

RETYPED FROM ORIGINAL
Quarterly Conference Meeting February 7, 1905

Report of committee on compensation and vacations

The undersigned having been appointed a committee by the Chairman of the Board of Control on August 4, 1904, pursuant to a motion made by Dr. Tomlinson and seconded by Judge Gould, to recommend or suggest some system for rewarding long and efficient service, either by promotion, increased pay, or by other means (it being stated by the Chairman at that time that the quarterly conference of the date named had practically agreed upon the adoption of some system), beg respectfully to report as follows:

That since reporting progress at the last quarterly conference, we have held meetings at the Fergus Falls State Hospital on January 17th 1905; at the St. Peter State Hospital and at Owatonna on January 24th; at the Rochester State Hospital and State Training School on January 25th; and at the School for Feeble-Minded on January 26th. The Superintendents of the state institutions located in the cities above named appeared before the committee at our request. On the evening of January 26th Warden Wolfer met with the committee in St. Paul.

All members of the committee attended each of the meetings, except that Dr. Rogers was prevented from being present at Fergus Falls and St. Peter.

The committee gave full hearings at all the places indicated, except that at Faribault our time was somewhat limited, and it is anticipated that Superintendents Tate and Dow may desire to express themselves more fully when the questions involved come up for discussion on February 7th. The committee express regret that they were unable to extend their stay at Faribault or the visit the Hastings and Anoka Asylums.

We have the honor to further report that for the purpose of considering the matters assigned to us, the institutions were grouped in three classes, as follows: One class consisting of the Hospitals and Asylums for the Insane, and the School for Feeble-Minded and Epileptic; another, of the Prison, Reformatory and Training School; and the third, of the Schools for the Deaf and for the Blind, and State Public School.

As will be readily understood, the committee found many varieties of employment at the different institutions, and acknowledge having met with difficulty in the adoption of general recommendations applicable to all, but we have decided to present some suggestions for your consideration and for discussion at the next quarterly conference.

Unfortunately there are no standards available whereby the public can estimate or judge of the extent of the exactions of personal service by employees in our public institutions. The idea that the inmates of these institutions require only custodial care is still paramount. No one who spends the entire twenty-four hours with his work can have the same interest in or enthusiasm for it that he would have if he were away from it a part of the time. Besides, it is greatly in derogation of good discipline to have those who are off duty constantly in association with those who are on duty. It is also a serious strain

on these employees never to have any relief from the sights and sounds by which they are surrounded unless when out-of-doors. This too intimate association of the caretaker with the inmate also has the tendency to blunt his sensibilities and to make him less sympathetic and considerate. We believe that this matter of personal service and its nature in our public institutions has not had the consideration due it, nor has there been a full appreciation of what is involved in it. It is manifestly unfair that an occupation of such responsibility, where tact, judgment, patience and intelligence more than is usual are required, should be classed with simple manual labor. If we are to get intelligent and competent young people into our hospitals and other institutions, there must be something to attract them to their work, which, from any other standpoint than that of professional enthusiasm, is certainly not attractive, and by most people regarded as repulsive. If the vocation of the care of these unfortunate and dependent people is looked upon only from the standpoint of manual labor, it will always be difficult to get anyone to engage in it, and impossible to secure the services of the intelligent and conscientious that alone should compose our staff of employees, and if we are to have order, decent conduct, cleanliness and good manners among the inmates of our institutions, we must have to care for them people to whom such characteristics are natural or easily acquired.

SERVICE STRIPES AND BADGE

It is worthy of note that human nature is so constituted that insignia, special designations, or other distinguishing marks are very appreciated. This fact is recognized not only in the army and in social organizations, but by railroads and other large enterprises, so that it is becoming more and more the custom to provide some distinguishing mark for special fitness, length of service, or efficiency among employees. On account of the diverse character of the institutions in this state under the control of your Board, it would be necessary, if some provision of this kind is made, to make the designation of such a nature that it would be adaptable to the employees of all the institutions. We believe that those who have served the state faithfully would appreciate such a recognition of their service as this designation would give, and that it would make them prouder of their service and more interested in the welfare of the work, while the fact that the designation was a general one and official from the state would serve to stimulate that esprit de corps which is so essential to enthusiasm and conscientious work. The fact that the character of the service in the different institutions varies, being personal in some, custodial in others, pedagogic and supervisory in others, makes the difficulty of providing a general designation much greater. Your committee, after due consideration, would recommend that whatever designation is adopted should be simple and unobtrusive. We therefore submit for your consideration the following:

It is our opinion that it would be wise to provide that for each three years of service uniformed employees shall wear one service stripe about the left arm of the uniform coat or waist while on duty, and that employees not uniformed shall wear a metal badge while on duty, upon which one bar shall appear for each three years of service.

The committee believe that employees, while in the service of the state, should be permitted the use of the service stripes or badge while off duty, if desired. We are not

prepared to present a more particular description of the proposed stripes or badge, and prefer that this detail should be left for further consideration.

EXTRA COMPENSATION

Your committee approaches with great diffidence the presentation of the subject of increased compensation, not only because it means increased expenditure of money, but also on account of the difficulties in the way of carrying out any measure framed with this object in view, so as to avoid dissatisfaction among employees and at the same time secure their appreciation of the fact that efficiency carries with it the assurance of recognition.

