

Civil Service Reform in a Western U. S. City.

Humours of the Competitive Examination System. — Higher Officers Appointed by Competition.

Kansas City has obtained a reputation as a "reformed" place, the municipal service being among the departments to which the reforming process has been applied. There are, however, unhallowed persons who make fun of the service and its examinations. The *Kansas City Times* quotes a question from the examination held by the Civil Service Commission in Kansas City for the position of dog enumerator and impounder, and comments as follows:

One horse and two goats were lawfully impounded and were not claimed by the owners. The goats were duly advertised, and sold at \$4 each, having been in the pound eight days, and the horse was duly advertised and sold for \$15, having been in the pound twelve days. What amount did the impounder pay into the City Treasury if he is allowed \$1 for each animal impounded and twenty-five cents a day for feeding each one?

Do you know how much the impounder paid? No. That's wrong. It doesn't depend on whether he had a relative in the City Council, for this is a question of arithmetic. And if you can't get a correct and satisfactory profit for the City Treasury out of the above story of the unfortunate goats and the horse, never again look down on a dog enumerator; for sixty men who wanted to be dog enumerator, at \$1,500 a year, had to "get the answer" to it in the Civil Service examination for that position yesterday.

This examination was held by a Commission in Kansas City which has established some new civil service precedents. It did not apply the examination first to the lower positions like dog enumerator and impounder; it began its examination with the highest positions in the several unexempted departments. There were two reasons for begin-

ning with the highest position. First, by this means it was expected that men would be thus obtained who would be in sympathy with the merit system. Second, it was thought that there would be more loyalty in employees if they knew that their superior officers had already passed the same test to which they had been subjected.

The chief officials of Kansas City, selected through competition, are the following: city engineer, superintendent of repairs, commissioner of street cleaning, chief superintendent of water works, assessor and collector of water rates. Although their titles might indicate that they were heads of principal departments, yet taken in connection with the organization of the Kansas City government, they are little more than chiefs of bureaus and there is nothing novel in their selection through competition, with perhaps the exception of the chief superintendent of water works. But while not novel, the inclusion of these important officials in the competitive class goes much further than in many cities now under the merit system.

But in one thing Kansas City has gone further in extending the merit system than any other American city, that is, in the office of its city counsellor, all of whose assistants are selected through competition. This is an important step in advance, the nearest approach to such competitive classification in a city counsellor's office being said to be in the case of Buffalo.

Guest—"I'll take some o' that."

Waiter—"Some o' which, boss?"

Guest—"Some o' that there. Can't you read?"

Waiter—"Scuse me, suh, I ain't had no education, either."