

SELECTED PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS  
IN A FEDERAL FIELD OFFICE

BY

STANLEY FRED NEWTON

Bachelor of Arts

Eastern New Mexico University

Portales, New Mexico

1953

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School  
of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical  
College in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
August, 1956

OKLAHOMA  
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE  
LIBRARY  
JAN 2 1957

SELECTED PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS  
IN A FEDERAL FIELD OFFICE

Thesis Approved:

*Robert H. Litton*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

*H. B. Lawkins*

*Robert M. Madsen*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate School

369954

## PREFACE

Modern personnel administrators realize that the most important part of an organization is the people in it; that the "human factor" predominates in production, not the mechanical factor. In broad terms the objective of personnel administration is the improvement of performance by developing good morale among the employees. A program of employee relations is as much a part of personnel administration as is recruitment or position classification.

The term "employee relations" does not have a standardized meaning to students of personnel administration. For the purpose of this study, employee relations is defined as those personnel activities specifically designed to increase employee participation and loyalty in his organization. Somewhat arbitrarily the following aspects of employee relations have been selected for examination: incentive awards system, settlement of grievances, recreational and publications program, employee insurance program, and unionization.

The successful administration of an employee relations program depends, in large part, on the implementation of the program at the worker level. In the federal service, an estimated eighty per cent of the employees work in the field, not in Washington, D. C. For this reason, the federal field

office's responsibility for the operation of an employee relations program is apparent.

The purpose of this study is to examine selected aspects of the employee relations program of a Federal Field Office. The office selected is the Oklahoma state office of the Soil Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, located at Stillwater, Oklahoma. The study includes the origin, nature and extent of each of the programs considered.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my major adviser, Dr. Robert O. Gibbon, for his invaluable guidance, and to Dr. Guy R. Donnell for his counsel. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service, particularly Mr. Ray Walker, State Conservationist, for permission to study employee relations policies in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service, and to Mr. J. B. Corser, Jr., Assistant State Administrative Officer, Mr. Tom Abshure, Personnel Officer, and Mrs. Genny Gibson and Mrs. Lenore Young of the Personnel Section for their patient assistance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. ORGANIZATION FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION . . . . .	1
II. INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM . . . . .	9
III. GRIEVANCES . . . . .	29
IV. RECREATIONAL AND PUBLICATIONS PROGRAM . . . . .	45
V. EMPLOYEE INSURANCE PROGRAM . . . . .	53
VI. UNIONIZATION . . . . .	72
VII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	85

## CHAPTER I

### ORGANIZATION FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

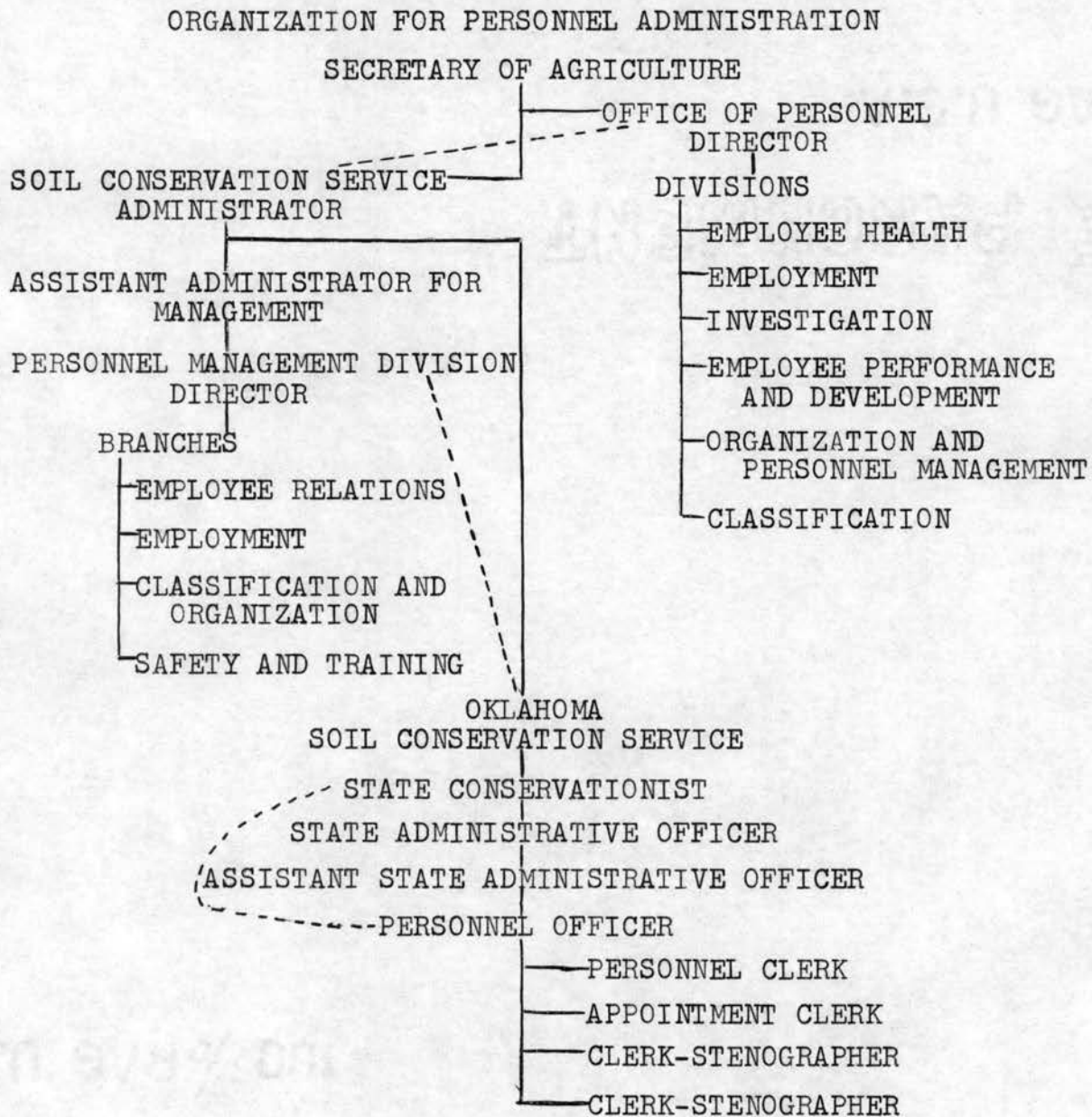
A personnel office may be organized along the lines of a generalist approach, a specialist approach, or a combination of both. In the generalist approach, the personnel officer of a particular agency, office, or work unit is responsible for the activities which make up the personnel program. He has clerical help to take care of the records and reports of the employees he serves. In the specialist approach, there is a division of duties along functional lines and each personnel officer is assigned a particular personnel function or a group of similar functions. A combination of these two is an organization in which the personnel program is handled by a generalist with a staff of specialists who serve primarily as consultants.<sup>1</sup>

The organization for personnel administration in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service is that of a generalist approach. The specialist approach is used in the national office of the Soil Conservation Service and the national office of the United States Department of Agriculture. Inasmuch as the state office is an integral part of the personnel administration hierarchy, a brief sketch

---

<sup>1</sup>William E. Mosher, J. Donald Kingsley, and O. Glenn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration (3rd. ed., New York, 1950), pp. 581-583.

of the entire organization for personnel administration with the duties and responsibilities of each unit is warranted. The organization is as follows.<sup>2</sup>



LEGEND:

———— Legal Lines of Command

----- Operating Lines of Command

<sup>2</sup>Tom Abshure, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 18, 1956.

The Office of Personnel in the Department of Agriculture is composed of a Director of Personnel and six functional divisions. The six functional divisions are the Employee Health Division, the Employment Division, the Investigation Division, the Employee Performance and Development Division, the Organization and Personnel Management Division, and the Classification Division. Each functional division is responsible for only that particular program which is its specialty. The Director coordinates the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Personnel in the Department of Agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

The Office of Personnel is responsible for the personnel management program of the Department of Agriculture. This program includes position classification, job evaluation, salary and wage administration, recruitment, examination, placement, retirement, separation, leave, incentive awards, performance ratings, employee relations, training, employee security, safety, organization, investigations, and health. The Office of Personnel promulgates departmental policies and procedures related to these functions and it delegates substantial authority to agencies for carrying out the operational phases of the personnel management program. In addition to the continuous day to day contacts on specific problems, the Office of Personnel conducts a systematic and periodic review to insure unification of the personnel management program and

---

<sup>3</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Directory on Organization and Field Activities of the Department of Agriculture (Washington, 1954), p. 42.



to measure its effectiveness in serving the agencies' personnel management requirements. It serves as the liaison office on matters of personnel administration with all governmental or private agencies concerned with the work of the Department of Agriculture.<sup>4</sup>

The Personnel Management Division in the Soil Conservation Service is composed of a Director and four functional branches. The four functional branches are the employee relations branch, the employment branch, the classification and organization branch, and the safety and training branch. Each branch is responsible for only that particular program which is its speciality. The Director coordinates the duties and responsibilities of the Personnel Management Division. The Division is responsible for the personnel management program of the Soil Conservation Service. The Division Director has the duty of administering the program by planning and directing the activities of employment, classification, organization, safety, health, training, investigations, incentive awards, employee relations, wage and salary administration, and welfare matters. The Personnel Management Division formulates and recommends the service personnel policies and standards. It works with field staffs in devising and promoting effective methods, practices, and procedures for the service personnel program. The Division advises and assists the field office staffs on all phases of personnel management

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.

and also conducts investigations of the operations of the field offices to assure adherence to personnel policies, standards, and procedures. The Division reviews reports of field investigations and recommends the appropriate action to be taken on any program. The Division maintains working relationships with the Office of Personnel, United States Department of Agriculture, with the Civil Service Commission, and with similar units in other agencies.<sup>5</sup>

The personnel section in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service is composed of a personnel officer and four secretaries. The personnel officer is responsible for the administration of the personnel program of all employees in the State. Besides the personnel program, this officer is also responsible for the payroll and travel policy. He is an administrative assistant with a GS-9 classification. The immediate supervisor of the personnel officer is the State Administrative Officer or his assistant. Over both of these officers is the State Conservationist.<sup>6</sup>

The organization of the personnel section is a generalist approach instead of a specialist approach at this level for several reasons. The Soil Conservation Service is appropriated only so much money for operation and this amount is not sufficient to establish a personnel section along the lines of a specialist approach. Instead, one individual has to

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>Tom Abshure, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 16, 1956.

accept the responsibility for the personnel program. Another reason for the use of this method is the decentralized organization of the Soil Conservation Service and the number of employees. The Soil Conservation Service is state-wide and employs over seven hundred people, most of whom are field employees. The personnel officer has the chief responsibility of assisting operating supervisors in carrying out their personnel management responsibilities and this is achieved better by a generalist. The personnel officer often can achieve close cooperation with line administrators inasmuch as he is able to see the overall picture of a problem and its relationship to the employment process.

The personnel officer exercises leadership in the development and the effective application of a sound career program in the state service.<sup>7</sup> He prepares administrative memorandums and instructional material that pertain to all phases of the personnel program within the State.

In addition, the personnel officer determines qualifications for in-service placements, advises the Civil Service Commission of specific needs and gives information to the Civil Service Commission regarding selection requirements. He personally interviews applicants for professional and administrative positions.

---

<sup>7</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Position Classification, Administrative Assistant for Personnel (Stillwater, December 16, 1955).

