the beginning. It was easy for those who were being despoiled to see distinctly the evils which the system brought in its train and then there were always those men of great patriotic zeal and foresight, like Henry Clay and Calhoun, who saw clearly where it would ultimately lead to if some measures to check it were not adopted. One of the earliest attempts at reform was made in 1851, when the question of efficiency was discussed in the Senate in two different reports. A system of examinations for candidates had been tried in the Treasury Department and was approved by practically all the members of the cabinet. It was therefore recommended that pass examinations be held for the lowest grades of clerkships and that all vacancies above these, except chief clerkships, be

filled by promotion. In 1853 pass examinations were prescribed by law and a few years later the system was reported as working well. ⁽¹⁾ The character of the examinations depended on the discretion of the departmental head who was also the appointing officer. ⁽²⁾ Consequently the system amounted to very little. It was still patronage under a formal disguise.

In 1864 Charles Sumner introduced a Bill to provide for greater efficiency of the Civil Service. This Bill was based upon the English Merit system, and embodied many of the provisions found in the present law. It provided for a board of examiners, for appointment by competitive examination, promotion by seniority of service, and removal for good cause only. ⁽³⁾ The Bill received some favorable comment from the press, but was dropped without action. The influence of this action was not lost, however. It impressed upon the minds of all thoughtful men the great need for reform, and in the following year, 1865, another Bill purporting to Civil Service Reform was introduced into the House

(1) House Executive Documents, 33 Cong. 2nd Sess. II
No. 3 p. 97-98

(2) Fish Carl R., Civil Service & the Patronage, p. 183.

(3) Sumner's Works, VIII, 452-7
Fish, Carl R., Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 210.

by Thomas Allen Jenckes, a young lawyer from Rhode Island. This Bill was also lost without much consideration. Too many other matters demanded the attention of Congress. Besides the idea of Civil Service Reform was too much of a novelty to allow of speedy acceptance. Mr. Jenckes, however, was determined to accomplish something along this line, and in 1866 "a concurrent resolution charged the joint select committee on retrenchment to examine into the expediency of so amending the laws under which appointments were made as to provide for the selection of subordinate officers after due examination by proper boards --- and for withdrawing the public service from being used as an instrument of political or party patronage." (1)

In 1868 he presented an elaborate report which contained a thorough discussion of the existing Civil Service, a careful summary of the systems employed in China, France, Prussia and more especially in England, and appended thereto was a Bill intended to adapt the best points in these various systems to American conditions. (2)

(1) Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 211.

(2) House Reports, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess. II, #47

It received considerable attention, but the sweeping changes which it suggested, made defeat inevitable. Congress refused to act upon it. But agitation was persistent and the question became one of permanence. Men like George William Curtis and Carl Schurz became very greatly interested in it, and some of its most ardent supporters. General Grant saw the great need of reform and ardently advocated it, ⁽¹⁾ as shown in his second annual message, in which he pressed upon Congress the advisability of a law which would govern, not the tenure but the manner of making all appointments." By a rider to an Appropriation Bill, provision was made for carrying out the President's wish. ⁽²⁾ It left everything to his discretion. He was to "prescribe such rules and regulations for the admission of persons into the Civil Service of the United States, as would best promote the efficiency thereof." An appropriation of \$25,000. was made for carrying out the work.

President Grant prepared to make the most of his opportunity and appointed an advisory board of seven members

(1) Nation, Dec. 3, 1868, Feb. 16, 1869.
Annals of American Academy, Vol. 15, p. 149.
Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, 212.

(2) Congressional Globe, 41 Cong., 2nd Sess. 17, 3d Sess. 59,
594-5, 1935-6.

with George Wm. Curtiss at the head. A plan similar to that of Mr. Jenckes was adopted, providing that no attempt be made to control the President's power of removal, thus completely separating the reform movement from the Senate's struggle for supremacy.⁽¹⁾ The rules thus formulated were applied on April 16, 1872, to the Departments at Washington, and to the federal offices in New York, and a sincere attempt was made to give the new system a fair trial. After two years the absolutely essential appropriation was cut off by Congress. The President continued his efforts constantly bringing before Congress the need of continuing the appropriation. That body either through an apathetic feeling or hostile position failed to act, and by 1874 the movement died for lack of funds.⁽²⁾ This short trial of the reform system had its good results. It suggested to those, who were anxious to see better service, a realization of what might be done, and set on foot a movement which was bound in due time to win out. Civil Service Reform began to figure more largely

(1) Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p.213.

(2) Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p.214.

in politics, first becoming a plank in the platform of the Liberal Republicans and later adopted by all parties alike, the success of a candidate being largely determined by his ardency for reform.

On the election of James A. Garfield for President, in 1880, the reformers were filled with hope, as he was known to be strongly in favor of reform. His tragic death, at the hand of a half-crazed office seeker, caused them to press more vigorously to secure their object; the more so, since Chester A. Arthur, the Vice President who now succeeded him, was reputed a thorough spoils man, and who owed his nomination to the Vice Presidency to "Boss" Conkling of New York. ⁽¹⁾ His reputation was, however, worse than the facts would justify. Although not fully in favor of a system of competitive examinations to determine appointments, he expressed his willingness to execute whatever law Congress should see fit to pass. ⁽²⁾

The reformers, encouraged by public sentiment, were eager to produce some measure embodying their principles. Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, one of the foremost men of the reform movement drew up a Bill which was presented

(1) Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p.217.

(2) Richardson's Messages, VIII, 11,60. Dec.6,1881.

to Congress by George H. Pendleton, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Civil Service Reform. The Bill was much debated on by both houses but finally passed and was approved by the President, becoming a law January 16, 1883.⁽¹⁾

This Bill, commonly known as the Pendleton Act⁽²⁾ provided for three Commissioners to be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. There were also to be a Chief Examiner, State Boards of Examiners and minor officers. The Commission were to aid the President in preparing rules to carry out the provisions of the law, which called for the classification of clerks and for open competitive examinations of a practical nature. If there was no competition, the Commission should arrange for a non-competitive examination. The rules were to exclude from the service all persons habitually using intoxicating beverages to excess, and were not to admit more than two members from the same family. Veterans were to have the same preference which was conferred upon them by the Revised

(1) 1st and 2d Report of Civil Service Commission
Jan. 16, 1883, to Jan. 16, 1885.

