

MERIT SYSTEMS REALLY WORK

The following article is quoted from a Special News Service bulletin of the National Civil Service League, dated December 2, 1946. Material submitted by I. A. DeFrance.

Kansas City Miracle

"The demise of the Pendergast political machine in 1940 left Kansas City taxpayers facing a deficit of over \$30,000,000. On April 30, 1946, Kansas City virtually wiped out most of this deficit and ended its fiscal year with a cash surplus of \$3,000,000. This accomplishment was in the face of a reduction of \$30,000,000 in real estate tax evaluations and a reduction in taxes.

"The total number of employees was reduced from 6,500 in 1940 to 3,400 in 1946. This was not by accident! Adoption of a merit system with rigid enforcement of sound personnel policies was largely responsible for this spectacular showing.

What the Merit System Can Do

"The Kansas City Water Department in 1940 had a payroll carrying 905 employees—many of them political workers, some of them receiving salaries without performing any service for the taxpayers. There was an operating loss of \$700,000 and a deficit in the sinking fund of \$8,000,000.

"The department now runs effectively with only 365 employees (60 per cent less) and instead of a large deficit there is a cash balance of \$1,500,000.

"Under the Pendergast regime in 1940 it cost Kansas City \$408,000 for garbage collection, or \$6.85 a ton. Be-

sides, the city owed private contractors over \$200,000.

"In 1945 it cost Kansas City taxpayers only \$237,000 a year, or \$5.35 a ton, and no private contractors' help was needed.

"No wonder leaders of business and industry support the merit system in government!"

Under Oregon's Civil Service Act, the merit system of personnel relations is being put into effect for Oregon state employees. Oregon's administrators and employees are fortunate not to be faced with conditions like those in Kansas City. The Oregon state government does have problems, however, which the creation and proper administration of a good merit system will solve or help to solve. State employees may look forward to civil service which provides recognition of individual merit, in-service training, opportunities for impartial application for employment. Properly administered, the improvement of personnel policies under the merit system will maintain a high morale among employees, will increase the efficiency of government services, and attract much-needed applicants with good qualifications.

Taxi Driver—It's not the work I enjoy.

Rider—No?

Taxi Driver—It's the people I run into.

Dr. E. Boring

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