Counseling with field employees on employee relations, retention preference, training, retirement, promotion policy, awards program, and performance ratings are also a part of the personnel officer's duties. He is responsible for the execution of a performance rating plan for all employees in the State.

Further duties of the personnel officer include on-the-site classification audits as required by regulations of the Civil Service Commission to insure compliance with the requirements of the classification laws, assistance of supervisory personnel in preparation of the actual write-up of these position descriptions, determination of the proper classification of positions in accordance with the class specification, recommendations to the State Administrative Officer for such classification and periodic inspections to obtain information to keep classification current.

The first phase of the chain of command is as follows: the Secretary of Agriculture refers the program together with his instructions to the departmental Office of Personnel. The Director of Personnel refers the program to the particular division concerned. This division outlines the policy for the various agencies of the Department of Agriculture. Once outlined the policy is sent back to the Secretary of Agriculture for his approval.

The second phase in the chain of command is within the national office of the Soil Conservation Service. Upon receipt of the program from the Secretary of Agriculture, the

Administrator of the Soil Conservation Service gives the program to the Assistant Administrator for Management who refers it to the Personnel Management Division. The Personnel Management Division Director assigns the program to the proper functional branch to outline the policy for the Soil Conservation Service. Once outlined the policy is sent by the Personnel Management Division Director to the Assistant Administrator for Management.

The third phase in the line of command is at the field office level. The State Conservationist receives the policy from the Assistant Administrator for Management of the Soil Conservation Service and refers it to the State Administrative Officer. The latter officer gives the program to the personnel officer of the state office to put into effect.

The above line of command is not always followed. In actual practice the following deviations often occur. The Director of Personnel of the United States Department of Agriculture may act in behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture and refer the policy to the departmental agencies. Also the Personnel Management Division Director of the Soil Conservation Service may act in behalf of the Assistant Administrator for Management of the Soil Conservation Service and send the policy directly to the State Conservationist. There the State Conservationist may by-pass the State Administrative Officer and forward the policy to the State Personnel Officer.

## CHAPTER II

### INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

It has been found advisable to adopt some systematic method whereby workers are encouraged to express their ideas and receive rewards. A system which has been adopted shows that a reservoir of ideas may be tapped. These ideas are often of real value for improving both work processes and working conditions. Such contributions, when recognized and given due recognition, will add to the workers' sense of partnership and belongingness.<sup>1</sup>

A suggestion and incentive awards plan has other advantages to be secured from its operation. The plan will offer (1) advantages in improved efficiency arising from the application of suggestions, (2) advantages in improved morale by the creation of new interest on the part of employees in their work, (3) advantages in recognizing ability and potential leadership, and (4) the advantage of a valuable training and educational medium which teaches employees what constitutes advantageous change. Such a plan is of value only if it induces employee cooperation and participation. It is necessary to make clear to employees that their suggestions

---

<sup>1</sup>William E. Mosher, J. Donald Kingsley, and O. Glenn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration (3rd ed., New York, 1950), p. 299.

are seriously desired, that each suggestion is accorded careful attention, and that appropriate recognition is given for suggestions.<sup>2</sup>

The original suggestion and incentive award program for federal employees was a typical suggestion box system. The program failed because of the lack of employee participation. There was no form of recognition given other than a step increase in salary. The monetary benefit was the same regardless of the nature and extent of the suggestion.

The present suggestion and incentive award program is based upon Title III of Public Law 763, 83rd Congress, approved September 1, 1954;<sup>3</sup> the pertinent regulations and instructions issued by the Civil Service Commission; and the regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture.

All employees paid from federal funds, regardless of grade and classification, are eligible to receive awards. Each individual is encouraged by his supervisor and by Soil Conservation Service letters and publications to submit any contribution or suggestion that might save time and money or improve public service, efficiency, morale, and safety. The employee is constantly reminded by publications that he has a part to play in management and a duty to share his suggestion with his fellow employees. Handbooks are given to

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 299-300.

<sup>3</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LXVIII, (1954), p. 1112.

all employees in order that they may know their rights and the correct procedures to follow when making contributions.

There are several kinds of awards that may be given to employees of the Soil Conservation Service for suggestions or exceptional employee performance. Cash awards are given for adopted suggestions of an idea, device, procedure, technique, method or system which result in money saving or important improvements in operations. Cash awards are also granted for the development of an invention. Honor awards are given for (1) sustained above average work performance such as the productivity of a unit which is held at a high level through several years, (2) performance which involves the overcoming of exceptional or unusual difficulties such as the ability of an employee to sell the program of soil conservation to the farmers of a given area, and (3) supervisors who have done an outstanding job of motivating the interest and participation of their employees in management improvement.<sup>4</sup> The types of honor awards which may be given under the program are the Presidential Award, the Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service Award, the Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award, the Soil Conservation Citation, Length of Service Award, Safety Awards, and Letters of Commendation.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Incentive Awards Handbook (Washington, 1955), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 7.



An employee is eligible to receive a cash award for any suggestion which results in tangible savings. Similarly, he may receive a cash award for exceptional performance which results in intangible benefits.

The cash award for tangible savings is normally based upon the net monetary savings for the first full year of operation following the adoption of the suggestion. The amount of the award is determined in accordance with established provisions. A cash award of \$10 is given to an employee if his suggestion or invention has resulted in a saving of \$200 during the first full year of operation. When the savings are from \$201 to \$1,000 the employee receives \$10 for the first \$200 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$100 or fraction thereof up to the maximum of \$1,000. When the savings are from \$1,001 to \$10,000 the employee receives \$50 for the first \$1,000 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$200 or fraction thereof up to the maximum of \$10,000. When the savings are from \$10,001 to \$100,000 the employee receives \$275 for the first \$10,000 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof up to the maximum of \$100,000. When the savings are \$100,001 or more the employee receives \$725 for the first \$100,000 and \$5 for each additional \$5,000 or fraction thereof.<sup>6</sup> Higher awards may be given when the table does not provide an adequate basis for determining the cash award or when a unit's contribution does not provide a cash award of \$10 to each individual who

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

participated. Whenever feasible the amount is determined by the table. The award received is based upon the savings realized by the local unit or if the suggestion can be used within the agency, the service, the department, or other departments of the government the award is determined from the tangible savings of all units that put the suggestion or invention into operation.

Cash awards for intangible benefits may be received by an employee for suggestions, work improvements, inventions, or work performance that result in improved working conditions, employee morale, safety, or better service to the public. The amount of cash awards for employee contributions is determined on the basis of the resulting benefit to operations after full consideration of such factors as (1) the extent and scope of application, (2) the significance of the contribution, and (3) the importance of the activity or operation which is effected by the contribution.<sup>7</sup> An employee contribution may apply to only one work unit or to several work units. If only one work unit benefits in a limited way and the effect on operations is small, the award will not be as much as contributions which affect a large group of employees and which results in a major change in operations.

The above factors determine how intangible benefits are evaluated. Once evaluated the award which the employee receives is taken from a table which classifies the value

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

of employee contributions.<sup>8</sup> The table applies in nearly every case. In the event the table does not apply, the amount which is arbitrarily set by the State Awards Committee must be fully explained to the State Conservationist.

The table for evaluating intangible benefits is broken down on a "limited" value of benefits or "moderate" value of benefits and by the number of organizational units affected. If the value of the benefit is determined by the State Awards Committee as "limited", the award received is (1) \$10 to \$15 for a small organizational unit, a work unit of one to six employees, (2) \$15 to \$25 if two to fifteen organizational units are affected, an area or field cartographic unit of twenty to forty employees, (3) \$25 to \$35 if fifteen to thirty organizational units are affected, a small state or several areas in a large state, (4) \$35 to \$50 if thirty to one hundred organizational units are affected, a medium size state or one hundred to three hundred employees, (5) \$50 to \$100 if one hundred to five hundred organizational units are affected, a large state or several small states or more than three hundred employees.<sup>9</sup>

If the value of the benefit is determined as "moderate", the award received is (1) \$15 to \$25 for a small organizational unit, a work unit of one to six employees, (2) \$25 to \$35 if two to fifteen organizational units are affected, an

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

area or field cartographic unit of twenty to forty employees, (3) \$35 to \$50 if fifteen to thirty organizational units are affected, a small state or several areas in a large state, (4) \$50 to \$100 if thirty to one hundred organizational units are affected, a medium size state or one hundred to three hundred employees, and (5) \$100 to \$300 if one hundred to five hundred organizational units are affected, a large state, several small states, or more than three hundred employees.<sup>10</sup>

The State Awards Committee uses the above scale when it awards intangible benefits to employees. The State Awards Committee has discretionary power to determine the value of intangible benefits up to and including \$300. Any intangible award in excess of \$300 will be determined and administered by the Department of Agriculture in accordance with the departmental award table.

The criteria set forth by law, Civil Service Commission regulations, departmental regulations, and the Soil Conservation Service regulations must be followed by the State Awards Committee if a cash award is involved.

A suggestion submitted by an employee is considered adopted and eligible for a cash award when the suggestion is actually put into effect or if the State Awards Committee approves the suggestion. The State Conservationist has final authority for the implementation of the suggestion and for the granting of the award. In those instances where delay

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

is necessary an initial cash award is paid. This award is based upon a conservative estimate of the anticipated value of the employee's contribution. When the actual value has been determined, the employee receives the rest of the amount due for his contribution. A suggestion must be adopted within a period of two years after its receipt by the State Awards Committee unless special circumstances intervene.

Employees may be recommended for an award based on sustained work performance. Such an award is usually recommended when supervisors assign a performance rating.<sup>11</sup> Superior work performance is a contribution of the employee above his job responsibilities and precludes anything the employee is expected or required to do. The employee's record must show a high and continuous level of productivity over a given period of time.<sup>12</sup> No more than one award, which is based solely on superior work performance, is granted to an employee within a twelve month period. The award covers a period of at least six months and is normally limited to the equivalent of a two step pay increase or \$300, whichever is smaller. These awards are not ordinarily measured in tangible savings. The amount is usually determined on the basis of intangible benefits.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Employees do not need to be rated as outstanding to be eligible for an award because the qualification for an outstanding rating is higher than for sustained above average performance.

<sup>12</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Incentive Awards Handbook (Washington, 1955), p. 10.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

Two cash awards for the same contribution are not given to an employee except when the actual first year savings are sufficiently greater than the estimate of savings on which the original award was based or when broader use is made of the contribution than that which was contemplated at the time of the original award. A supplementary award is then made.

Group awards are made for a contribution if more than one employee has had a part in the suggestion. Cash awards are made in equal shares or according to the contribution of each member of the group. The total award is generally the amount authorized for that type of award if made to one individual. When the individual share is less than \$10 the total may be increased sufficiently to provide a minimum of \$10 for each employee who contributes to the suggestion. The State Awards Committee has this discretionary power.

Employees may receive a cash award and a departmental or agency honor award for the same suggestion, special act, or superior work performance. Justification for the honor award may be used as documentation for the cash award but the cash award must be given to the employee before the honor award is presented to him.