(2) Ibid.

(1)
Statutes. The rules were also to provide for a fair apportionment of positions at Washington, between citizens of the various States and the District of Columbia. They were not to apply to laborers. No recommendation in favor of an applicant would count, except as to character and residence. Those applicants selected must serve a six months period of probation before any absolute appointment or employment would be given; and no person in the public service would be under any obligation to contribute to any political fund, while all officers were forbidden, under heavy penalty, to solicit or receive any such contribution.

These rules were to apply to the departments at Washington and to the customs houses and post offices with more than fifty employees. The President could extend these rules to other parts of the service at his discretion, and could provide for exemptions from them. The Commission was to keep records, to investigate cases in which the rules were supposed to be violated and to make an annual report to the President for transmission

(1) Revised Statutes, Sec. 1754.

to Congress, showing its own actions and the workings of the rules and regulations in force with such suggestions as they might care to make. (1)

The beginnings of the Civil Service Reform in 1883 were cautious, and Senator Pendleton, the author of the Civil Service Act was very careful to give the assurance that the measure was not intended to be sweeping in its operation, as shown by the fact that it only applied to the employees in the departments at Washington and large offices employing over fifty clerks. He stated in his first report that, "This Bill does not touch the question of tenure in office, or removal from office, except that removals shall not be made for refusing to pay political assessments or failure to perform partisan services. It leaves both where it finds them." (2)

Improvement in the Civil Service was noticeable at once. President Arthur, though not a strong believer in the Reform, appointed an efficient Commission with Dorman B. Eaton as president. Good rules were immediately drawn up, and February 15, 1885, after two years of trial,

(1) 1st & 2d Reports of Civil Service Commission,
Jan. 16, 1883 to 1885.
Statutes at Large, XXII, 403-7

(2) Annals of the American Academy, Vol. 15, p. 152.

the President, who had doubted the expediency of the innovation, reported that it was a success. ⁽¹⁾

The preeminent value of the Merit System was now fully demonstrated in the departments where it had been adopted, and was fast winning friends from the ranks of those who had opposed its adoption. It had become a national issue. Popular opinion endorsed it. ⁽²⁾ In the presidential election, the man who gave the strongest proof of standing by and supporting the movement, was generally elected. In the campaign of 1884 all three parties, the Republicans, the Democrats, and the Prohibitionists declared themselves supporters of Civil Service Reform. The Republican candidate, James G. Blaine, expressed a desire to see it extended. Grover Cleveland, the Democratic candidate, who was then Governor of New York, was considered the most thorough reformer, and his election was due largely to the support of those enthusiastic young Mugwumps who cared ⁽³⁾ more for good government than for party allegiance.

A line of strong, energetic Presidents, like

(1) Richardson's Messages, VIII, 276.

(2) Richardson's Messages, VIII, p.363.

(3) Andrew S. Draper, Appointing Officers & Civil Service Regulations, p.8.
Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 222.

Cleveland, Harrison, McKinley and Roosevelt, each more or less favorable to Reform, have done much to strengthen and encourage the movement. Each administration has witnessed enormous extensions of the Merit System, many of them bringing thousands of employees within the scope of competitive examinations. Some of the largest of these extensions were those which brought the Railway Mail Service, the Indian Service, the Rural Mail carriers, and many of the Departmental employees into the system. Some of these Presidents have taken steps, which were quite retrogressive, making sweeping removals and causing much alarm among the reformers. These acts were generally forced upon the Executive by party pressure, and the sweeps were never made in a field where the Civil Service law applied. Each one has vigilantly observed the law, and has frequently added to its enforcement through so amending the rules and regulations as to cover most of the needs of the Commission, and so increasing their power as to render them more capable of making the System entirely free from the Spoils element.

The marvellous growth of the Merit System in the National Civil Service, may be shown by the fact that on Jan. 16, 1883, under the provisions of the Pendleton Bill, the classified service included about 14,000 employees. Year after year has added its quota so that by June 30, 1907, the number was 196,918 employees subject to competitive examination. (1) The present condition is pretty well summed up in the last report of the Commission, where they state that "there are no parts of the Executive Civil Service which have not been touched by the Merit System. More than one-half of the positions are subject to examination under the Civil Service Act, and the labor regulations have been extended to many parts of the service, requiring the appointments of laborers to be made on the basis of physical strength. The Post Office department is following the policy of retaining fourth class postmasters during satisfactory service. In a general way, exemptions from examinations comprise private secretaries to heads of Departments and

(1) 24 Report Civil Service Commission, 1907. p.5-6.

important bureau chiefs, attorneys, positions with low pay which would not invite competition, emergency employments which cannot await the result of examination, and employment in isolated parts of the country. The Civil Service rules have not been extended to the Library of Congress, nor to the employees of the District of Columbia. Their extension to the latter class have been repeatedly recommended by the Commissioners of the District and bills are now pending in both Houses of Congress providing for the classification of the employees mentioned." (1)

In the last few years it has also been recommended, by the President, that Congress pass acts placing the Consular service and the fourth-class Postmasters under the classified system, but no successful action has been taken. Reference has already been made as regards the policy being pursued concerning the latter. In the consular service, great improvements have been made through executive action. The consular positions are strictly under executive control, under which, a

(1) 24th Report of Civil Service Commission, 1907, pp. 6 & 7.

rigid system of examinations, with a school of instruction in the State Department, have been established, in order to train young men of ability, to fill the responsible positions of Consuls. The appointments (1) have tenure during satisfactory service. A matter closely connected with Civil Service Reform, and which has been very largely agitated is the Pension question. This relates to the establishment of a Pension Bureau in the Civil Service Department for the purpose of aiding those who have grown old in faithful service, and who through the infirmity of age or ill health are no longer able to do the work required of them. The modest salary paid by the government to many of its employees makes it a difficult matter for them to lay much aside, and consequently when compelled through age or physical inability to retire, they are poorly provided for. Various plans have been discussed for pension relief, and it will no doubt be but a question of time till some (2) workable system will be adopted.

