Inventory of the State Personnel Board Records

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Descriptive Summary

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Agency History
Governor Hiram Johnson established California's first Civil Service Commission (Stats. 1913, ch. 590, p. 1035) as a reform measure aimed at promoting employee efficiency and ending the widespread spoils system in the public sector. The spoils system, a commonly practiced form of political favoritism, involved the giving of jobs in local and state government based on party loyalty, friendship, and nepotism rather than on qualification and experience.

During the 1920s, the Civil Service Commission underwent several revisions (Stats. 1921, ch. 601, p. 1020; Stats. 1925, ch. 236, p. 391; Stats. 1927, ch. 43, p. 75). As part of a restructuring of state government, the Commission was transferred to the newly established Division of Personnel and Organization, within the Department of Finance (Stats. 1929, ch. 293, p. 597).

A constitutional amendment, adopted in 1934, created the State Personnel Board (Const. 1879, Article XXIV). The creation of the State Personnel Board abolished the Division of Personnel and Organization. In June, 1968, the voters of California repealed Article XXIV and, in its place, adopted Article VII, the State Civil Service amendment.

Throughout its history, the State Personnel Board had performed various functions, interacting with a growing number of public employees and agencies. The Board provides state agencies with qualified employees and establishes guidelines to insure fair treatment of those employees. Other responsibilities include the regulation of appointments, promotions,
transfers, adjustments in salaries and wages; vacations, leaves of absence, employee-employer relations, employee grievances, and disciplinary actions.

The Board develops testing methods to determine qualified applicants; provides in-service training programs aimed at preparing employees for positions with higher responsibility; sets evaluation standards; and monitors the affirmative action and equal opportunity programs of state agencies.

The Board is also responsible for the administration of the Welfare Reform Act of 1971. This Act provides state and local agencies with guidance in the employment of citizens receiving public assistance.

The Board actively participates in programs designed to improve employee efficiency, to reduce sick leave, and to insure that civil service employees are working in safe and hazard-free environments.

The Cooperative Personnel Services division provides, at cost, technical assistance to agencies that select personnel through independent authority or that employ non-civil service personnel. These services include classification and pay surveys; fringe benefits; development of laws, rules, policies, and practices; and other personnel management matters.

This division also conducts oral interviews, written examinations, and selection services for local agencies.

The Department of Personnel Administration (Stats. 1981, ch. 230, p. 55), a new and separate agency, was created to centralize the personnel functions being performed by several state agencies, including some of the duties of the State Personnel Board. This centralization required that the State Personnel Board relinquish the management of non-merit aspects of civil service, functions such as salary setting and performance evaluation.

Between Constitutional Article VII and the statutes relating to civil service, Californians are provided a comprehensive Civil Service Plan.

   Physical Description: 1 1/4 cu. ft.
   Scope and Content Note
   Arrangement
   Arranged by contracting agency: city, county, school district, special district, state agency, and alphabetically thereunder.

   Surveys conducted by the Cooperative Personnel Services. Subjects include salary and classification of positions in Civil Service and Merit Systems and personnel management of civil service programs at the local and municipal level. Files contain recommendations of the Cooperative Personnel Services, summaries of wage surveys, standard job descriptions, and city ordinances proposing civil service and merit system implementation. Specific information may include employee names, present and proposed job classifications, present and proposed salary ranges, pertinent job descriptions, summary of comparative community wages, and correspondence.

   Physical Description: 1 file folder.
   Scope and Content Note
   Arrangement
   Arranged chronologically.

   An attempt was made in 1922 to qualify an initiative that would add a civil service amendment to the constitution. This attempt failed, but a new initiative was passed in 1934. The file contains drafts of a proposed constitutional amendment designed to protect and enforce the Civil Service System established in 1913. Types of material include drafts of amendment and initiative, reviews of proposals, and correspondence. The correspondence contains some examples of civil service reform at the national level and at various state levels.