Two awards will not be granted for duplicate suggestions which propose substantially the same solution to the same problem at the same place or for the same area. Suggestions which propose similar solutions to the same problem in two different areas are not necessarily duplicate suggestions, since each suggestion is used or proposed for a different

area. Each employee is then paid a cash award on the basis of tangible or intangible benefits to his area. If the suggestion is applied state-wide or to a larger area, the additional award, if any, is divided among the employees if they submitted the suggestion simultaneously, or to the employee who first submitted his idea to the State Awards Committee. In the event a second suggestion makes a separate contribution or contributes toward the adoption of the original suggestion, the employee is entitled to an award proportionate to his contribution.<sup>14</sup>

The immediate supervisor of the employee normally submits recommendations of superior work performance for cash awards; however, recommendations may also be submitted by any employee who is able to document the proposal. The recommendation must be submitted within six months following the completion of the period of performance or the special act on which the award is to be based. Cash awards for superior work performance are carefully considered. To be eligible the employee must have an outstanding record.

Suggestions are submitted by the employee to his immediate supervisor on form SCS 228. A memorandum is acceptable but the suggestion will carry more weight if it is approved by the employee's supervisor. Supervisors may review the proposal of their employees, add their comments if they so desire, approve the use of the proposal within their work area if it is within their authority to do so, and send the

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

proposal to the State Awards Committee with or without recommendation.

The State Awards Committee processes the employee's suggestion and acknowledges submission of the suggestion by notifying the employee of its receipt. An investigation is made by the Committee's secretary or by one of the Committee members. This person is given authority to review suggestions and to seek the advice of technicians. A suggestion concerning engineering is reviewed by the State Engineer. The investigation by the State Awards Committee includes the obtaining of additional information from state field offices for honor award recommendations, preparation of three copies of appraisal form SCS 227 for proposals which involve cash awards, and trying out suggestions and assembling data on monetary savings. A good preliminary investigation enables the State Awards Committee to make its recommendation for adoption, rejection, or further study without undue discussion or delay. Employees are told how their suggestions are being handled if the investigation can not be completed within thirty days.

After the investigators have gathered the needed information, the State Awards Committee reviews and appraises the proposal. The Committee forwards its recommendation to the State Conservationist, and designates the amount of cash award. If the recommendation is for rejection, the committee prepares a letter which explains in detail the reason for the rejection. This letter is sent by the State Conservationist to the employee.



If the employee's proposal is rejected he may request reconsideration. A written statement which sets forth the reason for requesting reconsideration is made by the employee and is submitted to the State Awards Committee. The Committee may reopen a case if new information is submitted or if it believes that the previous data was inadequately considered. There is no further appeal for the employee.

All cash award recommendations are reviewed for possible honorary recognition.

The final approval of cash awards up to \$300 is made by the State Conservationist for employees under his supervision. Recommendations for all awards over \$300 must be submitted through the national office of the Soil Conservation Service to the Department of Agriculture for approval. The Washington Awards Committee determines the amount of the cash award and makes the appropriate honor award if the proposal deserves both types of awards.

The second type of award the employee may receive is an honor award. Honor awards are the Presidential Award, the Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service Award, the Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award, the Soil Conservation Service Citation, the Length of Service Award, Safety Award, and Letters of Commendation.<sup>15</sup>

The Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service Award, the Department's highest honor award, is an individual

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-16.

citation or unit citation. Individuals receive a gold medal, a certificate, and a gold lapel emblem. A unit or group of employees receive a gold medal and a plaque which identifies the unit and briefly describes the achievement of the unit.<sup>16</sup>

Any employee whose achievements constitute a notably outstanding contribution to agriculture and to public service is eligible for consideration for the Distinguished Service Award. An example of this type of achievement would be outstanding leadership in soil and water conservation research which advances agriculture nationally or internationally. Two or more employees may each receive this award if the outstanding contribution to agriculture and to public service is a team project or organizational unit project. Achievements which are considered for the Distinguished Service Award but are passed over by the Washington Awards Committee are considered for the Superior Service Award.

In addition to outstanding contribution to agriculture and public service, achievements which are considered for Distinguished Service Awards include major contributions to science, outstanding skill in public administration, distinguished authorship, notably creative service and heroic action.<sup>17</sup> These are the contributions which constitute outstanding accomplishments.

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

The second highest Departmental award is the Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award. It may be received by an individual or by a unit. Individuals who receive the Superior Service Award are given a silver medal, a certificate, and a silver lapel emblem. A unit or group of employees who qualify for the Superior Service Award receive a silver medal and a plaque which identifies the unit and briefly describes the achievement.<sup>18</sup>

An employee who has performed service of unusual value is eligible for consideration for the Superior Service Award. Such service might include meritorious authorship, initiation of a suggestion or of work methods that result in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment. Similarly, a service which results in improved employee morale or work performance may be considered for this award.<sup>19</sup>

Two or more employees may receive a unit citation for an achievement which results from their teamwork or unit project. Nominees who fail to qualify for this award are considered for the Soil Conservation Service Citation.

The employee or group of employees is nominated for the Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service Award or Superior Service Award by the State Awards Committee. The Committee forwards recommendation for these awards to the Washington Awards Committee by January 1st of each year.

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

Any employee may recommend another employee or group of employees to the State Awards Committee. Nominations by the State Awards Committee are approved or rejected by the Washington Awards Committee.

Another type of award or recognition is the Length of Service Award. Any employee who completes ten or more years of service with the Department of Agriculture is deemed to be worthy of an appropriate Length of Service Award. The award consists of a miniature shield and a certificate. The shield has an enamel panel of green for ten years of service, white for twenty years of service, red for thirty years of service, blue for forty years of service, and gold for fifty years of service. Recipients of the Length of Service Awards are eligible for a Soil Conservation Service Citation when the work performed during the award period has been especially meritorious.

Another honor award that an employee may receive is the Presidential Award. This award is administered by the Civil Service Commission and is granted as a cash or honorary award by the President of the United States for contributions of unusually distinctive character or very wide-spread benefits. This award is the highest honor a civilian employee may receive and it may be granted in addition to the departmental honor awards.

Employees or groups of employees whose achievements warrant service-wide or state-wide recognition are given a certificate of merit which is the Soil Conservation Service

Citation. The award is made for any contribution which advances the service program of soil and water conservation.

Any employee or supervisor at any time may nominate an individual or group of individuals for the Soil Conservation Service Citation to the State Awards Committee. The State Awards Committee may then recommend that the individual or group of employees be recognized by the State Conservationist or by the Soil Conservation Service Administrator, depending upon the scope and importance of the achievement being recognized. If the achievement affects only a small segment of the service the award will be made by the State Conservationist. In the event the achievement affects a major portion or all of the service, the State Conservationist requests that the Administrator of the Soil Conservation Service award the Soil Conservation Service Citation. The Administrator will approve deserving nominations, sign the certificates and return them to the appropriate headquarters for presentation to the employee or group of employees.<sup>20</sup>

Safety Awards are made for outstanding safety records of employees and units. The award depends upon the significance of the employee's or unit's record. Three types of safety awards are given. These are individual safe driving awards, unit safe driving awards, and unit awards for no disabling injuries.

---

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

Individual and unit safe driving awards are given for the operation of vehicles without an accident for two thousand or more miles each year. The award consists of a safe driving card and is made for five, ten, fifteen, and twenty year records. The individual or unit must have five accident-free years for the first award. At the close of each five year interval thereafter, that is accident free, the employee or unit receives another card for the appropriate number of safe driving years. Any accident which can be prevented by defensive driving prevents the driver from being eligible to count that year as a safe driving year. If the accident occurred in the third year or before, the driver loses any previous year or years of credit and he must start again toward eligibility for a five year safe driving card; however, the employee who has three or more continuous safe driving years and who has an accident in the fourth or fifth year does not lose credit for the previous three or more years. The employee does not have to start again toward building his eligibility. He only loses the year in which the accident occurred. Records are kept by the Personnel Officer and safe driving cards are issued when due. Any question concerning loss of eligibility is settled by the State Awards Committee and their decision is final.

Unit awards for operation without disabling injuries are made on a yearly basis. Any employee accident regardless of the cause results in the unit losing its eligibility. This applies to accidents while on duty and not to accidents which

occur off duty. The records are kept by the Personnel Officer and awards are issued when they are due.

Letters of Commendation are given to employees who deserve recognition for meritorious job performance but who do not qualify for the honor or cash awards. Letters of Commendation may be given for devotion to duty or for the performance of extra duties. They are also given when an employee receives a cash or honor award. All supervisors have the authority and responsibility to use this method of recognizing deserving employee performance. The supervisor may write the letter or he may recommend that it be written at any level of administration. Copies of all Letters of Commendation are filed in the official employee personnel folder in the state office and are sent to the Washington Personnel Management Division of the Soil Conservation Service.

The State Awards Committee is composed of ten members. The chairman is the Deputy State Conservationist. The secretary is the State Administrative Assistant for Personnel. The other members are the State Administrative Officer, the Assistant State Administrative Officer, the State Engineer, the State Soil Scientist, the State Soil Conservationist, the Assistant State Conservationist, and two other Administrative Assistants. A quorum of the committee is four.<sup>21</sup>

In the past year, six cash awards have been conferred by the State Conservationist. One award was \$275 for the

---

<sup>21</sup>Tom Abshure, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 18, 1956.

suggestion of work improvement methods. The other five awards were \$135 and all were granted for sustained work performance. One of these awards was for outstanding performance of duties by starting a pasture seed program. One award was for an informational program that receives wide non-governmental publication. Another award was for increased conservation practices in a work area.<sup>22</sup>

Two additional suggestions which the State Awards Committee believes should receive more than \$300 are under study by the Washington Awards Committee. One employee invented a core drill device that is fastened on the back of a pick-up truck and is used for taking soil samples. It is believed that other agencies within the Department of Agriculture and other Federal Departments can use this invention. It is a time and money saving device in taking soil samples on large farms and ranches.<sup>23</sup>

Three suggestions have been rejected by the State Awards Committee in the past year.

The honor awards made to employees in the past year include eight Soil Conservation Service Citations, eighty Length of Service Awards, and thirty Letters of Commendation. Two hundred eighty-five safety awards were given. Ninety-nine of these were individual safe driving cards, eighty-seven were unit safe driving cards, and ninety-nine were for units

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



with no disabling injuries. No Presidential Awards, Distinguished Service Awards, or Superior Service Awards have been given.<sup>24</sup>

Normally around fifty per cent of all employee suggestions are approved and placed in operation. Approximately eighty per cent of all employees nominated for honor awards are approved.

Inasmuch as the present awards system is new, no statistics are available to compare the operation of the system in Oklahoma with other state offices. The number of suggestions submitted in the past year was smaller than expected by the Oklahoma office. Honor awards were higher than anticipated.<sup>25</sup>

It is realized that there is room for improvement and the program is receiving more publicity and striving to encourage employee contributions.

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### GRIEVANCES

The assumption is that civil service employees are furnished protections, benefits, and advantages superior to those enjoyed by employees of private industries. Civil service employees are given job status and security by law and are afforded a maximum of legal protection. Because of these factors it might be assumed that the civil service employee is happy and has no grievances. The fact remains that even under a system of legal job security, employees become upset or dissatisfied about a variety of things. Whether well or ill founded, grievances undermine morale. If an employee feels he is being abused, his attention and interest in his work will decrease.<sup>1</sup>

Dissatisfactions develop within any group of employees. These dissatisfactions may be the result of misunderstandings, jealousy, or working conditions. In some instances discontentment can be discovered and remedied by the supervisors. In other instances some plan must be adopted whereby grievances can be dealt with promptly and adequately. This is the purpose of a system for handling grievances. It is desirable

---

<sup>1</sup>John M. Pfiffner, The Supervision of Personnel (New York, 1951), pp. 364-366.

that a uniform system of practices and procedures be known and followed. Such a system should be fair, orderly, and expeditious in handling grievances. The importance of the system is not its frequent use, but the fact that it is available for employees to use.<sup>2</sup>

The employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service are provided an orderly procedure for the adjudication of their problems, complaints, and grievances. This procedure is standard throughout the Federal Service. The authority necessary for the establishment of this uniform procedure was granted by Executive Order Number 9830, dated February 24, 1947. This Executive Order fixed the responsibility for the establishment of uniform procedure in the settlement of grievances with the Director of Personnel subject to the approval of the head of the agency and the Civil Service Commission.<sup>3</sup> The program of the Soil Conservation Service is based on these rules and regulations.