Advancement in the Civil Service Reform movement

- (1) 24th Report of Civil Service Commissioner, 1907, p.7.
- (2) Good Government, Feb. 15, 1901, p. 37.

has been chiefly along two lines, namely, better enforcement of the Civil Service Law and the inclusion under the law of portions of the Civil Service which were previously administered under the Spoils System. There are now more than six hundred kinds of examinations in the national service, from tests for skilled laborers, to the examination for the calculator of the Nautical Almanac at the National Observatory. ⁽¹⁾ Even the possession of executive ability has been successfully tested under the Merit System. Heads of newly formed bureaus, requiring organizing ability of a high order, as well as special knowledge, have been filled through Civil Service examinations in Washington, ⁽²⁾ thus showing that if executive ability can be secured satisfactorily under competitive examination, the way is open for extending the system to all heads of departments except such as are purely political, like cabinet positions.

Great credit is due to the fact, that from the passage of the law in 1883, the men who have composed the Commission have been men of action and ability.

(1) R. H. Dana, Civil Service Reform, p. 9.

(2) Hon. R. H. Dana, Civil Service Reform, p. 10.

Often laboring under great disadvantages, yet in perfect harmony with each other they have had but one aim in view, namely that of raising the tone of public life. The success of the Commission's work naturally must depend in large measure upon co-operation on the part of officials connected with the classified service. Such co-operation is clearly contemplated by the law which expressly prescribes that its provisions shall be equally binding upon all officers of the United States connected with the different parts of the service within these provisions. ⁽¹⁾

One of the chief evils against which the Commission have had to contend is that of political activity on the part of officials in the various departments. Under the Civil Service Rules the "Commission have authority to make investigation concerning the facts, and reporting all matters touching the enforcement and effect of the Civil Service act, rules and regulations," ⁽²⁾ The authority of the Commission stopped, however, with the finding of facts and bringing the same to the attention ⁽³⁾ of the proper Department or the President.

(1) 15th Report, Civil Service Commission, p. 20.

(2) 21st Report, Civil Service Commission, p.107.

(3) 17th Report, Civil Service Commission, p.19.

This was a decided disadvantage. It was found that in leaving the enforcement of these executive orders, to the heads of departments, it resulted in a lack of uniformity and consequently the precedents for action were not well defined. Much more political activity was allowed in some departments than in others, and by lack of harmony with the Commission in this matter the power of the Commission was crippled. On June 15, 1907, the President amended Rule I., so as to put the matter under the control of the Commission. This amendment provides that "persons who, by the provisions of these rules are in the competitive classified service, while retaining the right to vote as they please and to express privately their opinions on all political subjects, shall take no active part in political management or in political campaign.⁽¹⁾ This increase in the power of the Commission is indicative of good results, and will bring greater efficiency into the service.

It has been truly said that "the Merit System is simply one method of securing an honest and efficient

(1) 24th Report, Civil Service Commission, p.13.

administration of the government, and in the long run the sole justification of any type of government lies in proving itself both honest and efficient." ⁽¹⁾ It is purely a democratic system. The main principle of the Spoils system is that offices belong especially to the politician. The merit system is for the people. The whole patronage system is inimical to American institutions. President Roosevelt says: "No republic can permanently endure when its politics are corrupt and base, and the spoils system, the application in politics of the degrading doctrine that 'to the victor belongs the spoils' produces corruption and degradation. The man who is in politics for the office, might just as well be in politics for the money he can get for his vote, so far as the general good is concerned ---Civil Service Reform is not merely a movement to better the public service. It achieves this end too, but its main purpose is to raise the tone of public life; it is in this direction that its effects ⁽²⁾ have been of incalculable good to the whole community.

Much of the success of the National Civil Service

(1) Roosevelt, "Good Government", June 1903, p.94.

(2) Roosevelt, "Administration and the Civil Service," pp. 5 - 6.

Reform movement is due to the framers of the Pendleton Bill, for drawing up an instrument so clearly setting forth the aims of reform. Mr. Foulke says of this Act, "The men who framed the federal Civil Service Act, created a mechanism of marvellous adaptability and efficiency for accomplishing the end they had in view. I regard that act as one of the most skillfully devised statutes ever passed by a legislative body."⁽¹⁾

(1. Wm. Dudley Foulke, "Advance of the Competitive System", published by National Civil Service Reform League.

Chapter III.

The Reform Movement in the Civil Service of States, Cities, and the Insular Possessions.

The example set by the federal government in adopting a competitive system for appointment to the federal service, has led to the application of Merit principles of appointment in various of the State and Municipal governments. The same evils which the federal Civil Service Act was designed to remedy, exist to a large degree in many of the lesser governmental institutions. Appointive offices, almost without exception, are considered as political spoils, the reward for party service, and party loyalty being the chief test.

At the time when the National Civil Service Law was passed, several of the States showed great interest in the question of reform, and even took steps toward passing similar measures. New York was the first one to act. It was there that the Spoils System first

developed in this country, and there it has inflicted some of its most intolerable evils,⁽¹⁾ consequently she was ready and eager for some method of reform. A reform association had already been formed before any action was taken by the National government, and upon the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883, the New York Legislature, being then in session, did not adjourn till they had passed a similar act, applicable to the evils of both the State Civil Service and cities of fifty thousand inhabitants. The Governor, Grover Cleveland, appointed a Commission and approved of the rules and regulations for the enforcement of the Act.⁽²⁾ This Act applied to all departments of the State service, and gave extensive authority for inquiry into municipal service. It also contained a stringent prohibition of political assessments. This Act was superceded by the Act of 1897, which reverted largely to the spoils method but in 1899 was replaced by the present act. The permanence of the system is guaranteed by a provision in the State Constitution adopted

(1) 2nd Report, Civil Service Commission, p.51-2.

