

There's Room at Top by Month's End



By
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There should be lots of room at the top later this month, if hundreds of eligible senior federal executives make good their threats to pull the plug before Aug. 1 to take advantage of a 5.1 per cent pension increase.

Already several dozen key Washington career officials have announced their plans to retire, and many of them fall into the category of being nearly irreplaceable. Both the executive director and general counsel of the Civil Service Commission already have turned in retirement papers, although both have indicated privately they might have stayed on another few years if the pay picture for executives was brighter.

The top career federal salary has been frozen at \$36,000 since 1969, and there is little chance they will benefit from an upcoming rank-and-file pay raise this October, unless President Ford personally pushes an ex-

ecutive pay raise. He shows no sign of doing it, hence the predictions of a top-level exodus.

Most of the government's 15,000 people in the \$36,000 pay range live within commuting distance of Washington, where salaries are much higher than the national average because of the government presence. A \$36,000 paycheck, which seems big here, is astronomical in most other cities where salaries are lower and the job market tight.

Many of the top aides—some of whom have spurned better job offers in industry in the past because of their investments in the retirement system—are bitter of the pay freeze, and unhappy because they get little sympathy from the average taxpayer who makes much less, and has the deep-bred suspicion of taxpayers everywhere that government costs more than it is worth.

The problem of pay compression—with many younger subordinates making as much as their more senior bosses—is a very real problem. And it will get worse. Within the next few years the upward march of rank-and-file pay will put many Grade 13 U.S. workers on the same salary level as their bosses. The steady, and frequent, cost-of-living raises for retirees mean that

many of the senior executives can retire and live on about the same standard they can now while working.

Officials with more than 40 years service, who can retire on 30 per cent of their salary, figure that cost of living raises—running at the rate of more than 12 per cent a year—soon will have the effect of putting them back at the equivalent of full pay while at the same time enjoying the benefits of retirement.

Who Checks The Checkers?

The National Civil Service League has asked Chairman David Henderson (D-N.C.) to deepen his subcommittee probe of the politicization of the career federal bureaucracy during the Nixon administration.

Henderson's Manpower Subcommittee has heard testimony from top Civil Service Commission officials, who investigated illegal or improper actions at the General Services Administration, Housing and Urban Development and half dozen other agencies.

League president Mortimer Caplin (IRS Commissioner under President Kennedy) asks, however, that the congressional unit find out what role, if any, the Commission played in the illegal activities it has denounced. Many people believe

that CSC went along with political preclearance systems in some agencies, and did little to block "name referrals" of special individuals for jobs until the Nixon regime was on the way out. Caplin thinks this is the time—and the subcommittee hearings the proper forum—to find out what happened, and why.

Arch S. Ramsay, now Treasury's personnel director will move over to the Civil Service Commission in August to head its important bureau of policies and standards. Ray Jacobson, who has been running the standards shop will take over as executive director of CSC.

Customs Service has picked Walter P. Turek to be director of its new Regulator Audit Division at headquarters here. He's been with Customs since 1959.

Roy C. Cahoon, an expert on the U.S. Mint and its various products, retired June 30 after 36 years with Uncle Sam, mostly as a top information specialist with Treasury.

Carl F. Goodman will move up later this month to be general counsel of the Civil Service Commission. He succeeds Anthony L. Mondello, CSC's super-sharp top lawyer, who will retire after seven years in the top legal job.