The employee is encouraged to give frank informal expression of his complaints. Supervisors, whenever possible, adjust employees' grievances promptly and satisfactorily; and there is maintained a system whereby an employee may appeal his grievance. All employees are privileged to use this machinery. They may appeal any matter coming within the

---

<sup>2</sup>William E. Mosher, J. Donald Kingsley, and O. Glenn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration (3rd ed., New York, 1950), pp. 313-316.

<sup>3</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Administrative Regulations, Title 8 - Personnel (Washington, 1955), p. 646.

administrative discretion of officials. Problems, complaints, and grievances that are appealable under this procedure may involve, among other things, (1) working conditions, (2) interpretation on application of rules and regulation or decisions, or (3) unfair treatment, including coercion, restraint, or reprisal.<sup>4</sup>

Problems, complaints, and grievances which may result from working conditions include unsanitary surroundings which would be injurious to the health and safety of the employee. Inadequate ventilation, inadequate lighting facilities, and broken equipment constitute working conditions which the employee is entitled to call to the attention of higher supervisors and, if necessary, lodge a formal grievance to the proper authority.

A typical grievance cause which may result from interpretation on application of rules and regulations or decisions is misassignments of duty. The employee's position classification tells the duties and responsibilities of each employee and to be given duties outside this description would be a grievance cause. Supervisors may give the employee inadequate instructions by withholding information and the results of this action may be unfavorable to the employee, and could result in dismissal action being started against the employee. Before or after dismissal has been completed the employee has the right and duty to lodge a grievance

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 647.

through the appropriate channels. Another action of supervisors which could result in a grievance problem would be the failure of the supervisor to listen to both sides of an argument. The failure may cause an employee to suffer unwarranted disciplinary action. Employees are protected from the arbitrary abuse of supervisors who give unwarranted disciplinary action. There must be just cause and evidence to warrant discipline procedures and the punishment must be according to the rules, regulations and laws relative to punishment. Disciplinary action against one employee may not be greater than that of another employee who has committed the same infraction of the rules, all other circumstances being the same.<sup>5</sup>

Typical grievance causes which may result from unfair treatment are coercion, restraint, or reprisals. Unexplained selection from outside the agency when an employee within the agency is qualified for the position through promotion would be unfair treatment and the consequence of this treatment would give the employee just grounds for a grievance. This action may be a misunderstanding; but it may be in the form of a reprisal and the supervisor must show just cause for the action taken. An employee may be blamed for some action or duty for which he was not responsible or required to do. This would be another cause for grievances. Failure to give credit for improvements made by an employee is another reason that a

---

<sup>5</sup>Tom Abshure, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 4, 1956.

grievance may be lodged and appealed through channels. An employee may be the subject of favoritism and such action may be cause for grievances from other employees. Another just cause for which employees may lodge grievances would be unwarranted disciplinary action. This action may be a coercive act of some official who inflicts more punishment than the law or rules and regulations provide. Such actions give the employee the right to lodge a grievance, and failure on the part of the immediate supervisor to take corrective action would give the employee the right to appeal his grievance through formal channels.<sup>6</sup>

Grievances can be adjusted by either an informal discussion and adjustment or by a formal appeal and adjustment.

The informal appeal is as follows. Whenever any employee feels he has a problem, complaint, or grievance, he is free to request an interview with his supervisor. Employees and supervisors are expected to exhaust every administrative device to settle grievances by the informal discussion and adjustment method. In the interest of uniform procedures and rapid settlement, employees present their problems, complaints, or grievances through regular supervisory channels. First, the employee presents his grievance to his immediate supervisor. If the employee fails to settle the problem at this level, he goes to the unit head, then to the section head, and then to

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

the head of the agency or such representative as the head of the agency may designate for the purpose.<sup>7</sup>

The head of the agency has ten working days from the date the employee brings his grievance to him in which to attempt a settlement. The head of the agency endeavors to adjudicate the grievance in order to minimize the need for formal procedure.

At any stage of the informal procedure the employee may secure assistance from the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture or the Personnel Officer of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service.

If the employee feels that he has not secured prompt and satisfactory adjustment by the informal appeal procedure, he may initiate formal proceedings. He first appeals to the head of the agency to which he is assigned for a hearing before a board of appeals. The board of appeals consists of three members, one of whom is designated by the employee. At the same time the employee applies for a formal hearing of his grievance, he submits the name of the board member whom he is entitled to designate. If he is unable to secure a board member he may write to the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture for assistance. The Director of Personnel will provide names of employees in the executive branch of the Federal Government who are available and who are qualified to serve. Notice of the appeal action of the employee is

---

<sup>7</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Administrative Regulations, Title 8 - Personnel (Washington, 1955), p. 649.

presented in writing. The notice states as clearly as possible the issue or cause of action and the pertinent facts as they exist in the opinion of the employee. The head of the agency makes prompt acknowledgement of the receipt of such appeal action to the employee and a duplicate copy of the notice of appeal is promptly sent to the Director of Personnel. If the employee has not tried to settle his grievance by the informal procedure before making formal application for a hearing, the head of the agency has the opportunity to effect an adjustment. He is granted ten working days from the date of receipt of the grievance; and he informs the Director of Personnel of any adjustment made or of the failure to effect an adjustment.<sup>8</sup>

When the head of the agency receives notice of appeal, he or his designated representative creates or organizes a board of three members to investigate the case, report findings of fact, and make recommendations for a decision. This board consists of a member named by the employee in his notice of appeal and of a member named by the head of the agency within five working days after receipt of the employee's notice of appeal. These two members agree upon a third member within ten working days after they have been chosen. If these two members are unable within the ten day period to agree upon a third member who is willing to serve on the board, the board is automatically dissolved, and the employee and the head of the agency concerned each appoints a different person as a

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



member within five working days after dissolution of the board. If these two members are still unable to agree within ten working days on the third member of the board the two members notify the Director of Personnel who selects the third impartial member of the board.<sup>9</sup>

The appeal boards have full authority pertaining to board procedure. All evidence received and considered by one member must be made available to all members of the board. All statements become part of the board hearings and there are no "off the record" statements. The evidence and documents used in the hearings are considered official and are not given to the employee or his representative. The complete file of the documents and evidence is kept and made available for review by the employee or his representative. This board hears all witnesses including those suggested by the employee in order to obtain a clear understanding of the facts. The hearing should be conducted expeditiously and is held during the regular working hours of the agency.

Within fifteen working days after its selection, the board reports its findings and makes recommendations which should be given careful consideration by the head of the agency in arriving at his decision. This decision must be made within ten working days after receipt of the findings of facts and recommendations from the appeal board. The employee is notified in writing of the decision of the head

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 649-653.

of the agency and a copy of the decision is sent to the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture together with a summary of the findings of the board.<sup>10</sup>

After the decision has been rendered by the appeal board the employee may submit new evidence, if he has any, to the Director of Personnel. The Director determines if the case is to be reopened on the original level and a new hearing held. In instances where the case is reopened, the Director of Personnel may reconvene the original board or direct the organization of a new board.

The employee may be dissatisfied with the recommendation of the appeal board and the decision of the head of the agency; or with the decision rendered after he had submitted new evidence. The employee has the privilege to appeal the decision to the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture. This machinery has been provided to insure a just and fair treatment of the employee and his grievance. The employee or his representative must make a written notice of the appeal of the decision. This written notice must contain a full statement of the reason for appeal and it must be filed in duplicate with the Director of Personnel within ten working days after the decision of the head of the agency. The Director of Personnel makes prompt acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal to the employee and transmits the duplicate copy of the notice of appeal to the head of the agency.

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

When the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture receives notice of appeal, he seeks by any and all means possible to obtain a prompt and satisfactory adjustment by the informal method; or he may decide the case on the basis of a thorough examination of the written reports and records or secure such additional information as he deems necessary. The Director may also order an investigation.

After the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture has studied the written reports, records, and documents, he may decide to hold a new hearing. He then organizes a new impartial board of three members. This board consists of one member to be selected by the head of the agency concerned, one member by the employee, and one member to be selected by the Director of Personnel. This board is authorized to review the records in the case and investigate the facts. The findings and recommendations of the board are submitted in writing to the Director of Personnel within fifteen working days after the board has been named. The Director studies the findings and recommendations of the board and submits his decision on the grievance in writing to the employee and to the head of the agency.<sup>11</sup>

If the employee is still dissatisfied with the decision on his grievance, he may appeal in writing from the decision of the Director of Personnel to the Secretary of Agriculture within ten working days from the date of the Director's

---

<sup>11</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Personnel, Employee Handbook (Washington, 1955), p. 47.

decision. The Secretary of Agriculture studies the findings, reports, and records of the appeal board or boards. His decision may be on the basis of a thorough examination of these documents or he may order an investigation before he makes his decision. The decision of the Secretary of Agriculture is final and there is no higher authority to which the employee may appeal typical grievances.<sup>12</sup>

In typical grievances, problems, or complaints the employee concerned is held responsible for carrying out the appeals procedure. Each employee is notified of his rights and of the machinery available to him for solving his grievance, problem, or complaint. He has the right and privilege to seek advice and help from the personnel section. Besides this privilege, every employee is asked to cooperate with officials and fellow employees in assisting them by serving as members of appeal boards, witnesses before appeal boards, or employee representative before appeal boards when requested. With the exception of witnesses, individuals chosen to serve on appeal boards should be selected from employees who have not formulated a definite opinion regarding the case. The individual chosen should request release from serving on the appeal board if he has formed a definite opinion. This includes any person who may have previously made an administrative decision in connection with the case.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

The appeal is dropped if the employee resigns or his appointment is terminated.

Travel expenses are authorized for employees whose presence is determined as necessary by the board in connection with these hearings. Travel expenses may be refused if appropriations are not sufficient. All expenses that are authorized incident to travel or otherwise incurred in the board hearings are borne by the agency in which the appellant is employed. Expenses for personnel of other Federal Agencies or of persons not in the Federal Service who are called to participate in hearings cannot be legally incurred by the agency. The time spent on appeals is official duty and the employee connected with appeal hearings will be considered on duty.

