

City Employees' Residence Requirement Is Studied

Civil service commissioners yesterday entered a plea to the council for a change in the city charter "which as it presently stands makes city employes second-class citizens," said Commissioner William Muriale.

Muriale referred to the residence requirement in the charter which states that all city employes must live within the city limits if they are to be hired on a permanent basis.

At an informal luncheon meeting yesterday Councilmen Paul Forgey and Dr. Ted Foster expressed opposition to the move on two counts.

They contended that people making their living on tax money should live in the city "because they will be more interested in the city government," and the public will feel that they (the employes) should spend their money in town, and this might be a bad time to open up the city charter to a vote of the people.

Councilman Cliff Dysle countered by saying "Neither the council nor the commission will decide the issue . . . it will be the people and their votes."

Muriale pressed his argument and fused ideologies when he said, "This is a mild case of nazism and forms an iron curtain which should be lifted."

In a letter to the council some months ago Commission Chairman Tom Twohig called the residence requirement "unconstitutional."

Yesterday he said, "This is an outmoded law more befitting to the horse and buggy days. I feel that it is working an injustice to the person of the employe. It accomplishes nothing and limits personnel selection, and we have a hard enough time getting competent employes as it is."

Forgey reiterated his point that people living in Santa Cruz and working for the city should spend

their money in town, "although I agree that the law is outmoded," Forgey said.

"My family is prohibited from buying anything outside the city limits," said the former mayor.

Dysle said, "I'm in business, too, Paul, but my employes don't have to buy in Santa Cruz and there's no way of making them spend their money here. I pay the people who work for me for an eight-hour day, and I'm not about to tell them where to spend the money. If I get a dollar back for the dollar I pay my people, I can't ask for anything more. The city should operate on the same basis."

Vice-Mayor Dick Farrar said, "As councilmen we're running a business and we should attempt to run it more efficiently than a private business so that we can compete. This residence requirement doesn't increase the efficiency of the city government one bit."

Foster said, "I think that an employe may have more loyalty to the job if he actually lives in the city."

Twohig replied, "All the employe owes to the city is a good, efficiently-spent eight-hour day."

Councilman Ad Jensen, a former member of the commission, said, "To my knowledge the city has lost some very valuable employes because of this requirement. People see that they have to live in the city and they just don't bother applying for jobs."

Personnel Manager Pete Tedesco pointed out, "We can estimate that at least 99 per cent of the employes will want to live in proximity to their place of employment. It is unfair to work a hardship on those people who wish to live in the country."

City Manager Bob Klein indicated that "an administrative problem may arise with the police and fire personnel, if they were allowed to live in Scotts Valley."

Dysle said, "That is a problem which could be ironed out by the city administration."

Forgey then presented the problem of opening up the city charter to a vote of the people. "I don't think it's wise at this time," he said.

"There are many things which should be ironed out, such as the board of equalization status, and the qualifications of any city attorney we might wish to hire," Forgey said.

Klein interrupted to say, "There are news reporters present, Paul." Forgey then asked that sections of the meeting be "off the record."

Klein pointed out that such a request was impossible since the meeting was between council and commission and "a public meeting under provisions of the Brown act."

Dysle later clarified Forgey's statements in reference to the city attorney, after Forgey declined to comment further.

"The council has nothing at all against the present city attorney, Lester Burns, who is doing an efficient job for the city, however the council finds itself limited under provisions of the charter to hiring a city attorney with certain specific requirements which are very hard to find in any attorney," Dysle explained.

"Our duty is to clean up obvious inequities in the charter and we have no choice to do anything else," Dysle said.

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