(2) 22nd Report Civil Service Commission, p.150.

in 1894, "that appointments and promotions in the civil service of the State and of all the civil divisions thereof, including cities and villages, shall be made according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained so far as practicable, by examinations, which so far as practicable, shall be competitive.⁽¹⁾

During the same year, bills and resolutions were introduced into the legislatures of Pennsylvania and Ohio purporting Civil Service Reforms. In Ohio no action was taken and in Pennsylvania the bill was defeated, but a bill prohibiting political assessments was adopted. The next year, 1884, the Massachusetts legislature passed a Civil Service Law, based upon the New York and federal acts. This law applied to the entire service of the State and to the twenty-four largest cities. The same year a similar act failed of adoption⁽²⁾ by the Indiana legislature. Civil Service Reform in state and city government has by no means kept pace with the almost steady advance that it has made in the federal service since its introduction. After 1884 very little

(1) 22nd Report Civil Service Commission, p.151.

(2) 22nd Report, Civil Service Commission, p.150.

action was taken by the States. New York and Massachusetts remained the only ones having adopted a merit system until 1905. ⁽¹⁾ During this long interval the system received some degree of recognition; various cities as Chicago, Milwaukee, Denver, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles had adopted civil service rules, thus constantly holding before the public the economy and efficiency resulting from the adoption of a competitive system of appointment to public office. ⁽²⁾

Within the last few years there has been a marked revival in Civil Service Reform throughout the States and Municipalities of the Union. This is shown by the passage of new legislation to that effect. In 1905 Wisconsin and Illinois both adopted Civil Service Laws. In Wisconsin the Merit System is to extend over the entire state service while in Illinois it applies only to the penal and charitable institutions. In 1906 acts were passed to cover the cities of Philadelphia and Norfolk, Virginia. In 1907 the City of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, adopted a law, and the State of Colorado

(1) Good Government, May 1907, p.38.

(2) Good Government, May, 1907, p. 38.

after ten years of fighting finally secured a Civil Service Law, which applies to the State institutions, to the Civil Service Commission itself and such cities as adopt its provisions by a popular vote. ⁽¹⁾ The law is comprehensive in scope and concise in form, avoiding the unnecessary details of administration which hamper many civil service laws. In many states and cities, like Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, Connecticut and numerous others, the movement is rapidly gaining ground, and although unsuccessful thus far in obtaining reform they will no doubt soon succeed in securing it, for everywhere the people are beginning to realize the advantages thus to be secured through better administration.

The Civil Service Laws of the various States are all originally based upon the federal act of 1883, and although many have greatly improved upon it along certain lines, yet they all possess some provisions very much the same, as, for example, all of them have strict prohibition against political activity of

(1) Good Government, May, 1907, p. 38.

employees and political assessments. The powers and duties of the Commission are also largely the same, except that in the States the Commission are given full power to investigate all cases of fraud, and have power to administer oaths, subpoena witness, and compel the production of testimony, essential powers which the Federal Commission still lack. The New York law was the best example of State Civil Service laws till 1905, when the Wisconsin law was passed. The sources of this Act were derived from the Federal Civil Service law and the laws of Massachusetts and particularly New York. Some improvements were incorporated into it as a result of the experience of other States. The legislature not only put in the essential provisions of the laws but also incorporated the most important provisions of the rules and regulations framed by the State Commissions. "As a result the Wisconsin law is self-operating. Even were there no rules framed by the Commission, it would still embody a merit system."⁽¹⁾ It has gone farther than any other law in that all appointments as far as practicable must be by competitive examination, and all employees, appointed prior to its

(1) Report of Civil Service Commission of Wisconsin, 1906, p.6.

adoption, must pass a non-competitive examination to
 retain their position. ⁽¹⁾ It has also done much
 toward solving that vexed problem of regulating promo-
 tions so as to exclude political consideration and to
 provide for advancement as a reward for industry and
 ability, by arranging for examinations, keeping
 efficiency records and establishing grades of salary. ⁽²⁾
 The Commission have drawn a line between positions
 requiring executive ability and those whose duties
 are merely routine. Promotions as pertaining to
 persons in the department are made from grade to grade
 as a result of examination in the lower service, but
 positions of executive ability are open to general
 competition. In Wisconsin also for the first time
 in the history of the Civil Service movement, legislative
 employees are included under Civil Service law. ⁽³⁾

The Merit System is not only applied to our
 national government positions and to many of our state
 and municipal institutions, but also to our insular
 possessions, where the results have been exceedingly

- (1) 22nd Report Civil Service Commission, p. 154.
 Good Government, Feb., 1907, p.14.
- (2) Good Government, Feby. 1907, p.14.
- (3) 22nd Report, Civil Service Commission, p.150.
 Report Civil Service Commission of Wis., 1906, p.5.

satisfactory and encouraging. The Phillipine Islands were given a Civil Service Law in 1900 and now possess a very complete and comprehensive system. Many natives are now holding positions, and much interest is shown in the service. In Porto Rico a law was adopted March 14, 1907, which went into effect January 1, 1908. This also is a complete law covering nearly all positions except those filled by the President, the Governor of the Island or the legislature. "It has been shown that the exclusion of the Spoils system and the employment and promotion of only those of demonstrated ability are essential in the successful solution of the problems of government that exist in these islands. (1)

The extension in the federal service has been to a degree upwards, that is, to include offices of increasing importance. In the state and municipal service it has been more, so to speak, horizontal; that is, to include a constantly increasing number of positions of the same general grade or character. We find now, however, that the states are also beginning to

(1) 22nd Report, Civil Service Commission, p.23, 25-6.
Good Government, Jan.1907, p. 48.
Annals American Academy, Vol. 19, p.340-50 by
Wm. Dud. Foulke.

extend upwards, as is well shown by Wisconsin in applying her competitive examinations to positions requiring professional skill and training. In conclusion it may be said that wherever this system has been on trial, the body of the Civil Service, national, state and municipal, has been largely separated from politics and the results have justified the efforts made on its behalf.

Chapter IV.

The Application of the Merit System in the States of New York and Wisconsin.