It is clearly understood that any employee is free from any and all restraint, interference, coercion, or reprisal on the part of his associates or supervisors in making any appeal, in serving as an employee's representative, in serving on an appeal board, in appearing as a witness before appeal boards, or in seeking information in accordance with the procedures of appeals. This applies before and after a problem, complaint, or grievance has been adjudicated. Should this be violated, it is brought to the attention of the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture immediately by an employee. An investigation is made and if it is found there has been any restraint, interference, or reprisal such disciplinary measures as the facts warrant are taken.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

There are certain causes for complaints, problems, or grievances which are adjudicated or settled in a different appeal procedure. These other causes are problems, complaints, or grievances arising from discrimination, removals and reduction in force, performance ratings, and classification appeals. Appeals of this nature have a different procedure established by law. In addition to these the military service veteran has the right of further appeal to the Civil Service Commission on all grievances.<sup>15</sup>

The procedure for the adjudication of complaints and grievances based on alleged discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, or national origin is the same as for typical grievances except there are more steps in this appeal machinery. The employee follows the regular supervisory channels in an effort to secure satisfaction by informal adjustment. Failure to adjust the grievance through these channels puts the problems into the hands of the Deputy Fair Employment Officer of the Department of Agriculture. He then tries to settle the complaint or grievance by informal adjustment. If he fails, the problem is referred to the Fair Employment Officer of the Department of Agriculture. If the machinery for informal discussion and adjustment fails, the employee is informed of his rights and the procedure for formal appeal. The machinery for board action on a grievance based on discrimination is started with the Fair

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

Employment Officer instead of the agency head. The complaint may then be appealed to the Secretary of Agriculture; and if the employee is still dissatisfied he may appeal to the Fair Employment Board of the Civil Service Commission. The decision of this board is final.<sup>16</sup>

Appeal for reduction in force and removals is made directly to the Civil Service Commission if any employee feels that proper procedures have not been followed.<sup>17</sup>

The procedure for appealing of performance ratings is the same as for typical grievances except there is one more step in the appeal procedure for "unsatisfactory" rating appeals. An employee who is rated "unsatisfactory" must first use the administrative appeals procedure and if he is still dissatisfied he may appeal to the Board of Review of the Civil Service Commission. An employee who is rated "satisfactory" may appeal for an "outstanding" rating. He may use the administrative appeals procedure or he may appeal directly to the Board of Review of the Civil Service Commission. He may not use both appeal procedures.<sup>18</sup>

Classification appeals may be made by the employee when he feels that his position classification is in error or the

---

<sup>16</sup>United States Civil Service Commission, Federal Personnel Manual (Washington, 1955), pp. Z/2/5-Z/2/9.

<sup>17</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Personnel, Employee Handbook (Washington, 1956), p. 45.

<sup>18</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Administrative Procedures Manual (Washington, 1955), p. 3.

position is improperly described. The appeal may be made through the employee's supervisor or directly to the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture or directly to the regional office of the United States Civil Service Commission. Further appeal may be made from the regional office to the national office of the United States Civil Service Commission.<sup>19</sup>

Each employee at the state office has been informed of the appeal system and descriptive literature has been furnished to him. The employees have also been asked to bring all problems, complaints, or grievances to their immediate supervisor for an informal discussion and adjustment. The supervisors realize the necessity of settling small problems and welcome the opportunity to make necessary adjustments or to clear up items which trouble the employees. The employees and supervisors have realized how much easier most matters can be settled when both work toward a solution. The Personnel Section's Staff is at all times open to employees to answer questions concerning their employment and to help them in any matter. It is realized that from time to time some problem, complaint, or grievance will be of the nature that it will take an appeal board to adjudicate the problem. However, the approach of the supervisors of the state office has kept formal appeals to a minimum. This attitude has been

---

<sup>19</sup>United States Civil Service Commission, Federal Personnel Manual (Washington, 1954), p. P2-2.



so favorably accepted that all grievances of typical cause and all but one grievance of other causes have been settled by the informal adjustment procedure in the last three years.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Genny Gibson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 4, 1956.

## CHAPTER IV

### RECREATIONAL AND PUBLICATIONS PROGRAM

#### Recreational Program

Leisure-time activities are provided for by a number of programs in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service. These programs are organized by members of the Soil Conservation Service and, in some instances, in cooperation with employees of other agencies of the Department of Agriculture. These activities include a men's bowling team, USDA Women's Club, an annual Christmas party, an Employees' Club, and on special occasions, honor parties for employees who are leaving the Service or who are getting married.<sup>1</sup>

The leisure-time activities are sponsored by the employees on their own initiative and completely financed by them. There is not a formal recreational program sponsored by the Soil Conservation Service. However, the State Conservationist has given permission to employees to use the last thirty minutes of a work day for the purpose of planning a recreational activity.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Lenore Young, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 11, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

One activity is the men's bowling team. This is the only form of physical recreation for men. Five members of the state office participate. The team is entered in the Stillwater, Oklahoma, bowling league and it is financed by the members.

The women employees of the Soil Conservation Service have formed a USDA Women's Club in cooperation with the women employees of four other agricultural agencies.<sup>3</sup> This club is financed and sponsored by the members. The activity provided is a monthly party. There is no formal election of officers nor any regular dues. The women of each agency take turns providing the entertainment and refreshments for a party and they pay the cost. The entertainment is usually card games such as pitch, bridge, and canasta.

On special occasions the women of the Soil Conservation Service give a dinner for employees who are leaving the Service and a party for their fellow employees who marry.

An activity which is financed by all of the employees is an Employees' Club. The club is not for the purpose of recreation but to provide benevolent services of a small nature. The members elect officers who serve one year. The officers attend to the service in behalf of all members of the club. These services include the sending of flowers to employees in the hospital, the forwarding of office news to

---

<sup>3</sup>The other agencies are the Office of the General Counsel, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Farmers Home Administration, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Office.

those who are ill, and help to employees when death strikes a member of the employee's family. These services are financed from the twenty-five cents per month dues which each member pays. The services provided are not in the nature of welfare or credit unions but are intended to provide a means of cheerfulness during times of sorrow.<sup>4</sup>

Another activity in which all employees and their families participate is the annual Christmas party. A committee is appointed by the employees to make all of the arrangements for the party and to inform the employees of refreshments that are needed. Each employee brings a share of the refreshments.

In the planning stage is another activity. This is an annual picnic for all employees.

Many employees travel extensively and it is difficult to have regular planned activities on definite dates. Also, the families and family chores demand a lot of the employees' time. Employees feel that outside activities such as churches, fraternal orders, and other entertainment activities provide much of their recreation. The leisure-time activities sponsored by the employees are supplementary to outside activities and provide sufficient additional recreation to meet the needs of all employees.

---

<sup>4</sup>Genny Gibson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 8, 1956.

## Publication Program

A publication program based upon sound principles will help satisfy the basic emotional needs of employees. These principles are (1) the provision of essential information regarding the organizational policies and program, privileges, rights, and duties of employees, and (2) the provision of information about employees and their families. If these basic principles are followed the employee is more likely to develop an optimistic attitude toward his work and a belief that the work in which he is engaged is worth while. The publications should keep the employee well informed and help him to develop a sense of security within the group. Publications are an effective method of recognizing employee achievements. A sound publication program will aid in the development of morale, loyalty, and efficiency.<sup>5</sup>

Employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service are furnished written and published materials in the forms of books, pamphlets, and newsletters. The purposes of these forms of communication are (1) to inform the employees regarding policies and procedures which effect their rights and responsibilities, (2) to provide a means of conveying news concerning individual employees and their families, and (3) to present to employees messages

---

<sup>5</sup>W. Brooke Graves, Public Administration in a Democratic Society (Boston, 1950), pp. 173-187.

from management on matters of current interest and importance.<sup>6</sup>

The source of authority for the publication of most handbooks and pamphlets is administrative discretion; except when some laws or Civil Service Commission regulations state that the agency must provide the media whereby employees are given certain provisions or rules. The regulations of the Civil Service Commission state that the employing office will furnish all necessary publications to employees concerning their right to appeal grievances.<sup>7</sup> Also, some pamphlets are published by other agencies who are charged with the administration of a particular personnel program. One program of this nature is the disability compensation benefits of employees when injured while on the job. The Secretary of Labor has the responsibility to administer this program and to issue necessary pamphlets to the employing office.<sup>8</sup>

State office publications present standard information, infrequently changing information and information on continuous operations. The standard information includes such things as laws, rules, and regulations of personnel programs. This material is published in procedural manuals, employee

---

<sup>6</sup>Lenore Young, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 8, 1956.

<sup>7</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Administrative Regulations, Title 8 - Personnel (Washington, 1950), p. 653.

<sup>8</sup>United States Department of Labor, Regulations Governing Administration of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (Washington, 1951), p. 5.

handbooks, and general government handbooks. It is usually given to employees during their orientation. The reports on continuous operations are given by the use of newsletters. The state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service publishes a newsletter once every month or six weeks. The United States Department of Agriculture publishes a departmental newsletter once every two weeks. Both of these newsletters contain personnel information, summaries of new policies and pending legislation, and general information concerning employees.

The state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service furnishes an employee handbook and an information kit to every new employee.

The employee handbook is published by the Office of Personnel of the United States Department of Agriculture. This book contains a brief history of the Department of Agriculture and its agencies. Also, it gives a summarization of legal and administrative provisions relative to qualifications for employment, examination and appointment, classification and pay, training programs, performance ratings, promotion, hours of work and leave benefits, employee welfare programs, discipline and appeal procedures, and finally, separations and retirement. The handbook is fifty-four pages in length and is presented in readable fashion with large printed type.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Personnel, Employee Handbook (Washington, 1956), pp. 1-41.

The information kit contains material relative to the various phases of the personnel programs.<sup>10</sup> This includes a pamphlet on the civil service appointment system, a pamphlet on the retirement program, a pamphlet on social security benefits, a service leaflet on the insurance program, and a service leaflet on unemployment compensation. The material furnished in this information kit briefly describes the conditions, procedures, and benefits of these programs.

The Department of Agriculture distributes a newsletter every two weeks.<sup>11</sup> Although this newsletter does not go to every employee, it is made available to everyone. A newsletter is placed in the mail of each section in the state office. An employee of the section reads the newsletter and gives it to a fellow worker. Included within the newsletter is information on bills passed or pending before Congress that will affect agriculture and departmental employees. There is also information concerning new procedures to be used, information on work of different agencies, and news of individuals who deserve recognition for achievements.

The Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service publishes a newsletter monthly or once each six weeks which is made available to all employees. It is prepared by the personnel section

---

<sup>10</sup>The titles of these publications are (1) Federal Civilian Employees: Your Unemployment Compensation, (2) Your Retirement System, (3) The Civil Service Appointment System, (4) Your Social Security, and (5) Group Life Insurance for Federal Employees.

<sup>11</sup>The title of the newsletter is USDA Employee News Bulletin.



under the direction of the Personnel Officer. The material is chiefly personal and personnel information such as increased pay rates of certain employees, recognition or awards which have been granted, the names of employees who are retiring, the names and addresses of new employees, and information concerning changes in a program such as the issuance of new driving cards. A brief space is used to show a summary of pending bills that would be of interest to employees. The close of every newsletter is usually a short poem or "thought for the day".

## CHAPTER V

### EMPLOYEE INSURANCE PROGRAM

In both private and public employment there is a definite trend for management to sponsor employee welfare activities. An employee insurance program is representative of this trend.

The insurance program for employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service is based upon existing statutes and the pertinent regulations and instructions issued by the Civil Service Commission. The types of insurance provided by this program are group life insurance, health insurance, and compensation insurance for work-connected injury and illness.<sup>1</sup>

A group life insurance is provided to federal employees. This life insurance was made available at low cost by the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act of 1954, Public Law 598.<sup>2</sup>

The insurance provided under Public Law 598 is term insurance. It builds no cash, loan, paid-up, or extended

---

<sup>1</sup>United States Civil Service Commission, Federal Personnel Manual (Washington, 1954), p. I/3/3.

