

## Our Changing Economy

# It's Job Turnover Time Again in Washington

*By Philip Stoddard Brown*

It used to be that a change of Administration in Washington caused a big turnover of Federal employees.

A hundred years ago, there were only 2200 Federal employees in Washington, but most of these were replaced when Lincoln became President. "At Willard's the main-floor corridors surged with office seekers, overflowing up the staircases into halls, reading room, barbershop, writing room, out on the porch and steps," Carl Sandburg relates.

Today there are some 235,000 Federal civilian employees in Washington, but only 1200 of those in the Executive branch were listed by the Eisenhower Administration as holdovers of Schedule C jobs, exempt from Civil Service protection. This is fewer than in Lincoln's day.



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Moreover, some of these 1200 jobs are now held by career officers who may be asked to stay on. Some new appointees probably are already residents of Washington and some who retire will continue to live here.

Also, it is well to bear in mind that there is a high turnover of top personnel at all times. Between 1933 and 1952, the average tenure of under secretaries and assistant secretaries was two to two and a half years, the Hoover Commission reported, and in the past eight years there have been three or four appointments to most of these positions. To be sure, not all appointees to top positions have been new to Washington or government service, but even so the usual tenure has been much too brief.

Hungry as the Democrats are for office and for control, the overall turnover next year will not be very different from that of any other year. Top replacements will be conspicuous. Also, there may be some publicized down-the-line dismissals of civil servants in a few agencies, as there were under Harold Stassen in ICA, but, in the aggregate, these will not have much effect on the rate of turnover.

### *How Much Expansion?*

In no instance, as far as I know, has a new Administration brought about a big increase in Federal employment during its first half year in office. Even the first months of the Roosevelt Administration were marked by a sharp drop, rather than a gain, in the number of Federal employees in Washington. The biggest gain occurred in the first half year of the Hoover Administration.

The Federal budget for the fiscal year 1962 will go to Congress two days before Mr. Kennedy is inaugurated. Supplemental requests for funds to finance new or expanded programs will probably be made soon thereafter, but they will be at the mercy of Congress. Moreover, the expansion of some programs will not require many new jobs in Washington.

But there are some programs which, if enacted, will create a lot of jobs. In the fields of urban affairs, education, health insurance, foreign affairs and possibly public regulation, thousands of new jobs may be set up and, at the outset, most of them will probably be Washington jobs.

### *Growth Will Be Renewed*

In the past 10 or 12 years there has been almost no net increase in Federal employment in Washington. In 1949, when Mr. Truman took office, there were 225,000 Federal civilian employees in this area. Today there are 235,000. But this stability may be nearly at an end.

My guess is that the Federal Government will grow markedly in the next four years—but not suddenly in January.

This increase in ancillary and secondary employment will increase the community's dependence on the Federal Government—perhaps as secure a dependence as any community can expect to enjoy.