The opponents of the Merit System have at times held forth as an argument against it, that it is contrary to the fundamental principles of American government. On the contrary it is the most direct method of putting these principles into effect. The Merit System is democratic, for it gives every citizen an equal opportunity to participate in the public service according to fitness. It stands for a government "of the people, for the people and by the people"; but as the people themselves cannot discharge all the duties, and perform all the services required, the government must be administered by their agents. If these agents are appointed as a result or reward of party activity the democratic spirit of our government is more or less perverted. When, however, we come to

a system under which every citizen should have an equal opportunity to aspire to serve the public, and to serve through a test of merit or ability, then the service is uplifted and we realize more fully the true spirit of our government. As Hon. Carl Schurz says, "Is not this the equality of opportunity, (1) which forms the very life element of true democracy?"

The Merit System is not only democratic, in that it brings the people more into touch with the government, and makes them interested in every phase of governmental activity, but it is one of the most economical and efficient forms of administration of government. The efficiency of the application of this system to all departments of State work is admirably demonstrated by those States which are administered under Civil Service Laws. In the State of New York, the Merit System has been constantly applied to all the administrative departments of State work, since the passage of the Civil Service Law in 1883. The working and result of the system in that State have been

(1) Quoted from Civil Service Reform in Wisconsin
by Ernest N. Warner.

entirely satisfactory. When in 1897 under a hostile legislature, the "Black Act" was passed, which reverted very much to the patronage by taking a large share of the control of competitive examinations from the hands of the Commission and placing it in the hands of the departments where the appointments were to be made, general dissatisfaction was immediately manifest. The next legislature, returned by the people, repealed the Act and the present law was adopted. In 1906 the President of the Commission addressed an inquiry to the several state and county officers concerning their experience with appointees selected from the eligible lists. In the replies not one advocated a rescinding of the law or a return to the Spoils System, and the great majority bore testimony to the efficiency of the law, and the wholesome effect upon the public service of the enforcement of the rule of competition. Supt. C. V. Collins of the State Prison Department said: "We feel that the Civil Service Law is a benefit to the service in that it furnishes men of superior

qualifications and in a measure protects them in their positions, thus prompting them to earnest endeavor to become proficient in their work and so to perform their duties as to merit retention in office.⁽¹⁾ Similar statements came from all, thus showing that even those men, high in position, who might be looked upon as preferring to choose their political friends for office, are in favor of the Merit System, realizing that a greater efficiency is obtained under it. In a State like New York, where the Spoils System was so rampant in its abuses, and where the political "Boss" has always been such a powerful factor in controlling the policy of the State, the beneficial results of the Merit System are more pronounced, for someone has said, "The only honest test of the Civil Service Reform System is to compare it with the Spoils System which it is intended to replace."⁽²⁾

The Wisconsin Civil Service Law, as previously stated, is one of the most efficient and applicable in the country. It applies to every department of State

(1) Report of the Civil Service Commission of New York, 1906, p. 9-10.

(2) Outlook, Vol. 76, p. 938-941.

work and includes within its scope practically all the positions, stenographers being about the only ones excepted. The Wisconsin Commission feel confident that merit can be made a test for positions where professional or technical skill are required to as great advantage as for mere clerical positions. ⁽¹⁾ The Civil Service Law has been in operation in Wisconsin since June, 1905, and the results have been most gratifying and satisfactory. The adaption of a Merit System to the State administrative departments, must be administered with great tact, for it is rather revolutionary in its character and there is usually much friction, creaking and groaning at the start. In Wisconsin the system proved satisfactory from the very first, ⁽²⁾ and recently, the Secretary of the State Agricultural Society who for the last fifteen years has had his office in the State capitol, stated in the presence of two or three officers, that the efficiency of the Capitol force has increased twenty-five per cent. since the adoption of the Civil Service Law, and this ⁽³⁾ statement was quite conservative.

- (1) Good Government, September, 1907, p. 73.
- (2) Report of State Civil Service Commission, of Wisconsin, 1906, p. 28.
- (3) Quoted from Mr. F. E. Doty.

The explanation for the above increased efficiency may be given by the fact that under the Merit System political activity on the part of the employees of the State has been checked and reduced almost to a minimum. This is one of the chief abuses and defects of the old system, and with this eliminated, better work in all the departments must be the inevitable result. It has done away with the practice on the part of candidates and their friends of importuning officers and of wasting their time in the interests of their candidacy. It leaves the officer comparatively free to do the work for which he is elected, and to give his undivided attention to it, because it is coming to be known that appeals to officers and interviews and petitions on behalf of some aspirant are fruitless. The people are beginning to recognize and understand that the only way to get a position in the public service is to pass an examination, and to be ranked according to merit. (1)

Besides producing efficiency in the service the Merit System is more economical than the old one.

(1) Civil Service Movement in Wisconsin,
E. A. Ketchum.

Mr. Edward A. Ketchem, State Insurance Examiner of Wisconsin, says: "The Civil Service Law does not create additional expense on the part of the State, but is indirectly an economical provision. I am convinced of that because first; the time of the employees is more continuously devoted to the service; second, the time of the officers is more continuously devoted to the business for which he is elected to attend to. Under the political system, every department was besieged with office seekers and a large amount of valuable time was given to interviews with candidates or their friends, or to answering their correspondence, and all this means money; third, the fact that the law provides that all pay rolls must first be certified by the Civil Service Commission serves as a substantial check upon unnecessary expenditures for service; fourth, then there is the moral effect upon all of our people of having a standard based upon merit and fitness only, and of having such a standard rigidly adhered to. ⁽¹⁾ Upon this point the Commission make a very similar statement when they say;

(1) The Civil Service Reform Movement in Wisconsin, Edw. A. Ketchem.

"There is no doubt that the work of the Commission has resulted in economy; it has insured to the State the time, energy and attention of many employees who in certain seasons would doubtless have been away from their departments, engaged in political work. A casual comparison of the departments, before and after the Civil Service Law was passed, by any one familiar with both conditions would furnish ample evidence of the changed situation, and would indicate the greater attentiveness and efficiency of the employees."⁽¹⁾

(1) "Good Government", Feb., 1907, p.13.