<sup>2</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LXVIII, (1954), p. 736.

insurance equities. The coverage of this insurance is not intended as a substitute for regular insurance policies which an employee purchases through private insurance companies. It is provided as a welfare benefit to give minimum, low cost protection for the employee. The group insurance provided by this plan is underwritten by a large number of private insurance companies which write group insurance.

The responsibility for administration of the Act is broken down to different levels. The Act provides that the overall responsibility for administration of the provisions rests with the Civil Service Commission. The Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance was created to administer the insurance program on behalf of the insurance companies which underwrite the policies. The office has the responsibility of settling claims presented by employees.<sup>3</sup>

Each federal agency has certain ministerial responsibilities in administering the insurance program. It is the Personnel Officer's responsibility to certify the eligibility of employees and to counsel and advise employees concerning the insurance program. Other responsibilities which the agency must perform include the withholding of premiums from the employee's wages, the report and deposit of premiums, the maintenance of insurance records and assistance to the claimants.

---

<sup>3</sup>United States Civil Service Commission, Federal Personnel Manual (Washington, 1954), p. I/3/5. Hereafter the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance will be referred to as OFEGLI.

All regular employees are covered by this insurance program except those who are employed on a temporary, part-time, or intermittent basis. In the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service all employees are eligible to participate.<sup>4</sup>

If he is not in the excluded group, an employee does not have to request that he be included in the insurance program for he is automatically covered with group life insurance the first day he is on pay status. An exception is made if the employee, on or before the date of employment, files a waiver of life insurance coverage. During the placement interview the insurance program is explained and each new employee is given literature on the program. If the new employee does not desire to be insured, he may then file the waiver of life insurance coverage, standard form 53. This form, properly executed, relieves the agency of withholding premiums for life insurance coverage.<sup>5</sup> If the employee is already covered with insurance, he may withdraw from participation in the program by filing a waiver. When a waiver is filed by an insured employee his coverage stops at the end of the pay period in which the waiver is received by the employing office.

---

<sup>4</sup>Lenore Young, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 7, 1956.

<sup>5</sup>United States Civil Service Commission, Federal Personnel Manual (Washington, 1954), p. I/3/8.

Once a properly executed waiver becomes effective it remains in effect until cancelled, even though the employee may transfer to another agency or receive appointment after a break in service. If an employee is hired who has previously worked for the Federal Government, the employing office must find out if the employee had waived his insurance coverage during his previous employment. If the employee has an uncancelled waiver from this employment, he is not automatically insured. If the employee is not certain, the deductions for insurance are made by the employing office. If such an employee does not have a waiver filed, he is automatically insured, unless at this time he wishes to waive the insurance. In any case, the employee's statement is verified when his official personnel folder containing his insurance records is received.<sup>6</sup>

An employee who has waived his insurance coverage and who wishes to be reinsured may cancel his waiver by meeting certain conditions. He must be under the age of fifty on the date he requests insurance and at least one year must have elapsed between the effected date of his last waiver and the date of his request for insurance. Also, he must furnish satisfactory medical evidence of insurability. All of these conditions must be met by the employee in order to cancel his waiver. The employee who meets these conditions

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

may fill out a Request for Insurance, Standard Form 51. The completed request is sent to the OFEGLI, which either authorizes insurance coverage or denies such coverage and informs the employing office of the action taken.<sup>7</sup>

The Group Life Insurance policy provides the employee with two kinds of insurance during employment. These are life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. The amount of insurance that is provided to an employee under age sixty-five is an amount equal to the current rate of his annual compensation if such rate is a multiple of \$1,000. If not a multiple of \$1,000 his insurance is the next higher \$1,000. For example, an employee whose annual rate of compensation is exactly \$3,000 is insured for \$3,000. He has \$3,000 of both life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. But, an employee whose annual compensation is \$3,200 will be insured for \$4,000. The employee may not elect to take insurance coverage for any other amount than that established on the basis of his annual salary.<sup>8</sup>

The amount of insurance carried by an employee under sixty-five automatically changes whenever his annual compensation is increased or decreased by an amount sufficient to raise or lower his compensation to the next \$1,000 bracket. For insurance purposes the change is deemed to occur on the

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. I/3/10.

date the change in salary is effective or the date the payroll change is approved.

After an employee reaches age sixty-five, the amount of his insurance will be reduced each month by two per cent of the amount he has on his sixty-fifth birthday. This reduction continues until the amount reaches twenty-five per cent of his coverage on his sixty-fifth birthday. After this there are no further reductions in the amount of his insurance. The reduction is effective at midnight on the last day of each calendar month, and the first reduction is made at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the sixty-fifth birthday falls.<sup>9</sup>

Any change in the salary rate which occurs after the sixty-fifth birthday and after the employee has become insured does not effect the amount of his insurance or reduction.

The cost of the insurance is shared by the employee and by the Government as his employer. The employee's share is two-thirds of the cost and it is withheld from his salary. The cost per \$1,000 of insurance has been established as twenty-five cents per employee each biweekly pay period. The Government's share is one-third and it is contributed from agency appropriations or other funds available for the payment of salaries. Withholdings must be made for each pay period an employee is insured and under age sixty-five and receives any salary. The amount to be withheld is always based on

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

the amount of insurance last in force during the pay period. The full withholding amount must be made for each pay period even if the employee was in a pay status for only part of the pay period unless the amount of salary received is not enough to cover the withholding. In case the total salary is not sufficient, the total amount earned, less deductions for retirement or social security and income tax, must be withheld and applied as his insurance payment. Where the employee is in a non-pay status for an entire pay period, then no withholdings to cover that pay period will be made from future salary payment nor will the employee deposit the amount which would have been withheld if he had been in a pay status.<sup>10</sup>

The amount to be withheld is based on the amount of insurance last in force during a particular pay period. If an employee's annual compensation changes during a pay period, the withholdings must be based on the amount of insurance in force at the end of the pay period.

An employee who is age sixty-five or over is insured without cost to himself and no withholdings are made from his salary. For an employee who attains the age of sixty-five insured, withholdings cease at the end of the pay period immediately preceding the one in which he reaches his sixty-fifth birthday.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/13.



The benefits that are payable under this insurance program include payment of coverage for death or dismemberment losses. The conditions for payment of insurance benefits depend upon the employee's loss occurred while insured, proper notice, and proof of claim.

The total amount of the life insurance policy is payable in the event of the employee's death regardless of cause.<sup>12</sup>

Payments under the Accidental Death and Dismemberment portion are conditional. The benefits under this portion are payable if an employee receives bodily injuries solely through violent, external, and accidental means; or if as a direct result of the bodily injuries the employee loses his life; or if there occurs loss of life, limb, or eyesight within ninety days after the accident. Loss of limb is defined as the loss of a hand or a foot severance at or above the wrist joint or ankle joint. Loss of sight, either in one eye or both eyes, must be total and permanent.<sup>13</sup>

The full amount of accidental death and dismemberment insurance is payable for loss of life. Half the amount of the insurance is payable for the loss of one limb or the sight of one eye, or the full amount for two or more such losses.

For all losses which result from one accident, no more than the full amount of accidental death and dismemberment

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/18.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

insurance is payable. If a loss of one hand or one foot or sight of one eye occurs in a different accident after a previous loss of any such member, the benefit payable for the subsequent loss is one-half the amount of the insurance. Otherwise, the payments for benefits from loss will not affect the amount of benefits payable for losses which result from any subsequent accident.

There are certain exceptions for which payments for accidental death or dismemberment will not be made. These exceptions include intentional self-destruction, war, hernia, ptomaine or by bacterial infection.<sup>14</sup>

The person or persons who receives the benefits from the insurance is the designated beneficiary; however, the employee does not need to name a beneficiary. An order of precedence is provided by the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act which is followed if a beneficiary is not named. If there is no designated beneficiary surviving or if none has been named, the benefits are payable to (1) the employee's widow or widower, (2) the child or children in equal shares with the share of any deceased child distributed among the descendants of that child if death occurred after benefits started, (3) the parents in equal shares or the entire amount to the surviving parent, (4) the duly appointed executor or administrator of the employee's estate, or (5) the next of kin under the laws of the state of domicile at the time of death.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/20.

If the employee wants to name a beneficiary or change the designation, he files a written notice, signed, and witnessed with the employing office. A witness to the designation may not receive payment as a beneficiary. The employee does not need to secure consent from anyone to change his beneficiary. To be valid, a designation or change of beneficiary, must be received by the employing office before the employee's death. If the employee moves to another agency, or if he retires and is eligible for life insurance during retirement, or if the employee reacquires insurance after it has ceased for any reason, the designation of the beneficiary that was previously made is void. The employee must file a new form if benefits are to be payable to a designated beneficiary.

If the employee names more than one beneficiary, their respective interest in insurance benefits must be specified. If a designated beneficiary dies before the employee, his rights and interest to the benefits are automatically discontinued.

The beneficiary named by the employee as entitled to payment must make claim within one year after the employee's death. Failure to make claim during this period prohibits the designated beneficiary from receiving payment, unless he would be the one according to the order of precedence. Payments are made according to the order of precedence when the beneficiary fails to file a claim.

When the beneficiary or other survivor becomes entitled to receive death benefits, the claim must be filed with the OFEGLI before benefits will be paid. If the beneficiary desires, benefits will be paid in a lump sum or by installments. The insured employee may not make advance arrangements for installment payments to beneficiary or other survivors.

To receive payment of the death benefits the employee's beneficiary must send in a claim with written proof of employee's death and of the claimant's right to benefits. All notices should go through the employee's personnel office before being sent to the OFEGLI.

If the employee is involved in an accident which results in loss of life, limb, or eyesight, it must be reported within twenty days after the accident. Proof of the loss must be submitted within ninety days after the date of the loss; however, if it is not possible to furnish this notice by the time specified, the requirement is met when the beneficiary has furnished the notice as soon as possible.<sup>16</sup>

The OFEGLI has the right to have a physician examine the employee during the period he is claiming benefits for loss of limb or eyesight. It is also provided that the OFEGLI has the right to require an autopsy in the event of a claim for accidental death benefits, unless the autopsy is forbidden by state law.

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/23.

The employee's entire insurance coverage stops, except after retirement, on (1) the date an employee is separated from service, (2) the date when a period of twelve months of continuous non-pay status ends, (3) the day immediately before the day indemnity coverage under the Servicemen's Indemnity Act of 1951 is acquired, (4) the date of any other change in employment which results in loss of eligibility to be covered, (5) the last day of the pay period during which the employing office receives a waiver of insurance coverage, or (6) the date of termination of the Group Policy. Coverage is not discontinued after retirement if the employee is sixty-five or over with at least fifteen years of creditable service or because of disability. Life insurance, but not accidental death and dismemberment insurance, will be provided during retirement in accordance with the Group Policy. The amount of insurance and monthly reductions after the sixty-fifth birthday will be the same after retirement as if the employee had not retired.<sup>17</sup>

Group Life Insurance may be converted to an individual policy by the employee if he applies for it within thirty-one days after discontinuance of the Group Policy. The policy received will not be term and will be for an amount equal to or less than that for which he was previously covered. If the employee should die during the thirty-one day period, a death benefit will be payable, subject to

---

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. I/3/25.

proof in the usual manner. The amount to be paid will be the maximum amount for which the individual policy could have been issued.

