



Mr. Eugene J. Lyons,
Special Assistant to the President
for Personnel Management
Executive Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

60-2016

Dear Mr. Lyons:

At the Civil Service League Awards dinner last week you mentioned that there is a real need to reach business, civic and educational leaders throughout the country with the message that was so well presented to us by the League. To this end I promised to develop some thoughts that might be passed on to the presidential candidates. Here are my personal thoughts in the matter.

As far as I can see, neither party has anything to gain by a big attack on the personnel presently employed in the Civil Service. That there will always be some measure of incompetence within the Civil Service is taken for granted, and I would assume that any candidate who wishes to include in his program a move to reduce the percentage of incompetents will do so. But I would hope that this will not become an important issue. It didn't in 1956. Similarly, there may be some criticism of the management of Civil Service, although here again it is difficult to see wherein any of the candidates can profit much by taking this line. My general thought, therefore, is that anything that we wish said on behalf of the Civil Service can be put entirely on a forward-looking basis. This is what I would propose:

There is no dispute as to the challenge increasingly represented by the USSR in the fields of science and technology. The challenge is affected by proficiencies in the general field of administration. Upon our ability to attract and hold in Government the best talents that are available may depend a large measure of our future security. Only the Civil Service can provide the continuity of effort needed in many complex fields.

EXECUTIVE SECURITY FILE

It would be my suggestion that approaches be made to interest each candidate in acknowledging the country's need for an increasingly competent and effective Civil Service and then go on from there by pointing out the necessity of continuing to attract to the Government the type of capable, devoted and loyal personnel that is needed.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

C. P. Cabell
General, USAF
Deputy Director

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Mr. Eugene J. Lyons
Special Assistant to the President
for Personnel Management
Room 268
Executive Office Building
17th & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lyons:

You mentioned on Tuesday evening that there is a real need to reach business, civic and educational leaders throughout the country with the message that was so well presented to us by the Civil Service League. To this end I promised to develop some thoughts that might be passed on to the presidential candidates.

As far as I can see, neither party has anything to gain by a big attack on the personnel presently employed in the Civil Service. That there will always be some measure of incompetence within the Civil Service, is taken for granted, and I would assure that any candidate who wishes to include in his program a move to reduce the percentage of incompetents will do so. But I doubt that this will become an important issue. It certainly didn't in 1956. Similarly, there may be some criticism of this administration's management of Civil Service, although here again it is difficult to see wherein any of the candidates can profit much by taking this line. My general position, therefore, is that anything that we wish to say on behalf of the Civil Service can be put entirely on a forward-looking basis. This is what I would propose:

There is no dispute as to the challenge represented by the USSR in the fields of science and technology and increasingly in the general field of administration. The Soviets are today demonstrating the inherent strengths of a system that pays but scant regard to freedom and personal preference. It is altogether possible that one of the very basic issues that will decide the outcome of the cold war is that of man power utilization. Now, plainly, within the United States:

this issue extends far beyond the reaches of the Federal Service and involves considerations about which there will be debate. Yet it is my view that the great challenge that confronts us in this field can and must be faced squarely in the Federal Establishment if we are to expect to meet it on any other front. I mention only two areas of federal enterprise in support of this contention: defense research and development and the conduct of foreign programs. Upon our ability to attract and hold in these fields the best talents that are available may depend our future security.

We will depend on the Federal Civil Service to provide the main answer to the manpower problem. Only the Civil Service can provide the continuity of effort needed in these and other complex fields. In the past, the Government has been a pioneer in introducing and developing sound personnel practices, and its influence as a "model employer" has had a profound effect on the country at large. Today, in the field of manpower utilization the Government can and should again take the lead, whatever party comes into power.

Approaching the subject from this point of view, it would be my suggestion that each candidate acknowledge the country's need for an increasingly competent and effective Civil Service and then go on from there by showing in what ways he would attract to the Government the type of capable, devoted and loyal personnel that is needed. Both parties have their own splendid traditions in this respect, and each candidate may be expected to have his particular formula for making the United States stronger and more competitive through an improvement among the ranks of Federal personnel.

Sincerely,

C.P. Cabell
General, USAF
Deputy Director

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Director of Personnel

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