Chapter V.

The Application of Merit principles in Minnesota.

In the two States of the Union, where the most complete form of the Merit System have been adopted in all the administrative departments of the State, the results have been most gratifying. These results have shown the superiority of the Merit System over the Spoils System by being more democratic in principle, more efficient and economical in the administration of government, and more in touch with the people. With these features of the system in mind, let us look at the situation in Minnesota and see how the system would fit the conditions. There now exists and has existed for some time a generally felt need for Civil Service Reform in this State, not only in some of the departments of the State government, but in some of the leading municipalities. Very little, however, has been done along this line. There is but one city in the State which has adopted a Merit System; that

city is Duluth. There, in 1900, through the efforts of Hon. Henry F. Green, civil service rules were adopted, which apply to the police and fire departments, and all clerks who do not handle money. These constitute about one-fourth of the whole clerical force. Appointments are made by the Mayor from a list of eligibles furnished by the Board of Civil Service Commissioners and in case of removal the Mayor is required within twenty-four hours, to file in his office, open to public inspection, a statement of the cause. "The general personnel since the adoption of the new home rule charter in 1900, is under the protection as well as restriction of the Civil Service regulations and there has been a marked improvement in efficiency and discipline."⁽¹⁾

Minneapolis is the only other city in the State, which has made any effort towards adopting civil service rules. In 1902 an amendment to the city charter was proposed for this purpose, but the people were not in favor of the amendments,⁽²⁾ and nothing was accomplished. Attempts were made by the citizens of this city at different

(1) 21st Report of the United States Civil Service Commission, p.126.

(2) Good Government, Jan. 1903, p.5-6.

times to secure a Home Rule Charter, all having provisions which would improve the Civil Service. In 1904 such a charter was being pushed with considerable energy, and chapter V of this charter contained Civil Service provisions. These were well drawn, and applied the Merit System to the Police and Fire departments. It was provided that in these departments no appointments, promotions, or transfers could be made except by competitive examination. The Chief of Police and the head of the Fire Department were exempt. The Civil Service Commission were to keep an eligible list of all candidates passing the examinations, and appointments were to be made according to highest rank. No payment was to be made by the comptroller unless the pay-roll was first certified by the Commission, who were also given full power to make investigations, administer oaths and compel witnesses to appear. ⁽¹⁾ One provision was similar to a ⁽²⁾ provision in the Massachusetts law, in that the Commission in ranking applicants might add a certain per cent. to the examination grade on account of long experience of

(1) Good Government, April, 1904, p. 58.

(2) Massachusetts Civil Service Rules, Rule 40, Sec. 1.

the candidate and prior service, or to persons supporting a family or owning a home in town. Failure to secure the charter prevented the reform. During the year 1902 Mayor David P. Jones established a rule under which men selected to the police force should be required to take a physical examination and to qualify as to character, habits and general aptitude for police work, politics not to be considered.⁽¹⁾ This rule has been lived up to by each Mayor ever since. The results have been entirely satisfactory, and the need of a regular Civil Service Law, administered under an efficient Commission, is felt by all. In his annual message delivered to the City Council February 14th, 1908, Mayor Haynes says, "I have repeatedly urged the passage of such a law for our city and Chief Corrison and myself caused a bill for this purpose to be prepared and presented to the last legis-⁽²⁾lature for its consideration, but it failed to pass."

In the fall of 1907, a Committee of the National Underwriters' Association⁽³⁾ investigated the conditions in the fire department of Minneapolis and in its report

(1) Annual Report, 1905, City of Minneapolis, p. 449.

(2) Annual Message, James C. Haynes, Mayor of Minneapolis 1908.

(3) Good Government, February, 1908, p. 11.

recommended that the department be placed under civil service rules. This report was discussed by the members of the City Council, but no official action was taken. A poll of the aldermen showed a distinct sentiment against the application of the Merit System to the fire or any other departments. On April 26, 1908, however, the City Council passed a resolution by a vote of fourteen to eleven, for the appointment of a committee to prepare rules for the establishment of a merit system in the various city departments, and it is hoped that Minneapolis will soon fall in line with the reform movement.

Having ascertained the extent of the Civil Service reform, along municipal lines, let us turn to the government of the State and notice the condition of the various administrative departments. Minnesota is a growing state. Her vast natural resources are being rapidly developed, and her territory settled. Industry is being promoted on every hand. With this great growth, the functions of government are being

(1) Good Government, May, 1907, p. 35.

multiplied, thus increasing the work in the various departments, and requiring the addition of new ones. As the government^{al} duties increase, larger numbers of employees are needed to carry on the work. One great result of all this has been that the number of officials, elected by the people, has remained about the same, but that the appointive power of these officials has been greatly extended, for under the present system the appointment of all the Capitol employees is made by the heads of the departments. Comparatively good service is rendered, especially in some departments, but it is entirely dependent upon the head whether or not good appointments are made, and under a system where the appointing officer has power to appoint and remove at will without any restraint being placed upon his judgment or any special requirement on the employee, the tendency is that he is more influenced by the fact that a candidate is a loyal partisan or by party pressure, than that he is especially qualified for doing the work. This abuse of the appointing power results in inefficiency

of service and increased expense to the State, especially in departments, the duties of which require special qualification on the part of its employees.

