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Report on Visit to  
The United States Civil Service Commission  
(August 3 to August 7, 1959)

The American Civil Service System was born on January 16, 1883 of the martyrdom of the President James A. Garfield, killed by a disgruntled job seeker, Charles A. Gateau, and put an end to the spoil system. The Civil Service act was signed by President Chester A. Arthur.

The body was first known as the Advisory Board of the Civil Service but later on it was called the Civil Service Commission. To it President Grant appointed seven members, three within the Government and four from outside. Besides acting as advisor to the President, the first commission supervised competitive entrance and promotion examinations conducted by boards at Washington and New York. It also acted as a board of appeals from decisions of these boards.

Although Grant's commission did a remarkable job and received praise from administrative officials, the press and the public, Congress was indifferent if not hostile to the Commission's work.

Thus, the Commission lived "in a shadowy sort of existence" for three years but after all Congress recognizes the merit system instituted by the Civil Service Commission based on efficiency, economy and democracy. Another direct advantage of the institution of the Civil Service Commission was the relief that members of Congress and the President would obtain from the burdensome demands of office seekers.

The Civil Service Commission is directed by a body of three Commissioners. The terms of office of each such commissioner shall be six years and shall expire as designated by the President, one at the end of two years, one at the end of four years, and one at the end of six years after such effective date.

The task of a Civil Service Commissioner is threefold; first is that of a policy maker, second that of a judge, and third of a spokesman for the merit system of Federal employment. The commissioners choose as executive director the most prominent person in grade 16, 17 and 18.

The executive director devotes his attention to the improvement of personnel administration, working through a small executive group consisting of bureau directors and the technical advisers to the Commission.

The workload of the U.S. Civil Service Commission is carried by five bureaus:

1. The Bureau of Field Operations, organizes, directs and supervises the Commission's regional offices and their subsidiary organizations in executing all commission programs and activities in the field service. It evaluates such programs and initiates changes in policy when need is indicated and provides leadership in broad fields of personnel management and collaborates with other bureaus in developing and recommending for approval policies designated to meet the needs of the field services. There are at present three divisions or offices at the Bureau of Field Operations.
  - A. Operational policy and instructive division
  - B. Program development and management division
  - C. Eleven regional offices each office headed by a regional director.
2. The Bureau of Programs and Standards, directs the Commission's activities in (1) providing leadership and guidance in strengthening Federal personnel programs and to improve personnel management in the federal service, (2) maintaining the system of regulations and instructions by which programs and policies are made effective, (3) establishing standards and providing selection methods and tests to measure qualifications. The Bureau of Programs and Standards is subdivided into five offices or divisions:
  - A. The administrative office
  - B. The program control and legislature reporting office.
  - C. The program planning division
  - D. The regulations and instructions division
  - E. The standards division.
3. The Bureau of Inspections and Classification Audits, This bureau is divided into two divisions. The functions of each division are described below:
  - A. The administrative and control division (1) plans the Commission's program for the conduct of inspections and classification audits of the agencies delegated authorities in the field of personnel administration, (2) develops and promulgates instructions, procedures, handbooks and guides for the conduct of inspections, (3) maintains liaison with other divisions of the Commission, (4) maintains control records on inspections and classification audits, (5) performs the administrative services for the Bureau of Inspections and Classification Audit, and, (6) performs other work not specifically assigned elsewhere in the Bureau as directed.
  - B. The Washington Division inspects the personnel programs, policies and operations of the agencies in the Washington area. The Washington Division is divided into sections and each section has the responsibility for these functions for a group of agencies located in the Washington area.
4. The Bureau of Management Services, is responsible for the direction, coordination, and control of the personnel, fiscal, administrative and business management activities of the Commission. The Bureau is divided into:
  - A. The budget and finance division is responsible for the Commission's budget programs financial activities and the work reporting and analyses system.
  - B. The personnel division directs the Commission's internal personnel program and advises on internal personnel policy.
  - C. The office services division is responsible for programs that provide office management services and facilities for the Commission.

- D. The library develops and maintains a collection of personnel administration literature which is one of the finest in the country.
- E. The employment statistics and publications control office collects and publishes Government-wide personnel statistics.
- F. The organization and methods office administers the Commission's over-all management control system.

5. The Bureau of Departmental Operation, directs the Commission's centralized activities in conducting the examining program, administering the Civil Service Retirement Act and the Federal Employee Group Life Insurance Act; administering an investigative program; establishing physical requirements of Federal positions, acting on certain appeals by Federal employees, administering the Government-wide program for improving government operations through training and the use of incentive awards. The Bureau is divided into:

- A. Two staff offices
  - a. The appeals examining office adjudicates the appeals of those Federal employees in the Washington and certain overseas areas who have been adversely affected by a reduction in force or by disciplinary action.
  - b. The administrative office provides all of the usual administrative services such as budgeting, work reporting and cost analysis, personnel, procedural studies, form control, reports control, records control, property and space control and utilization and related services.
- B. Five Divisions
  - a. The retirement division administers the Civil Service Retirement and the Federal Employee Group Life Insurance Acts; adjudicates all retirement claims; accounts for and maintains the retirement and insurance funds; maintains file of individual retirement accounts; issues instructions controlling the retirement and insurance systems; prepares Commission reports to the Congress on proposed retirement and insurance legislation.
  - b. The examining division directs recruitment, examining and placement activity for positions under Civil Service Commission jurisdiction in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and for certain positions throughout the country.
  - c. The operations improvement division coordinates and promotes the government-wide incentive awards program and directs Commission operated interagency training programs.
  - d. The investigations division plans and operates the Commission's investigative program which includes (1) national agency checks and inquiries and limited personal investigations for nonsensitive positions, (2) full field investigations for sensitive positions, (3) investigations on matters relating to enforcement of the Civil Service laws and rules and, (4) qualifications investigations of applicants for administrative and professional positions. It evaluates all nonsensitive cases for the metropolitan area and for the field when loyalty is involved. It negotiates with and advises agencies on investigative matters.

- e. The medical division determines physical standards for Federal positions; evaluates applicants and their physical qualifications for particular positions; facilitates the employment of the physically handicapped; evaluates claims for disability retirement under the Civil Service Retirement Act; determines professional standards and rates applications for medical and related positions and operates the Commission's internal health program.