

New men mean new methods. The necessity for both in this City has been strikingly illustrated by the work of one of the smallest of its departments---that of the City Record.

The condition of this department when I entered upon the discharge of my official duties on the 1st of January, 1895, fitly illustrates the demoralization which existed in the public service.

Though the estimates of, and appropriations for, the City Record office had been maintained at a large figure, I found on the 1st of January, 1895, bills in arrears to printers and book binders aggregating nearly \$93,000 and extending back as far as 1890.

Year after year the estimates of the City Record office had been made to include the payment of all arrearages; and yet, in this small department, whose entire annual appropriation is less than \$300,000, I found arrearages equal almost to one-third of the ~~total~~ cost of its annual maintenance. Beyond this I found that the City Record, the official journal, had on hand a large accumulation of documents from the various departments which had been held over so that the expense of their publication fell upon the new administration. Estimating the cost of this publication at reasonable figures and adding it to the arrearages of bills unpaid would bring the total deficit of the department to an amount considerably in excess of \$100,000.

The adoption of business methods by the City Record office was followed immediately by most gratifying results; the most gratifying of all being the liquidation of every dollar of the bills in arrears, so that on the 1st of January 1897, it began with a clean balance sheet. The contract for the publication of the City Record, which since 1890 had been awarded without competition to one printing house, was opened to public bidding in 1895, and the competition was close and spirited. More than 25,000 blank books are annually required for the City's use. Instead of following the former plan of advertising the contract for books on short notice and requiring bidders to visit all of the departments to examine

the books, specifications were carefully prepared by the City bookbinders so that every bidder has had an equal opportunity to compete since the 1st of January, 1895. For the printing and lithographing of several million blanks, similar competition was sought and with equally favorable results. As far as possible, articles of stationery not obtainable in the open market were eliminated from the stationery schedules and for that too the competition was made fair and free. The result of the application of these business methods is strikingly shown by the comparative statement I append of the expenses of the City Record office for 1894--1895--and 1896, the contracts for 1894 and 1895 having been let by my predecessors.

	1894-----	1895-----	1896.
Publication			
City Record-----	\$ 72,000.00-----	\$ 72,000.00-----	\$ 42,000.00
Printing & Lithographing-----	\$ 31,224.78-----	\$ 32,830.00-----	\$ 23,047.06
Stationery-----	\$ 30,631.11-----	\$ 34,415.45-----	\$ 18,138.61
Blank Books-----	\$ 45,505.25-----	\$ 40,068.71-----	\$ 23,976.26
Salaries & Contingencies-----	\$ 9,200.00-----	\$ 10,050.00-----	\$ 10,400.00
T o t a l Appropriation-----	\$281,200.00-----	\$281,200.00-----	\$277,200.00
Number of Books----	18,585	19,223	25,186

The contracts for the CITY RECORD and for the City Record supplies for 1897 that have just been awarded have all been let on practically the figures of the preceding year. It will be difficult in this department to go back to the reckless extravagance of the past without inviting a telling comparison.

The total appropriation for the City Record department for 1897 is \$235,000 which is \$46,200 less than the total appropriation for 1894 though it is obvious that the demands of the departments for printing, books and stationery supplies must necessarily increase from year to year. The creation of two new district courts and the separation of the department of Charities & Correction into two distinct departments has added greatly to the demands upon the City Record office, though this has been in part off-set by the enactment of a statute directing the Commissioner of Public Works to furnish supplies to the Supreme Court.

The receipts of the City Record office are turned into the City Treasury, and while they are small, they show a considerable increase. The amounts paid into the Chamberlain's office from the sale of the CITY RECORD are as follows:

2	1893-----	\$3,175.57,
	1894-----	\$3,555.52,



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2 {	1893-----	\$3,175.57,
	1894-----	\$3,555.52,
	1895-----	\$4,225.17,
	1896-----	\$4,037.93,

I refer to this department, not to demonstrate that the same proportionate reduction in expenses could or should be made in all

the other departments. The success of a municipal administration can not altogether be measured by the aggregate of its expenditures. Special needs at special times may require special drafts upon the City Treasury. The real measure of an administration's success is therefore, to be found in the results of its expenditures. Thoughtful people will enquire not so much whether its expenditures were parsimonious as whether they were wasteful or prudent, extravagant or moderate, judicious or improvident.

A municipality is simply a stock company; the rent payers who, in the ultimate analysis ^{of the matter,} are the payers of the bulk of the taxes, and the tax payers proper, are the stock holders. A business-like administration of a City means profitable returns to the citizen in the shape of improved educational facilities; in public safety, through efficient police and fire departments; in improved public health, fostered by clean streets and wholesome restrictive legislation; and in opportunities for recreation in well kept parks and in well devised institutions of various kinds.

No one can question the fact that the application of business methods to the administration of public affairs is as essential as their application to the administration of private affairs. New York is the greatest business center of our hemisphere, and to have it governed on business principles and by business men was my first pledge and remains my last and steadfast purpose.

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Office of the City Record,
John A. Sleicher, Supervisor,
No. 2 City Hall,
New York.

March 1st, 1897.

W. Lockwood, Esq.,

Clerk, EXAMINING BOARD OF PLUMBERS,

No. 220 Fourth Avenue, New York.

Dear Sir:-

The enclosed requisition is respectfully returned because, as I explained to you when you called, a part of it does not come within printing and stationery, and the other articles which you call for have heretofore been furnished by your own Board. They should have been called for on an annual requisition, if you are entitled to them from this Department. I thought we had an understanding in reference to this matter, and am surprised that this requisition should have been sent to us again.

Respectfully yours,

John A. Sleicher
Supervisor City Record.

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OFFICE OF THE CITY RECORD,
HENRY McMILLEN, SUPERVISOR,
No. 2 CITY HALL,
NEW YORK.

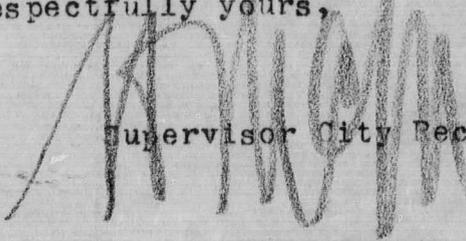
December 22d, 1897.

The Hon. William L. Strong,
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall, New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Will you kindly send this office a requisition to cover
"1,000 Autograph Cards" ordered by your department ? The work was
done by the MARTIN B. BROWN COMPANY, and a requisition is necessary
before the bill can be audited by the Board of City Record.

Very respectfully yours,


Supervisor City Record.

... record.

... record.

... is necessary

... work was

... to cover

136.