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Commission Wants To Change Charter Eliminating Employee City Residence Requirement

The civil service commission in a letter to the city council challenges the moral soundness of a section of the city charter, regarding residence requirements of city employes.

Chairman Tom Twohig said in the letter, "There is . . . a question in our minds as to whether any organization has the moral right to ordain where an employe should live when residency would not interfere with the performance of assigned duties. We seriously challenge this provision in our city charter as being morally unsound and contrary to the universal American ideal of personal freedom."

Personnel Manager Pete Tedesco said yesterday, "This residency requirement carried in the city charter is contrary to all good personnel practice."

The charter, adopted in 1948, carries the stipulation, "Promptly upon appointment every appointee to any office or employment shall become a bona fide resident of this city."

There are a few city employes who do live outside the city limits. "These persons were employed by the city prior to the adoption of the charter, and were allowed to retain their residences providing they were content to remain 'frozen' in grade," explained Tedesco.

Out of 12 cities polled in this area, the civil service commission found only three with the "residence requirement." Com-

missioners checked with Berkeley, Daly City, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Los Gatos, San Jose, Santa Clara, Salinas, Sunnyvale, San Mateo, Palo Alto and Watsonville. Only San Mateo, Santa Clara and Daly City require that all employes reside within the city limits. Daly City is in the process of revising this section of its personnel ordinance, say commissioners.

The letter points out that the city is "competing with private industry, as well as with each other."

By requiring that "prospective employes reside within the city . . . (it) is placed in a very difficult position with regard to the competitive recruitment of able personnel," the letter says.

One objection which has been voiced against the non-residence idea is that city employes should be taxpayers of the city.

In the commission's opinion "there is little reason to assume that the great bulk of city employes who are presently employed and those that would be employed in the future would not continue to reside in the city, since most employes desire to live in reasonable proximity of their place of employment."

The letter ends with a recommendation that the "city council consider and initiate the proper action for a revision of the city charter as it pertains to the residence requirements of city employes."