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REPORT

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CAN, or should, the State try to be competitive with industry and the Federal government when it comes to employment practices and pay scales? That question has been bandied about for years, but no one has ever come up with a meaningful answer. Establishment of the Classification System a decade ago was to have been a way of facing up to the economics of hiring and keeping workers capable of competing in the technological age. But it's not working the way it was supposed to, the Texas Research League told its members last week. Although about 92% of the State's work force is categorized by some 1,200 job classifications (filling a thick section of the appropriations bill) and are eligible for the eight steps built into 21 salary grades, they usually get hung on one of the first rungs of the payscale ladder. After sampling 100 positions, the TRL said it found many breakdowns in the system--including an instance of a highway patrolman with 30 years' experience earning the same as a DPS rookie. It found that State contributions to group insurance ranged all the way from \$6 a month at the Atty Gen.'s Dept to about \$18 a month at the TEC. And it said the recent 6.8% pay raise was bestowed across the board "whether they had been working for the State for six months or six years, and without any regard to whether they were any good at their job." One result of fragmentation, the TRL said, is that there "are no State employees"--there are Highway Dept employees, TEA employees and so on. And one reason for the failure to arrive at a uniform performance evaluation system, it was thought, was the fact there is no central placement unit.

THE Legislative Budget Board didn't go into that in looking at State pay. It looked at the Public Employees Assn's proposal for a 4-step pay raise (13.6%) in fiscal '74 and a 2-step increase the second year, plus anniversary raises, "longevity raises," and ½-step merit raises each year, at a cost of about \$293 million. Then, Exec. Dir Keel reported the State Classification officer's suggestion for a 6.8% hike and a 1.7% merit raise for each of the two years, at \$125.1 million. The LBB staff recommended only 3.4% more a year, plus a 1.7% merit increment the second year, for \$97 million. Keel said a consumer price index study indicated that 3.4% more annually would enable State employees to hold the line against rising prices, but the additional 1.7% is needed as "an essential part of the merit plan." The same principle would be applied to exempt salaries, including judges and the governor, and faculty. Rep. Cavness moved to give a merit raise each year of the biennium, and after asking if there wouldn't be a way "to pay less people more," Rep. Finck joined him, but they were the only "ayes." The others instead went with

Sen. Creighton's suggestion to limit the one-time merit lift to classified personnel.

SEN. Schwartz said he's not giving up on the idea of twice-a-month paydays, and Exec. Dir Keel said that could be handled for about \$100,000. Schwartz also said something should be done about the situation in which State employees "are paid on a 365-day basis, but when they miss a day's work, get docked on a 1/20th of a month basis."...A big chunk of the meeting time was given over to discussion of the MH-MR system--a proposed \$312.7-million budget which would just about double grants-in-aid to community centers, and make that program viable finally. That plan also would include bare-bones construction--renovations and repairs, and ongoing work at the State schools underway, including \$6 million more for Fort Worth State School, because LBB Exmr Dorcy explained it would be more economical to serve 600-plus patients than the number figured into the recent construction-start bill. The board excised the amount earmarked for a drug-abuse treatment center at Vernon, but said MH-MR Cmr Wade could try to get them to change their minds in December. The Bldg Cmn's proposal was delayed until then, too, and the LBB shelved a suggestion for activating the Civil Air Patrol Cmn and Mass Transportation Cmn.

ALL in all, 49 agency plans were approved, but the recommended pay plan has to be built into them. Just how much the LBB's ideas will mean to the freshman majority (93 of 150) cannot be assessed, but the reelected incumbents who voted on them (Sens Aikin, Moore, Creighton and Schwartz, and Rep. Cavness) doubtless will continue to be influential members. And Lt Gov.-Elect Hobby was there, absorbing every word. But no one was there to represent Gov.-Elect Briscoe. Former Gov. Connally's budget director, Bill Cobb, has indicated he would be glad to work for Briscoe, but he hasn't been asked.

NEW members came to town to get "oriented," and Reps Nugent and Adams not only told them "How a Bill Becomes a Law," but wrote a manual on the subject for them. A sage bit of advice: When all other efforts to save a bill fail, "concentrate on your other legislation"...They're due back Monday for a 3-day pre-session legislative conference in Thompson Conference, sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs...An AR reporter was mistaken for a new lawmaker at a Trial Lawyers' party for freshmen, and Sen.-Elect Betty Andujar's PR man, Danny Parrish, asked him "how firm" his pledge was to Price Daniel Jr. Parrish asked him if he'd be interested in joining a movement to back a stalking horse to weaken Daniel's support, so a conservative could be pitted against him in January. The "freshman" said he wasn't interested, and the man mentioned as the decoy said he wasn't, either...While the legislators were together, press releases about proposed bills were flying their way: The Society of Architects spoke up for a bill for "an intensive land-use study and for an intelligent approach to long-range land planning." The Assn of Hospital Governing Boards endorsed a plan for certification of health care facility construction based on need. Sen.-Elect Gammage said he'll be running

with consumer protection bills. And Lt Gov.-Elect Hobby said he wants that, as well as penal code revision, judicial reorganization and a proposal for class-action pollution suits. Constitutional Revision Sponsor Wolff said he's drafting a bill to change the primary date to July or August, so the legislators meeting in a constitutional convention in '74 can concentrate on that task, and worry later about reelection.

