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The Massachusetts Retirement System for Public Employes.

The universal interest among Civil Servants in the Superannuation issue will render the following description of a recent enactment in Massachusetts timely.

In 1910 the Massachusetts Legislature passed a general enabling act authorizing cities and towns to establish retirement system for their employes. This is the first law of the kind to be placed on the statute books of an American state. No municipality, however, has yet taken advantage of the permissive provisions of this measure.

In contrast with American cities in this respect, European cities have generally adopted pension schemes of one sort or another for their employes. Indeed, it is a striking commentary on the backwardness of American municipal administration as compared with European that the leading cities of Europe have all established general retirement systems for their employes, while no American city thus far has taken such action.

The retirement plan embodied in the act passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1910 is based on the principle of joint contributions. The employes are to be assessed regularly on their wages and salaries at the rate of not less than one, nor more than five, per cent., to provide a fund out of which annuities shall be paid to those retired from the service. Exception is made, however, in the case of employes receiving more than $30 per week; such employes are not to be assessed on the excess above that amount, but simply on the flat basis of $30 per week. The annuity received by each employe retired under the provisions of the act is such amount as his contributions during his period of service, accumulated with interest at 3 per cent. compounded semi-annually, will provide for him according to actuarial computation. In addition to the annuity, the employe is to receive in each case a pension of equivalent amount paid from the public treasury. In no case is the total allowance, including annuity and pension, to be less than $200 per year, or more than one-half the average wages or salary during the ten years prior to retirement.

The age of voluntary retirement is fixed at 60 years; that is, employes who have reached that age may retire or may be retired by the board intrusted with the administration of the act. The age of compulsory retirement is fixed at 70 years; that is, employes who have reached that age must retire or be retired. An additional reouirement of 15 years' continuous service is laid down for employes retiring or retired at the age of 60. Furthermore, employes who have served 35 years continuously may retire or be retired at any age.

Participation in the retirement system is optional for present employes. It is obligatory for future employes, those entering the service