It was the consensus of opinion among the heads of state institutions, as far as heard, and it is the recommendation of your committee, that over and above the maximum compensation fixed by order of the board (assuming that the schedules of salaries and wages are based on a general average of efficiency) extra compensation should be paid for exceptional qualifications and special efficiency, with the provision that in the Hospitals for the Insane and School for Feeble-Minded such extra compensation shall not be paid to nurses before graduation, as a rule, as the training they receive is to be regarded as a part of their compensation.

For efficiency combined with long service it is believed that extra compensation should be allowed and paid, though the committee have not worked out a complete detail plan, and do not know that one can be satisfactorily employed further than to establish maximum limitations of increase, and leave the application of the increase to the action of the Superintendent, subject to the approval of the Board, and to suggest that it seems to us that such extra compensation should be based upon a percentage of the regular schedule maximum.

With some hesitation we quote the following figures as possibly worthy of consideration in connection with the fixing of total maximum extra compensation increases, viz: For domestic service, ten percent; for special service, such as teaching, nursing, etc., fifteen percent; for service in executive positions, twenty percent. This latter, of course, is not to apply to heads of institutions and their staffs.

VACATIONS

The members of your committee do not agree with Mr. Russell Sage in the belief that vacations are harmful. On the contrary, they believe, from their experience, that vacations serve a double purpose; that is, they are not only beneficial too the employee by the relief they give from the monotony of his surroundings and work, but also to the institution on account of the opportunity the necessary changes give to familiarize other employees with the work of the institution, and in that way discover their adaptability in directions that have not heretofore been tried. The vacation also shows the employee that he is not indispensable, and that someone else can do his work. Besides, those who are continuously employed, especially in personal service, without any relief from the strain of the work, have their sensibilities blunted and their interest progressively lessened. Consequently they grow gradually more and more careless and indifferent, whereas if they go away from their work for a time, they get a different point of view, become

refreshed both physically and mentally, and take up their work again with a greater degree of interest and energy.

Your committee agree in the opinion that periodical vacations from responsibilities, cares, and activity of institutional life are conducive to the best results, and that such vacations should be classified. For laborers, artisans and others who work by the day, week or month, and to whom days of non-employment are likely to come from time to time, or who are practically at liberty to temporarily discontinue their service at will, your committee recommends no vacation with pay, but for domestic workers, who are subject to duty call at all times, though ordinarily their time for certain hours per day is at their own disposal, the undersigned recommend a maximum annual vacation of one week with pay. For undergraduate nurses and attendants, not less than ten days with pay; for guards, graduate nurses and attendants, two weeks with pay; and for persons holding places known as executive positions, such as chiefs of departments, matrons in charge, supervisors, general head nurses, keepers, etc., three weeks with pay. The construction of the intent of such order as may be made to fall to the superintendent and Board. It seems to us that length of service might be advantageously reckoned with in the matter of vacations with pay, and the above recommendations might be applied for a term of years, together with progressive annual periods for rest, as the term proceeds.

SO-CALLED RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES

The undersigned believe that the public service would be benefitted if at certain times employees holding responsible places in the various institutions, such as stewards, engineers, and others, might meet for the discussion of matters of importance in their particular work, and we therefore present this topic for consideration to the Board and the conference.

PENSIONS UPON AGE RETIREMENT

Railroads, mercantile houses, and manufacturers have of late been noted as turning their attention to making provision in old age for faithful life service of servants and employees, and it has occurred to your committee that the policy might be found to be advantageous and just in the case of those who serve the state in subordinate places, and particularly those who render personal service, which service your committee believe to be the most difficult to secure and the most irksome to perform, though the most indispensable and valuable of all work.

We do not fully understand whether or not a report upon this subject is contemplated under the wording of our instructions, and we await your further orders in this regard as in all others.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee

St. Paul, Minnesota, February 7, 1905

Supt. Randall then read the following from J. N. Tate, Superintendent of the School for the Deaf, Faribault:

Mr. Randall, Secretary:

I think no badge or stripes would be productive of good to the School for the Deaf.

As to wages beyond the maximum, I may say such a scheme might stimulate our people to better service and result in more permanency than now exists. It is, in my opinion, a weak point in connection with our trades unions that they have a fixed scale of wages. This is true to some extent in our State Institutions. If it is the intention of the Board to obviate this real injustice, then the scheme should be worked out for all its worth.

If the policy followed by most business firms, that of paying what the man or woman is worth, could be practiced in our State Institutions, we would have more satisfactory service. We all know that it often happens that an employee occupies a position without at all filling it; but since he is probably doing the work as well as another would, we allow him to remain. It is with such difficulty that the positions are kept filled at all that we dread to have a vacancy.

Our work is such that it does not, as a rule, attract the best talent. Those who occupy the more responsible positions are too often doing so till something better turns up; or if it be a woman, till she marries. We, perhaps, pay enough for the help we have.

The scheme suggested by the percent too be added in case of exceptional merit, may lead a more meritorious class of persons to seek employment in our state schools. If so, much good would be thereby accomplished.

J.N. Tate, Superintendent.

Faribault, Minnesota, February 6, 1905