

State Halts Cash-Incentive Program

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ALBANY, Jan. 10 — A program for 100,000 state workers that rewards excellence on the job with \$300 bonuses and career advancement has been suspended because too many employees have received high ratings from their supervisors.

The State Office of Employee Relations confirmed tonight that because of problems with the "performance evaluation system" the second round of evaluations, scheduled to begin in April, had been postponed. The program had been set up as an experiment in motivating state employees, including secretaries, clerks and maintenance workers.

"The problem was that supervisors were overrating people," said Meyer S. Frucher, the director of the state office, which negotiated the reward concept with the Civil Service Employees Union. "When we pressed the supervisors, a lot of them lowered the ratings. Then the union got upset and said we were imposing a quota."

A union spokesman said that it had

agreed to the suspension and added that a union task force would take a few months to study the rating system. Mr. Frucher said that he hoped evaluations, possibly with some modifications, could resume in June.

When the system was set up last year, the state estimated that 10 percent of the workers would be rated outstanding, 15 percent highly effective, more than 70 percent satisfactory and 1 or 2 percent in the lowest category, calling for substantial improvement.

The initial evaluations, however, showed that nearly 50 percent of the workers were placed in the two highest categories. The state set aside \$4.5 million to be awarded in \$300 bonuses, first to those in the outstanding category and then to those rated as highly effective. In addition, salary advancement from the hiring rate to the top rate were to be determined by the ratings, rather than by the number of years in a job, as had been the practice.