CITING Hank Grover's 100,000-vote near miss as proof that a Republican can be elected governor, GOP Chmn Willeford said Texas is nearing a two-party system, and he has "great expectations for '74."...At the same time Thursday, Natl GOP Co-Chairperson Anne Armstrong revealed some expectations of her own: She's keeping "all options open" for running for governor herself. If Sen. Grover, still miffed at the lady's lack of support, runs again, the Republicans would have an honest-to-gosh primary contest...The Natl Women's Political Caucus will hold its first national convention in Houston, Feb. 9-11...Natl Democratic Cmtemen Joe Bernal and Billie Carr said they're behind Natl Chmn Jean Westwood's fight to keep her post. Sen. Bentsen and Former Treasurer Bob Strauss mentioned Strauss as the logical replacement, but Secy of State Bullock and Texas McGovern Campaign Dir Ed Wendler were opposing that idea, because of Strauss' ties with John Connally. Connally reportedly spent two hours with Pres. Nixon while present cabinet members waited for an audience, but the White House said "no offer" was made.

FOLLOWING one of those now-you-see-them, now-you-don't meetings of the Parks & Wildlife Cmn, during which a US Corps of Engineers' request for a moratorium was discussed, and final action on the Mustang Island purchase was decided, the Atty Gen. issued another opinion on the Open Meetings Law. In Opinion M-1261, Martin ruled that notice need not be posted "of a public body's meeting with its staff members for internal administration purposes," and it may hold closed meetings with its attorney for several reasons, but must post notice of the closed meeting if matters of public business are to be discussed with him. The Atty Gen. also held that the Education Code section barring campaign contributions to Board of Education candidates by anyone in the bond-selling business is unconstitutional, and said the State may sell property purchased at a delinquent tax sale prior to the two-year redemption period's expiration...The US Supreme Court ordered Fort Worth to begin busing students in 16 schools by Jan. 30...The Travis County Legal Aid society appealed to the 3rd Court of Civil Appeals to order immediate release of the 494 persons in Youth Council custody who were determined by 200th Dist Judge Charles Mathews as having been denied right of counsel at time of commitment. Mathews had refused to grant them writs of habeas corpus, saying "the only fair" procedure would be to have the original courts handle the individual petitions.

THE Optometry Board still is deadlocked with its 3-3 decisions, but has stood by the no-price advertising law interpretation that no one can advertise glasses at "reasonable costs" or "low costs." Member Rogers

is suing on that, and the State is moving to transfer the trial to Austin. Dr Rogers also said he'll go to court again the next time Chmn Burton tells him he can't vote on something because Rogers has a "conflict of interest."...Welfare Cmr Vowell said Medicaid rights are being restored to the nearly 20,000 oldsters who were removed from State welfare and Medicaid rolls when their Social Security benefits were increased. Federal amendments provided the Medicaid restoration, he said, but they can not go back on welfare, too. The board will talk about that and other new developments Monday at 10 a.m....Welfare Dept social workers went to the Dominican nuns' retirement center at Houston after the legal department determined that the vows of their particular order did not create a "barrier" to welfare aid. "Personal need" applications by about 35 elderly Dominicans are being processed individually--not on a community basis...The School Land Board announced a March 6 lease sale, with a Dec. 8 cut-off for nominations...The Railroad Cmn said oil wells can stay wide open again in December, but Chmn Tunnell said Texas wells simply can't meet the demand for Texas oil.

TO & FRO: The 77 new House member total represents the biggest turnover since '53, when 88 newcomers took over. The modern record was set, however, in '47, when 92 freshmen arrived. The Senate situation is more notable: With 15 new members, this will be the largest sweep since '35 when the new ones also numbered 15...The Governor's press secretary, Carlton Carl, becomes Speaker-Apparent Daniel's executive assistant Friday--with Smith's blessing...Martin Dies Sr died, 27 years after he retired from the Congress because of a cancer...US Sen. Tower asked GOP colleagues to elect him chairman of their Senate Policy Cmte...The State Historical Survey Cmte is working on restoration of the Sam Rayburn House in Bonham as a museum, and expects to have the project completed late in '73...Financial writers estimated that it will cost Shearn Moody Jr about \$1 million and an insurance company to reopen W. L. Moody & Co. Bankers...Houston Mayor Louie Welch's decision to become Houston CofC prexy, instead of running for reelection, is considered by some to be a step toward qualifying for an ambassadorship...Jay Barnes of Austin is new president of the Society of Architects...AR overlooked former Rep. George Preston of Paris in mentioning ex-House members being "recycled."

THE State Railroad finally has an engine on its line--No. 28, a '17 model Baldwin "Pershing" donated by Temple Industries...Gov. Smith returned from a "highway safety" conference in Venezuela in time to see new Highway Cmn Chmn Simons sworn in Friday, and accept a blanket from the Navajoes...Lone Star Gas got an okay for a 6% burner tip rate increase to Lewisville residents...A Board of Insurance-Catastrophe Property Ins. Assn committee has been formed to determine if a public hearing is needed for windstorm insurance pool changes in coastal areas...State Highway Engr Dingwall is planning to retire now that he's 65, and the best guess as to whom will succeed him is Luther DeBerry, assistant engineer...DPS Waco Commander Maj. Harry W. Hutchison retires Nov. 30, after 41 years' service.