

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

To the Honorable Members of the City Council:

Herewith is submitted for your information in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, my second annual message for the year ending November 30, 1914, and the Bureau reports of the Department of Public Safety, coupled with certain recommendations which it seems to me are worthy of your consideration, although it may not be possible to adopt same all or in part until the next session of the budget committee, should you decide to do so. Attached to this message is a copy of the budget adopted for the ensuing year.

The financial condition of the city is excellent. Through the exercise of careful administration of departmental affairs, with the co-operation of the various chiefs of bureaus and divisions, it was possible to effect economies in maintenance and operation so that a reduction in the tax levy from 7.7 mills to 7.5 mills was made for the ensuing year, thereby making a considerable saving to the taxpayers, without crippling the efficiency of the service. This was done, too, despite the fact that the people voted prohibition during the year and there was a resultant loss in license fees.

With commission government working more smoothly as time goes by, it is my firm belief that the people of Portland are to be congratulated upon having adopted it, and with careful management it no doubt will continue to be worthy of their approval at the polls scarcely eighteen months ago.

During the year, numerous inquiries have reached this office from all over the United States, seeking information as to the facts with regard to commission government, and in a number of instances word has come back that information forwarded to certain cities has helped to bring about the adoption of new charters under more progressive lines.

In our own city, it seems to me, there are hopeful signs that municipal government, at least, is receiving much attention and one of the best indications of this is the fact that in a number of our public schools, classes have been held and the subject given special attention by teachers and pupils, sometimes illustrated by charts. In this excellent work, which I hope will constantly increase until every citizen of Portland shall have much more intimate knowledge of the governmental workings than they now have, the principals of these schools have lent their hearty approval and in some cases have initiated the feature.

Time was, not so very long ago, that municipal business was supposed to be left to the elective and appointive officers, and it seemed to be deemed unnecessary that the citizen should be concerned about it, except perhaps, at tax-paying time. This, however, is a day of enlightenment and under commission government, it is my earnest hope that the affairs of the public shall be understood by the people. Lack of adequate information frequently brings about friction, turmoil and therefore loss of time and money.

The business of the city is the business of the people; the Council is the public's board of directors. The closer into touch we may come to the citizens, the better will be their understanding of our purposes in the administration of their affairs and in the expenditure of their funds while the sacred trust imposed upon us shall continue. Knowledge of the inside workings of the Council, and illuminating information of what is being done at the City Hall and why, will work to the betterment of all concerned.

To the end that there may be a means of disseminating general official information to the public, and of thereby bringing the people into closer touch with City affairs, I recommend that the Council authorize the enlargement of the present Health Bulletin to include news of other departmental activities.

During the year there have been no changes of note in the personnel of the City's chief officers. The membership of the Commission of Public Docks remains the same, Honorable Ben Selling and C. B. Moores having been reappointed by me; the membership of the Civil Service Board is unchanged; I appointed as a board of motion picture censors, Mrs. Elmer B. Colwell, Mrs. Millie R. Trumbull, Mrs. A. C. Newill, Mrs. Sol Hart and Mrs. A. M. Gray.

Relative to the work of the Commission of Public Docks, I wish to call attention to its great importance to this port. From a commercial standpoint, it cannot be too strongly urged that all possible assistance be given the members in their efforts to make Portland Harbor equal to any. Without adequate docking facilities, the city cannot hope to compete with others and will be compelled thereby to lose prestige and a great opportunity. Whenever it becomes necessary for additional funds with which to work out ample plans to handle the enormous trade that will be ours only if we are prepared to care for it, I trust that they will be forthcoming. Economically and efficiently expended, they will return to the people many fold the sums put into the investment.

In my opinion, there should be a very careful checking over of the efficiency system by the Council, with a view to ascertaining its merits and its faults, so that should it be deemed wise, such changes as may be found necessary to make it workable and uniform in every department, may be decided upon. The plan, while having its good points, is imperfect and it seems to me should have the attention of the Commission and receive whatever amendments are necessary to make it a means of correctly keeping the records of municipal employees, or should be abolished.

The Civil Service Board and the Council should, it seems to me, join in an effort to eliminate as much as may be found desirable in order to make more simple and workable the system of efficiency records, as well as to eliminate as much as possible all features that interfere with rapid dispatch of the public business. There should, I feel, be as few classifications as it is possible to make, thus doing away with many examinations now held under existing conditions. I recommend that this subject receive the careful consideration of the Council.

A matter which is of more than departmental importance is that of the public morals; it concerns every resident of the city and even more than that. During the year an aggressive campaign was

carried on against immoral establishments, such as saloons, grills and so-called hotels, the proprietors of which were found to be constant violators of the laws. I take this opportunity with pleasure to thank the members of the Council for unanimously backing this work to the limit, it being possible in the circumstances to permanently close a list of very objectionable places. Several resorts which had flourished here for many years are now dark as a result of the determined efforts of the police, reinforced by the Council.

In this connection, I wish to speak of another subject, also of great general importance. It is concerning the proposed detention home for unfortunate women. Modern methods must be brought into requisition in this regard if we are ever to make any real progress toward the elimination of the social evil in our city.

Last year the project received the endorsement of the Council to the extent of an appropriation of \$15,000 and out of that sum \$8000 was expended for a site, near the County Farm, in Multnomah County, within sufficiently reasonable distance of Portland as to make it desirable for the purpose.

At the present time, the city has nothing to offer women taken into custody by the police one way or another, save and except the jail or a fine or both; neither of which, as I see it, works a lasting good. With a properly equipped home and farm, however, there will be something worth while to hold out to them as an inducement to better lives and if it proves possible to save but one out of thousands that may be sent there through the coming years, it will have been justified. This is a work that should have the hearty approval and co-operation of all. It is planned to provide enough work for the inmates to keep them busily occupied in ways that will be beneficial to them and that will fit them to become useful members of society.

Closely allied to this subject is that of handling the criminal and non-criminal male element, with which every large city must cope. Especially in the winter does this become a grave problem. To jail these men is but to give them a treat, in most instances, for then they are cared for perhaps better than outside, with but little or no labor to as much as repay the city for their keep. The city owns no rockpile, neither has it any other means of employing the class referred to, and it would seem to me to be an opportune time for the Council to consider a method for so doing and in this connection, it may be added that in some places work-houses have been provided and have proved of great benefit to communities in ridding them of the idle and vicious and even bringing in revenue over and above operating expenses. I see no reason why this might not be applied to Portland.

One of the most important features of administering the public business is to constantly guard the welfare of the people against the vicious elements and also to protect the youth against the pitfalls and snares that otherwise surely will be laid; not only should the city provide means of taking care of the criminal or criminally inclined, but it occurs to me, it should furnish those means necessary to prevent perversion of the boy and girl, such as ample parks and playgrounds for the communities of our population. One dollar expended for a place of amusement or recreation for children, is

worth \$100 put into reform schools, jails and penitentiaries. It is true these cost some money, but to my mind they are investments of the first class, and should be made in sufficient amount as to make it impossible for anyone to charge the municipality with neglect in this regard. We have made an excellent start and should continue the course to perfection.

With a perfected system of preventive plans, plus an adequate corrective course such as mentioned, Portland would be able to handle in an able manner all of the problems arising in this regard in a thoroughly modern manner, to the everlasting credit of the city and the benefit of her citizens, big and little.

Yours very truly,

H. R. ALBEE, Mayor.