

errors. In a very great number of cases the government employe fully realizes that in case he does a particularly original or especially efficient piece of work for the government, those who are over him will insist that the credit for his accomplishment shall be theirs, and in many cases instead of commending and rewarding the man, jealousy on their part leads them to persecute him. Thus "play safe" is the rule in the government service, even if you accomplish little or nothing. Yet nothing in industrial life is more true than that the man who never makes mistakes never accomplishes anything.

On the other hand, when it comes to the quantity of work done by each employe, the public (that is, the whole people) has as yet had no definite standard for measuring the work of its public servants. And in fact, in a general way it may be said that the people of our country realize that most government employes are inefficient (exactly how greatly inefficient they do not know), and that they have come to look upon this as perhaps the normal state of affairs. We would all like to have the highest possible standard of efficiency for our public servants, but a hundred years of experience have shown us that they are almost universally inefficient, and we have come to look upon this condition as irremediable.

There have been, indeed, fundamental reasons why government employes should be inefficient, instead of efficient. Throughout civil life, 19 out of 20 employes realize that in order to succeed they must render a quality and quantity of service which will enable them to compete with a large number of other men who are at all times ready to take their positions in case they fail to make good. Thus they fully realize that it is only through their own personal accomplishment, through each day doing a big day's work and doing it right, that they can hold their jobs and have the hope of advancement. In government service, however, it has been almost universal that the employe has received his position mainly through the influence which he has been able to bring to bear upon the men at the top. The employment has been given as a reward for political services, and the men have held their jobs more through political pull and influence than through merit. In civil life almost every employe feels that the permanent tenure of his job, as well as his advancement, depends upon his ability to continually render full and efficient service to his employer. Few of the government employes (even those under civil service rules) feel any fear of losing their jobs on account of not doing a full day's work. They almost all realize the importance of not making any serious blunder, but providing they make no serious mistakes they feel that they can do only a

fraction of a day's work, without danger of losing their jobs.

Even in spite of civil service examinations, this still remains substantially true, that certainly the greater number of government employes look to influence to keep their jobs rather than to their own merit. Even when the government employes have ceased their own political activity in the direction of getting votes for their party, and doing similar party work, still they realize that political pull is more important for their success than turning out a large day's work.

The government as an employer is looked upon in a totally different light from the private employer. Government employ is looked upon as a crib at which vast numbers of men are to be fed. The Congressman in whose districts government work goes on; the labor leaders who claim to be able to deliver the labor vote; large numbers of workmen, and in many cases the government officials—even those high in rank—unite in adopting the view that the principal function of government employment is to provide work for their henchmen, their friends, and their political allies. By many of these men government employment is viewed almost entirely from this standpoint, so that the more men they can get in the government employ and the higher the wages that these men are paid, the better they are satisfied. All hands, however, realize that the American people will not tolerate a sloppy quality of work, so that in spite of the fundamental lack of interest in the results obtained, a fairly good quality of work is insisted upon. This mental attitude still represents the survival of the old "spoils system" in which practically the whole people acquiesce, in the conviction that "to the victor belong the spoils." This mental attitude on the part of the great majority of those connected with government work represents the largest obstacle to government efficiency. And the principal problem before any administration which attempts to obtain government efficiency will be that of changing this mental attitude, shared by practically all government employes.

In the past there has been very little inducement for those superintendents and managers who believe in a large and full day's work to go into government employ, and with very rare exceptions every man who has undertaken to bring about efficiency in large numbers of public employes has failed and has ended by deeply regretting that he ever had anything to do with the whole problem of getting a fair day's work out of government employes. Even under what may be looked upon as a reform administration, that for example of President Roosevelt, we have the notable in-

stance of Mr. Stillings, who went into the government Printing Office with President Roosevelt's entire approval, and who made great changes, practically all tending toward increased efficiency. He dismissed hundreds of incompetents, hundreds of loafers, from the Printing Office and was in a fair way, if time had been given him, to make a reasonably efficient establishment out of the Printing Bureau, which had been nothing less than a public scandal. The discharged employes, the labor leaders, and many politicians in Washington (some in Congress), and even some high up in the Senate, however, united in opposing the good work of Stillings and, during the campaign for the election of Mr. Taft for the Presidency, they took advantage of certain blunders which Mr. Stillings had made to drive him out of the government employ. And this in spite of the fact that the errors and mistakes which he had made were not equal to one-thousandth part of the good which he had accomplished. It can be safely said that Stillings' dismissal was the direct result of the supposed political necessity of electing Mr. Taft to office. Stillings was sacrificed to the good of this cause. It must be understood, however, that Mr. Taft had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Stillings' dismissal, and it is doubtful even whether he was aware of it. At any rate, this is not an arraignment of any individual but of the supposed necessities of our system.

Now, with object lessons of this sort before them, there is very little inducement for strong and earnest men to undertake the type of fight which is necessary in order to secure a fair day's work from government employes. The government official who attempts to insist upon a full, proper day's work from the employes who are under him, goes at this undertaking with the certainty that he will have the bitter enmity of the public officials high and low, and that whatever promises he may have received from those who are over him, he is likely to share the fate of Mr. Stillings, and many others, who have made this attempt. Any attempt at efficiency is looked upon by the place holders and their backers as an assault upon their personal rights, and is fought by all parties with bitterness. Man after man who has come into the high places in government employ, and who has fully realized the gross inefficiency of government employes and been possessed with an earnest desire to reform, has weakened when he realized the tremendous uphill fight ahead of him, with the prospect that when the next Congressional or national election came he would be made a sacrifice for the necessity of obtaining votes. This has led him to give up any great effort towards increased efficiency, and to turn his energies into other channels.

Government efficiency will never be brought about until the prevailing mental attitude of government

employes has been radically changed; and the great problem is how this great change is to be brought about. In facing this problem, the first fact which must be approached is that a great mental revolution of this sort will of necessity demand a large amount of time. It is not a question of producing physical changes, but rather of working a great mental revolution in large numbers of men, and any such change demands time, and a large amount of time.

It is absolutely useless to attack this system until our Chief Executive Officer shall be dead in earnest in this attainment of efficiency, and I think it can be said that no President, up to Mr. Taft's administration, has had government efficiency as a serious problem before him. No government employe who looks back at what has happened in the past, however high up he may be, will in the future want to tackle this great problem of efficiency without the backing of the President of the United States, and without the certainty that the President of the United States will guard all those who are engaged in the earnest effort to increase government efficiency from political attacks, and that he will place government efficiency above the getting of votes, either at the time of a Congressional or national election. I believe this is the very first requirement in the attainment of efficiency, that the President shall place it above and beyond politics.

In the case of my personal friends, who have been asked to assist in obtaining government efficiency under Mr. Taft's administration, knowing the treatment that was meted out to Mr. Stillings, for example, they have invariably undertaken this service for the government with very great reluctance, even under the administration of Mr. Taft, whom we all believe to be earnestly seeking for government efficiency. They have all been afraid that when the time came for getting votes, that such pressure would be brought upon the administration through the labor leaders, through the political leaders, through all government employes, and through Congressmen, Senators, and even some members of the Cabinet, that even to a man of Mr. Taft's sterling qualities it might appear to be of less importance to sacrifice the man who was engaged in promoting efficiency rather than to lose votes at the election.

First, then, be sure that the President of the United States is solidly behind this government. Not only this, but it is almost a necessity that the President should have some advisor close to him in whom he will have complete confidence as far as this efficiency problem is concerned. There is no question that Mr. Taft earnestly desires economy and efficiency in government administration, and yet no fixed or settled policy has been followed during his administration. So those men who are working for efficiency are con-