At the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service all employees except three have insurance coverage under the Group Life Insurance program. These three have exercised their right to waive coverage.<sup>18</sup>

Disability compensation has been provided by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act as amended in October, 1949. This Act provides compensation for death, disability, and full medical care for duty-connected injuries or illness suffered by employees in the performance of their duties.<sup>19</sup>

The administration of benefits provided by the Act is the responsibility of the Secretary of Labor through the Bureau of Employees' Compensation.<sup>20</sup> An employee injured at work must follow the rules and regulations of the Bureau in order to be eligible to receive the benefits provided by this Act. The employing office is instructed by the Bureau to inform all employees of their rights and responsibilities, and to make arrangements for immediate first aid for minor or emergency injury. The employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service have been given literature

---

<sup>18</sup>Genny Gibson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 7, 1956.

<sup>19</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LXIII, (1949), p. 854.

<sup>20</sup>Hereafter the Bureau of Employees' Compensation shall be referred to as Bureau.

which explains the benefits and the procedure to follow. A first aid station is maintained for emergency treatment and a list of approved physicians is made available to the employees.<sup>21</sup>

All personal injuries and diseases caused by the employment are covered, except an injury or death caused by willful misconduct of the employee. Likewise, if intoxication of the injured employee is the cause of the injury or death no benefits will be paid. Severe penalties are incurred by anyone who accepts compensation benefits based upon a false claim. The penalty is a \$2,000 fine or one year in jail or both.

If the injury was sustained at work, the employee is entitled to first-aid and full medical care as needed for his injury, including hospitalization, without cost to himself. The employee must use the government medical facilities and secure the services of an approved private physician. If such help is not available, other arrangements are made so that the employee will receive the care he requires and still be covered by the Act.

The employee is entitled to monetary benefits for any loss of wages or wage earning capacity due to disability from a work injury. The financial benefits received by an employee with no dependents is sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of his salary. The rate of financial benefits is increased to seventy-five per cent for periods of disability

---

<sup>21</sup>United States Department of Labor, Regulations Governing Administration of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (Washington, 1951), p. 5.

when the employee has one or more dependents. Dependents recognized in disability cases include a wife, wholly dependent husband, unmarried child under eighteen years of age, and a wholly dependent parent. At the time disability begins, an injured employee may first use any sick and annual leave to his credit. This is at the employee's discretion; and he may use any or all of his leave before he starts drawing disability compensation which begins after pay stops. If the disability period is less than twenty-two days, payment starts on the fourth day after pay stops.<sup>22</sup>

The least amount a disabled employee receives for a month of total disability is \$112.50 unless his monthly pay rate is less. In that case he receives his full monthly rate. The most an employee may receive for a month of total disability is \$525. The wage rates include amounts withheld for income tax and retirement purposes. If the period of disability is less than ninety calendar days, the compensation is computed by multiplying the employee's daily wage rate by two-thirds, or if he has a dependent, by three-fourths. This figure is then multiplied by the number of work days for which he is eligible to draw compensation. Three days are deducted from eligible days when disability is twenty-one days or less. The three day waiting period is not deducted if permanent partial disability is involved or if the employee is disabled for twenty-one calendar days beyond the leave period.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



For periods of disability in excess of ninety calendar days, compensation is computed in terms of a standard fifty-two week year. The salary of annual employees is multiplied by two-thirds or three-fourths, dependent upon their dependency status, and the result is divided by fifty-two to determine their weekly compensation rate. For per diem workers the gross annual is figured by multiplying the daily rate by the number of days they would work and dividing the gross by fifty-two for the weekly compensation rate.<sup>24</sup>

If an employee is injured and able to return to work, but sustains a loss of earning capacity due to disability from his injury, he is paid for his loss of earning capacity for as long as the period may last, or he may be paid under a schedule for certain permanent disabilities. The rate of compensation is sixty-six and two-thirds per cent or seventy-five per cent of the loss of earning capacity in accordance with the number of dependents he has.

Employees are provided a fixed amount of compensation for permanent partial and permanent total disabilities. The amount and the length of time disability benefits will run is fixed by law. Permanent partial injuries are when an employee suffers one hundred per cent functional loss or dismemberment of certain bodily members. Benefits of this nature are in addition to other benefits received. Permanent total injuries are permanent total disability of both hands,

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

both legs, or both eyes and other situations which the Bureau may determine as permanent total disability. In such cases, the benefits received continue for the remainder of the employee's life.<sup>25</sup>

The Bureau is authorized to arrange for vocational rehabilitation of an employee who is permanently disabled. He may be paid an additional compensation up to \$50 per month for maintenance while he is undergoing an approved course of training. If disability is one hundred per cent loss of use of a major anatomical member and the employee continues to suffer loss of wage-earning capacity after attempting vocational rehabilitation, he may receive benefits in proportion to his loss of wage-earning capacity.<sup>26</sup>

If an employee dies as a result of work injury or disease, the family will be paid burial expenses up to \$400. If death occurs away from duty station, the Bureau will pay transportation and casket cost from place of death to his home in addition to burial expenses.<sup>27</sup>

The employee's widow is also eligible to receive monthly compensation until she remarries or her death. If there are no other dependents, she receives forty-five per cent of his regular monthly pay not to exceed \$525. This benefit also applies to surviving husbands provided they are wholly

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

dependent upon their wife's income. If the employee is survived by a widow and unmarried children under age eighteen, the widow will receive forty per cent of the monthly pay and fifteen per cent for each child up to a maximum of seventy-five per cent of monthly pay for all dependents. If the children are sole dependents, the first child receives thirty-five per cent of the monthly pay and fifteen per cent is authorized for each additional child up to seventy-five per cent for all dependents.<sup>28</sup>

This Act is the exclusive remedy for injuries suffered by employees while at work.

The health insurance that is available to employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service is Blue Cross and Blue Shield and it is optional insurance. Blue Cross offers contracts to individual members of the group. The coverage provides payment for hospitalization. This covers room and board of a specified grade, general nursing, and certain extra services supplied by the hospital. Blue Shield operates similarly to Blue Cross in the field of surgery and in-hospital medical care. The cost for this health insurance is wholly paid for by the employees who join the group. New employees may join any time within thirty days after appointment or they must wait until the group's anniversary date. Responsibility for the administration of this health insurance program rests with the Blue Cross and

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Blue Shield Corporation. The only responsibility of the employing office is the collection and payment of employee premiums. Twice a year, premiums are collected and forwarded to Blue Cross and Blue Shield. This action is a function of the personnel section within the agency. This type of health insurance not only covers employees but also includes their dependents. In the state office fifteen employees have taken this insurance.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Genny Gibson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 7, 1956.

## CHAPTER VI

### UNIONIZATION

The employment and working conditions of federal employees are established by acts of Congress, executive orders, and administrative rules and regulations. The right of civil servants to utilize industrial labor management techniques has been restricted by law in order to insure that the public service is continued without interruptions. Despite this restriction federal employees have organized in order to improve their economic and social welfare.

The position of the civil servant has made it difficult for him to be represented by a union. It was felt that there was no place for employee organizations and representation in the American public service. This attitude retarded the growth of unions and spread a fear of employee organizations. Through the years this attitude has been replaced somewhat with an attitude of toleration.<sup>1</sup> The so-called "gag" orders prohibited solicitation for pay increases and denied the right of employees to influence in their own interest any legislation before Congress. These directives have been replaced with legislation which permits employees to organize and lobby.

---

<sup>1</sup>William E. Mosher, J. Donald Kingsley, and O. Glenn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration (3rd. ed., New York, 1950), pp. 348-352.

The first favorable legislation came about as the result of the demoralized conditions in the railway mail service. Although federal employees were prohibited to join organizations or to act individually for their betterment, they did try. Employees appealed to Congress for more rights and better employment conditions. Strikes were used but with very little success. This activity drew the attention of some members of Congress. They became interested and investigated the condition of federal employees. The result of this investigation was the Lloyd-La Follette Act of 1912.<sup>2</sup> This Act was termed the most important legislation ever enacted for federal employees. The Lloyd-La Follette Act applied specifically to postal employees but by later interpretation the provisions of the Act were extended to all federal employees. The provisions of this Act granted the right to organize, the right of affiliation, and the right to lobby. Civil servants now have the right of membership in any society, association, club, or other form of organization that is not affiliated with any outside organization imposing an obligation or duty to strike against the United States. They may appeal to Congress for legislation which they favor or dislike. The Act also provides that employees may not be removed or reduced in rank or compensation as a result of being a member of an employee organization. Membership in a union is voluntary.

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

This Act did not give to federal employees the right of collective bargaining in the true sense of the term. Conditions of employment and working conditions are controlled by congressional acts and executive orders. Representatives of employees may appeal to Congress and to Administrators for certain changes in conditions; but the right to participate directly in negotiations does not belong to employee organizations. Therefore, the chief method used in sponsoring proposals by unions is representation before Congress.

The most controversial and misunderstood aspect of the relationship of employee organizations to the public service is the question of the right to strike. At one time this aspect was of little concern in public service. The Federal Government had many existing laws by which employees could be prosecuted for striking other than outright prohibition of strikes by law.<sup>3</sup> These existing statutes covered various actions but there were still loopholes. Also, the constitutions of nearly all employee unions contained provisions which denied the use of strikes to their members. Despite these restrictions, legislation to prevent strikes against the United States became effective in Public Law 419, passed by the 79th Congress in 1946.<sup>4</sup> This legislation was in the

---

<sup>3</sup>The sections of the Criminal Code relating to obstruction to the mails and to conspiracy against the government may be invoked to cover any organized walkout.

<sup>4</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LX, (1946), pp. 268-269.

form of clauses attached to appropriation acts which required that no funds be used to pay the salaries of any employee who refused to sign an affidavit in which the employee stated that he did not belong to an organization asserting the right to strike against the United States. This action was prompted by the belief that the constitution of the United Public Workers of America departed from the traditional no-strike policy of other civil service unions. Legislation to prevent strikes of federal employees became stronger in 1947 by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, Public Law 101, of the 80th Congress.<sup>5</sup> This Act made it unlawful for any employee with civil service status to participate in any strike against the United States. Any employee who does participate in a strike will be discharged immediately from his employment, lose his civil service status, and will not be eligible for reemployment for three years by the United States.

Present legislation gives to civil service employees certain rights and certain restrictions. Employees have the right to organize, affiliate, and lobby. They are restricted in such activities as strikes, arbitration, collective bargaining, and closed shops within any agency. Due to this legislation civil service unionism is today firmly entrenched in the United States. Several unions which represent federal employees have been organized. Some of these unions are affiliated with industrial union such as the American

---

<sup>5</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LXI, (1947), pp. 140-141.



Federation of Labor. Some unions are not affiliated with an industrial union.

One union which represents federal employees is the non-affiliated National Federation of Federal Employees.<sup>6</sup> This is the union which is available to employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service. At the present time no other union for civil service employees has a local in this area. Federal employees who meet the eligibility requirements may join or refrain from joining Local 882 of the NFFE.

The NFFE was organized in 1917 and is the oldest of employee unions. There is a national headquarters located in Washington, D. C. and locals located in any city where there are at least five civil service employees who desire to join. These locals may form a State Federation of all local unions.

The organizational structure of the NFFE at the national level consists of the President, Secretary-Treasurer, and nine Vice Presidents. All candidates for these offices file with the Secretary-Treasurer during a prescribed time at the national biennial convention. The election of these officers takes place during the close of the convention. They are elected by a majority of written votes of the delegates

---

<sup>6</sup>Hereafter the National Federation of Federal Employees will be referred to as NFFE.

present at the convention. The terms of all officers are for two years or until their successors are elected.<sup>7</sup>

The national officers of the NFFE compose the Executive Council, which is the highest administrative body of the union. Their duties are to administer the property of the Federation and to act as the final authority on all administrative questions referred to it by the locals.