In two of the great administrative departments of the State, the needs of reform have become so imperative that it has been necessary to adopt a competitive system for making appointments. The two departments are those of the Dairy and Food Commission, which adopted the Merit System through a statutory act, and the Railroad and Warehouse Commission in which through an act of the Commission itself merit was made the test for appointment. Within the past few years the functions of the Dairy and Food Commission have greatly increased, due to the fact that in Minnesota the dairy industry is one of ever-increasing importance, and that the passing of pure food laws requires constant effort to prevent the marketing of unwholesome foods. The nature of these duties is such as to require special technical knowledge and ability on the part of the employees, the demand for which is constantly increasing. It was realized,

therefore, that if the work was to be done in an entirely satisfactory manner, competent employees must be secured, and that some special test was necessary to determine their competency. Consequently, at the last session of the legislature in 1905, a law was passed, placing this department on a merit basis. ⁽¹⁾ This law provides that all applicants for the position of inspector, must pass a competitive examination before a Board of Examiners. This examination is not only to determine the general qualifications as to knowledge of the technical phases of the work, but also as to the moral character, mental ability, and physical fitness of the applicant. The Board of Examiners consists of the Dairy and Food Commissioner, the Dean of the Agricultural College, and the Attorney General of Minnesota. This board is to keep an eligible list, as a result of examinations, from which the Commissioner must make his appointments. An inspector can only be removed for good cause. After a removal the Commissioner must file with the Secretary of State, his reasons for making the same in writing, which is open to public inspection. The one

(1) Laws of Minnesota, 1905, Ch. 300, Sec. 1, § 447.

removed may also, on request being made within fifteen days after removal, be given a hearing before the Board of Examiners. The result of this is self-evident. Men and women of ability will be appointed to these positions regardless of political affiliations. They are encouraged to render their best services, knowing that by so doing the retention of their positions is assured them, and that a whim or fancy of the head of the Department cannot put them out. The service is thus strengthened by a corps of employees, experienced and reliable. The system thus far has proved exceedingly satisfactory. There has been no difficulty in getting capable men and women to take the examinations which are held in January. At the last examination out of fourteen candidates, eleven passed and were placed on the eligible list. ⁽¹⁾ That the people express their confidence in it goes to show that the time is ripe for the application of the merit principles to all departments of State work.

In the Railroad and Warehouse Commission the

(1) Deputy Commissioner.

(1)
need of a merit system for appointment was early felt, and resulted in the adoption by the Commission entirely independent of any State action, of a competitive examination system designed to meet this need. The functions of this department extend over the entire internal commercial business of the State. The Commission have the supervision and regulation of all railroads within the State, of all warehouses, express companies, grain shippers and commission merchants, the weighing and shipping of hay and straw, the testing of all railroad scales, and the supervision of country houses, or elevators. To carry on this vast amount of detailed work it is not only necessary to employ a great number of men but efficiency requires men who are expert in their various lines of work, as for example inspectors of grain, or scales, and men familiar with the intricacies of transportation in general. The Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners, like the heads of all other departments in the State, have full and unquestioned power to appoint and dismiss their employees at will. The great number of

(1) Report of Railroad and Warehouse Commission of Minnesota, 1894, p. 42.

appointments at their disposal, including about three hundred places at the present time,⁽¹⁾ and the requirement of special qualifications for the larger number of these, soon convinced the Commission that in order to have the work of the department performed in a satisfactory manner, some test must be made to determine the fitness of the men appointed. As early as 1894 Mr. A. A. Clausen, the Chief Inspector for the Commission, in his report, said, "Our rules should provide for a system of examinations and a certain standard of qualifications before new appointments are made. No person should be selected not of proper age, physical condition and possessing other necessary qualifications."⁽²⁾ This advice was acted upon and the present competitive system was adopted, which applies to all inspection departments. The whole system is based upon the promotion idea. Original appointments are made only to the very lowest grades in the various departments, as the grain department, the weighing department, etc., and no new man is appointed to fill one of the higher positions. "When

(1) Staples, Railroad & Warehouse Commission, Mar. statement

(2) Report of Railroad & Warehouse Commission of Minn., 1894, p. 42.

Inspectors are wanted, promotions are made from men in the helping department, and they are only promoted after a thorough examination, and the most successful applicant if sufficiently well qualified is given the promotion. It generally takes from two to five years and sometimes longer before a man becomes qualified to take the examinations. ⁽¹⁾ Equal opportunity is given to all the employees and it depends upon their own ability how rapidly they are advanced.

The power of removal is never exercised except for good cause. This system has proved entirely satisfactory. By means of it the department is provided with men of experience who possess expert knowledge concerning their line of work. There is not an Inspector on the entire force of employees, who has not been in the department for at least seven years. ⁽²⁾ It is well demonstrated, therefore, that under the direction of honest and capable men the system results in giving the State able and efficient employees, and a high class of service. The danger lies in the fact that since the

(1) Mr. Chas. F. Staples, Commissioner.

(2) Mr. Chas. F. Staples, Commissioner.

system is wholly independent of any authority other than that of the Commission, the election of unscrupulous commissioners might result in doing away with competitive tests of merit and a resort to the use of their political patronage, with all its attending evils.

Chapter VI.

Application of the Merit System to the Various Administrative Department of Minnesota.

In the other administration departments, as yet, no merit system has been applied although the increase of the functions of these departments and the increase in the number of employees has been quite constant, keeping pace with the growth of the State. This is well exemplified in the department of the State Treasurer. Where about seven years ago, the entire work of the department was done by a force which consisted of the Deputy Treasurer, Chief Clerk and two other clerks; at the present time, besides the Chief Clerk and Deputy Treasurer, four other clerks and a stenographer are necessary to do the work. The vast increase in the amount of work may be illustrated by the fact that at that time there were only about two hundred checks issued each month. Now there are two thousand each month.

Each state institution had its own treasurer, and drew but one check from the State Treasurer for a sum covering all the expenses of the institution. Under the Board of Control this work has been so centralized that now the State Treasurer must issue separate checks for each employee in each institution, thus making much detailed work in the Treasury Department. The loans on the permanent trust funds of the State also show an increase of nearly four million dollars during the same time. The nature of most of the work of this department is such as to require skill and experience on the part of employees. It needs men who are familiar with the financial condition of the State, and with the problem of loaning and investing large sums of money.

An important reason why the Spoils system has never developed its most obnoxious forms in the governmental administration of Minnesota is that it has always been a Republican State, in politics, and that the important offices like those of State Auditor, State Treasurer and Secretary of State, have been held by Republicans almost continuously. The result has been

that the new incoming official, if himself not thoroughly acquainted with the work, by having served in the department before, would not make a clean sweep, but remove the minor employees and retain someone who was so familiar with the work that it could be continued with very little interruption. This is the case in the State Treasury Department. The Deputy Treasurer, Mr. Pettyjohn, was appointed deputy by State Treasurer Black in 1901,⁽¹⁾ and has been retained ever since. He was thoroughly acquainted with the banking business before the appointment, and when the State Treasurer's work was extended so as to include the treasury work for all the State Institutions, he was able to produce order out of the resulting chaos, and arrange the work in a very systematic way. He is so fully acquainted with every detail of the work that he is practically indispensable, and hence is retained by each new treasurer. If the strength of the two large parties were as evenly balanced in Minnesota as in many other states, so that they would alternate in power, there would no doubt take place a clean sweep after each election, resulting in a new force of

(1) Legislative Manual of Minn., 1901, p. 645.

inexperienced employees. The effect upon the service of the department is easily understood. In order to keep up the efficiency of the work a merit system is necessary. It furnishes the department with men of ability, and secures the tenure for those of experience, already in office. It also gives the officer and employee more time to devote to the duty to which they were elected or appointed.

In the department of Audit, there is even greater need of a merit system. The work of this department consists of the auditing of all claims, and the Land department which has charge of all state lands, keeping strict account of all forests, timber and mining interests. With the exploitation of the State's resources, this work is rapidly increasing, demanding the services of men who are thoroughly acquainted with the problems of forestry, of timber valuation, and mine inspection.

The increased demand for employees is shown by the fact that in 1901 there were but ten appointees necessary to perform the work while at the present time the force consists of about thirty. ⁽¹⁾ A great deal of responsibility ⁽²⁾

(1) Legislative Manual of Minn., 1901, p. 375.

(2) Deputy Auditor.

rests with the State Auditor to appoint men to all of these positions who are capable of rendering efficient service to the State. All of these positions, but eight, are included in the land department as land clerks, mine inspectors, cruisers of timber, superintendent of immigration, etc., and in order to get men with the proper qualifications, the Auditor must spend much valuable time, if he does not retain those already in office, or else fill the places with his political friends and trust to their ability to learn to perform the required duties.

The application of a competitive system of examinations for making these appointments is of inestimable value, for under it the State secures the services of the most capable men, while the Auditor would be free to fulfill the duties for which he was elected. A merit system is of benefit to the State, and to the appointing officer as well as to the employee. It is of benefit to the State, as it secures for the State a high grade of efficient servants, who are free to give their entire time to their work, thus rendering better service, and requiring a lesser number of employees than when half of

time is devoted to politics. The service to the State is constant and not disrupted by every election. It is of benefit to the appointing officer, as he is freed from the responsibility of seeking for candidates, but has only to choose men of ability who have been tested, and whose names are presented according to their merit. He is also free from constant solicitation on the part of politicians or friends, who desire offices for themselves or others. The effects upon the employee are equally beneficial. He feels that he is a servant of the State rather than of the party. He can give his entire attention to his duties and need not feel dependent upon the will of the head of the department, since he is assured that by rendering efficient service he will retain his position regardless of the party in power. He is also free from making forced contributions towards political campaigns, a practice of great abuse, now strictly forbidden by every Civil Service Law.

That there is need for a Civil Service reform in the administrative departments of Minnesota is indicated by

the great growth of functions in every department, as well as by the fact that in two of them, merit principles have already been applied. Although, special legislation on this subject for one department, and the adoption of such a system by another one, greatly promote the efficiency of those departments through rendering better service to the State, the thing that is most needed is not a separate system in each department but a State Civil Service Law, administered through a State Civil Service Commission, which is equally applicable to all the State departments. The wisdom of such an act is shown in Wisconsin where since the adoption of the State Civil Service Law in 1905, the whole tone of public life and public service has been raised, and the cost of administration to the State greatly lessened.

A Civil Service Law should be carried one step farther, as in Wisconsin, and be made to apply to legislative employees, as well as to the various administrative departments of the State.

In the appointment of these legislative employees,

some of the rankest abuses of the patronage prevail. This patronage consists in appointing, at the beginning of each legislature a corps of stenographers, typewriters, and laborers, as well as the clerks for the various committees. These appointments are made in the following manner; at the beginning of a session, there is a caucus of the majority party, at which the various members bring forth the names of those for whom they wish to secure a position. The number is determined largely by the demands of the party. Each House makes its own appointments. The Senate has about fifty while the House of Representatives makes about sixty. The salaries of these positions range from \$2.50 a day for a page to \$10. a day for the clerk of the Judiciary Committee; the average salary for stenographers is \$5.00 a day. It is needless to say that many unnecessary appointments are made, and that many are incapable of doing the work for which they are appointed. The condition in Wisconsin in 1905 illustrates this. The Wisconsin legislature made about eighty-two appointments,

thirty-five of which were stenographers; so many of these were incompetent that the burden of the whole work fell to four or five persons. There were often persons on the pay-rolls who did not put in an appearance at all except to draw their pay. (1)

Hon. Ernest N. Warner, the father of the Wisconsin Civil Service Law, says: "Legislative appointments were personal prerequisites, and the number and pay of legislative employees was determined by the demand for places rather than by the necessity of the service. The whole system and method of appointment of the State's employees was a species of graft." This statement can be taken as authentic as Mr. Warner was a member of the Wisconsin Assembly and thoroughly familiar with the conditions prevailing. By the application of a merit test for the appointment of these employees the number has been greatly reduced and the efficiency raised, and on the whole, the members of the legislature were well satisfied to be freed from the pressure of place-seekers. (2)

Although under the present system in Minnesota, capable

(1) F. E. Doty, Secy. and Chief Examiner of the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission.

(2) F. E. Doty, Secy. and Chief Examiner of the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission.

officials are often secured, the application of a merit system tends to make the entire force more capable and efficient for "The best public servants will be those who give the longest time to the public service, and that city or state will get the best results which looks for the most capable men and keeps them in its service so as to secure the advantage of their increasing experience."⁽¹⁾

(1) Fairlie, "Relations of Civil Service Reform to Municipal Administration, p. 6.

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