The President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Federation are the only two officers who remain in Washington, D. C., to represent the membership; however, these officers may call for assistance from the other officers or any member. Ordinarily, these two officers can handle all representation before committees.<sup>8</sup>

The objectives of the NFFE are to advance the education, social, and economic welfare of the employees of the United States; also, it sponsors programs dedicated to the development of greater efficiency within the various agencies of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

The methods for attaining these objectives are by petition to Congress, by creating and fostering public sentiment favorable to proposed reforms, and by cooperation with officials and employees.

---

<sup>7</sup>Bernice DeShong, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 6, 1956.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>National Federation of Federal Employees, Constitution, Article II, p. 1.

Every local must adopt a constitution. All locals must submit their constitution to the national office of the NFFE for approval before the local is allowed to operate. The NFFE has copies of suggested constitutions and by-laws which are furnished to new or reorganized locals on request. Any change in the constitution of a local must be approved by the National Executive Council.

The constitution of locals, as well as the NFFE, contains the Federation's policies and procedures on strikes, demonstrations, fields of activity, organizational structure, eligibility requirements, dues, and authority.

The constitution of the locals and National Federation provides the guarantee that under no circumstance will the Federation engage or support strikes against the United States nor will any type of demonstration be used. The procedures used by the union to reach their objectives must be confined to the use of dignified and reasonable approaches.<sup>10</sup>

The organizational structure of the local depends upon the membership. Local 882, which employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service may join, has a President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three board members. These five officials form the Executive Council of the local. The duty of the Executive Council is to administer the affairs of the local and to submit recommendations at the State Convention.

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 2

Local meetings are held monthly to conduct union business and to draw up a program for the betterment of employees. After the regular business is completed the remainder of the meeting is conducted as an educational forum. Important legislation before Congress and proposals that will be sponsored are discussed. This enables the individual member to know what is being done and how it affects him. Another purpose of this discussion is to notify members when contacts should be made with their Congressmen. In addition to the information given at local meetings, the Federation uses other means of communication. Members of the NFFE receive the organization's official magazine, The Federal Employee. From time to time, various pamphlets are sent to the locals. In cases where immediate action by local members is essential, telegraph and telephone calls notify the local of what is taking place and the action the NFFE desires that the local and its membership take.<sup>11</sup>

To be eligible for membership in the local union the employee must receive a major portion of his pay from federal funds, be subject to the retirement program, and be subject to the leave benefits. Every employee in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service is eligible for membership in the local. At the present time the membership

---

<sup>11</sup>Bernice DeShong, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 6, 1956.

of Local 882 is fifty. Seven employees in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service are members.<sup>12</sup>

The dues to be paid by each member is determined by the local. Members of Local 882 pay a \$1.00 initiation fee and \$2.00 per quarter which makes the first year's cost per member \$9.00 and for each succeeding year \$8.00. From this amount the local sends \$6.00 per member to the NFFE national office each year as its share of the cost. The local pays the State Federation forty cents per member each year. This leaves the local \$1.60 per member each year for its own funds.<sup>13</sup>

Local 882 does not provide insurance or recreation for its members. It serves primarily as an educational forum and informative meeting. Its concern is to work out a program of issues to present to the State Convention in order that proposals may then be organized and presented at the National Convention. The NFFE wants a well-rounded and concrete program to present before Congress.

There are no social or economic activities provided for union members with the exception of an annual dinner. It is felt that there is sufficient activity of this nature outside the union. At one time an order house was maintained whereby the members could buy merchandise at discount but this has been discontinued.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

The correct channel of communication is between the national and local unions. A State Federation may be formed by the locals of a State; but this unit is not to be considered a substitute for the local unions. The chief concern of a State Federation is the extension of membership and the development of a program for the State from the recommendations of all locals.

The organizational structure of the State Federation is a President, a Vice-President, six District Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer. These officers are elected at the biennial State Convention by a majority vote of the attending delegates. They serve two years or until they are defeated for re-election by another candidate. Any member of good standing in the locals may be a candidate for the state office.<sup>15</sup>

The State Federation is financed by the locals which pay forty cents per member each year.

The primary emphasis of the NFFE is placed upon activity at the national level. The locals are organized chiefly for strength and to help map out the program to be achieved.

---

<sup>15</sup>Elmo Baumann, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 14, 1956.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

If employee relations are sound, productive efficiency and morale tend to improve unless management is technically inefficient in planning or administration. This means that a sound employee relations program is essential to achieve the maximum production. The result of this study of selected problems of employee relations in the state office of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Service discloses that sincere efforts have been made to implement the employee relations program as developed by higher authority.

The first problem is employee participation in management. An incentive award program has been adopted for all federal employees. Employees who participate may be rewarded by monetary or non-monetary awards. The full effectiveness of this program in the Oklahoma state office can not be determined due to the newness of this program. Very few monetary rewards are given; however, there are a large number of non-monetary awards each year. The latter type of awards gives recognition to employees, thus it serves to create a sense of partnership and belongingness. The incentive awards program appears to be the only formalized method of employee participation in management.

The second problem is fair treatment of the employee. To provide for fair treatment the federal service has adopted a uniform procedure for the adjustment of grievances. The aims are to provide provisions for adequate review of employees' grievances and to reduce arbitrary action by supervisors. The effectiveness of this program in the state office is shown by the infrequent use of the appeal procedure for grievances. Only one grievance in the last three years has not been settled by the informal methods of settlement.

The third problem is the publication and the recreational programs. The aim of both is to provide a sense of belongingness. Every employee is furnished pamphlets and handbooks upon entering the Service and the agency keeps the employees informed by current pamphlets and newsletters. In addition, the Department of Agriculture publishes a newsletter. The recreational program provides a variety of different activities; however, there is no formal all-employee program. The program provided does offer, in a supplementary way, an opportunity for most employees to enjoy recreation together.

The fourth problem is the health and welfare program. The objective of this program is to help provide a sense of security for employees. Employees are offered, at their own choice, life, accident, and health insurance at low cost. The cost of the program, with the exception of health insurance, is borne by both the government and the employee. Benefits are payable for death and disability. One weakness of the welfare program is its failure to provide disability



compensation for off-duty accidents. The high degree of participation in the program by the employees of the state office indicates its acceptance.

The fifth problem is unionization. The primary problem is the proper function of a union in the federal service. It is a right of all federal employees to join or refrain from joining a union which abides by the statutes governing unionization of federal employees. The relatively small percentage of the state office's employees who belong to Local 882 of the National Federation of Federal Employees indicates that the union is not strong. The main function appears to be employee representation before Congress by the national officers. There is no direct communication between Local 882 and the administrators of the Oklahoma state office.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Avery, Robert S. Experiment in Management. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1954.
- Charlesworth, James Clyde. Government Administration. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951.
- Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. Employee Relations in the Public Service. Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1941.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Employee Training in the Public Service. Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1941.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Public Relations in Public Personnel Agencies. Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1941.
- Fesler, James. Area and Administration. University of Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1949.
- Gaus, John M. and L. D. Wolcott. Public Administration and the Department of Agriculture. Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1940.
- Graves, W. Brooke. Public Administration in a Democratic Society. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1950.
- Latham, Earl. The Federal Field Service. Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1947.
- McCamy, James L. Government Publicity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.
- Meriam, Lewis. Public Personnel Problems. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1939.
- Mosher, William E., J. Donald Kingsley, and O. Glenn Stahl. Public Personnel Administration. 3rd. ed. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950.
- National Federation of Federal Employees. Constitution. Detroit, 1954.
- Pfiffner, John M. The Supervision of Personnel. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951.

- Pigors, P. J. and C. A. Myers. Personnel Administration. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951.
- Spero, Sterling D. Government as Employer. New York: Remsen Press, 1948.
- Tead, Ordway. New Adventures in Democracy. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Art of Administration. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951.
- Walters, J. E. Personnel Relations. New York: The Ronald Press, 1945.
- White, Leonard D. Introduction to the Study of Public Administration. New York: Macmillan Company, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Trends in Public Administration. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933.

#### Articles

- Dickinson, Harold L. "Some Problems in Establishing a Generalist Personnel Office." Personnel Administration. Vol. 12, No. 6. (June, 1950). pp. 19-22.
- Goodrich, George M. "Integration vs. Decentralization in the Federal Field Service." Public Administration Review. Vol. 9, No. 4. (Autumn, 1949). pp. 272-277.
- McCaffrey, John L. "Wanted: More Generalist." Personnel Journal. Vol. 33, No. 4. (July-August, 1954). pp. 86-90.
- Sawchuk, H. A. "The New Federal Incentive Awards Program." Public Administration Review. Vol. 15, No. 1. (Winter, 1955). pp. 43-45.
- Watter, David M. "The Generalist vs. the Specialist." Personnel Administration. Vol. 17, No. 1. (January, 1954). pp. 27-31.

## Governmental Publications

Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, Task Force Report. Federal Personnel. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949.

\_\_\_\_\_. Personnel Management. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949.

\_\_\_\_\_. Personnel and Civil Service. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.

United States Civil Service Commission. Federal Personnel Manual. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954.

United States Department of Agriculture. Administrative Regulations: Title 8 - Personnel. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.

\_\_\_\_\_. Directory on Organization of Field Activities of the Department of Agriculture. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954.

\_\_\_\_\_. Office of Personnel. Employee Handbook. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.

\_\_\_\_\_. Soil Conservation Service. Administrative Procedures Manual. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.

\_\_\_\_\_. Soil Conservation Service. Incentive Awards Handbook. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.

\_\_\_\_\_. Soil Conservation Service. Position Classification, Administrative Assistant for Personnel. Stillwater, December 16, 1955.

United States Department of Labor. Regulations Governing Administration of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951.

U. S. Statutes at Large. 79th Cong. 2nd Sess. Vol. LX. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946.

\_\_\_\_\_. 80th Cong. 1st Sess. Vol. LXI. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947.

\_\_\_\_\_. 81st Cong. 1st Sess. Vol. LXIII. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949.

\_\_\_\_\_. 83rd Cong. 2nd Sess. Vol. LXVIII. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954.

Interviews

- Abshure, Tom. Personal Interview on Employee Relations.  
Stillwater, Oklahoma. June, 1956.
- Baumann, Elmo. Personal Interview on Unionization.  
Stillwater, Oklahoma. June, 1956.
- DeShong, Bernice. Personal Interview on Unionization.  
Stillwater, Oklahoma. June, 1956.
- Gibson, Genny. Personal Interview on Employee Relations.  
Stillwater, Oklahoma. June, 1956.
- Young, Lenore. Personal Interview on Employee Relations.  
Stillwater, Oklahoma. June, 1956.

VITA

Stanley Fred Newton  
Candidate for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Thesis: SELECTED PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN A FEDERAL  
FIELD OFFICE

Major Field: Political Science

Biographical:

Personal data: Born in Olustee, Oklahoma, September 17,  
1930.

Education: Attended grade school in Olustee and Victory,  
Oklahoma; graduated from Victory High School in  
1948; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from the  
Eastern New Mexico University, with a major in  
Political Science, in June, 1953; completed require-  
ments for the Master of Arts degree in August, 1956.

Professional experience: Served in the United States  
Army from 1953 to 1955.