

Municipal Facts—City of El Paso

The heads of the different departments make requisitions on the purchasing agent for their required supplies, who, before making a purchase secures the approval of the aldermanic head of the committee controlling a particular department. In the event a purchase is a large or unusual one the council as a whole approves it. After a requisition is properly approved the purchasing agent secures competitive bids and awards the business to the lowest and best bidder, issuing a purchasing agent's order to cover the transaction. When the invoice is received it is checked against the purchasing agent's record to verify price, quantity, etc., after which it is sent out to the departmental head (who issued the requisition) for his O K as to the receipt of the goods. When again received the invoice is checked and approved and turned over to the accounting department for settlement. When the vouchers are prepared the bills are finally gone over by the chairman of the finance committee, who places his O K on them, when they are ready for the warrants to be drawn, and all warrants are signed by the mayor and city clerk. The system is complete, all bills passing through the same channel and there is very little opportunity for an unauthorized bill getting through for payment.

In addition to purchasing all of the supplies, etc., required by the city, another duty, and an important one, is the sale and disposition to the best advantage, and at the best possible price, anything the city might accumulate from time to time, such as second hand machinery, discarded equipment etc. The selling is conducted in much the same manner as the purchasing, competitive bids being received and the highest bidder being the successful one. The proper and timely disposition of the city's junk not only nets the city several thousand dollars yearly but also the city's premises are kept clean and sightly.

Employment Bureau.

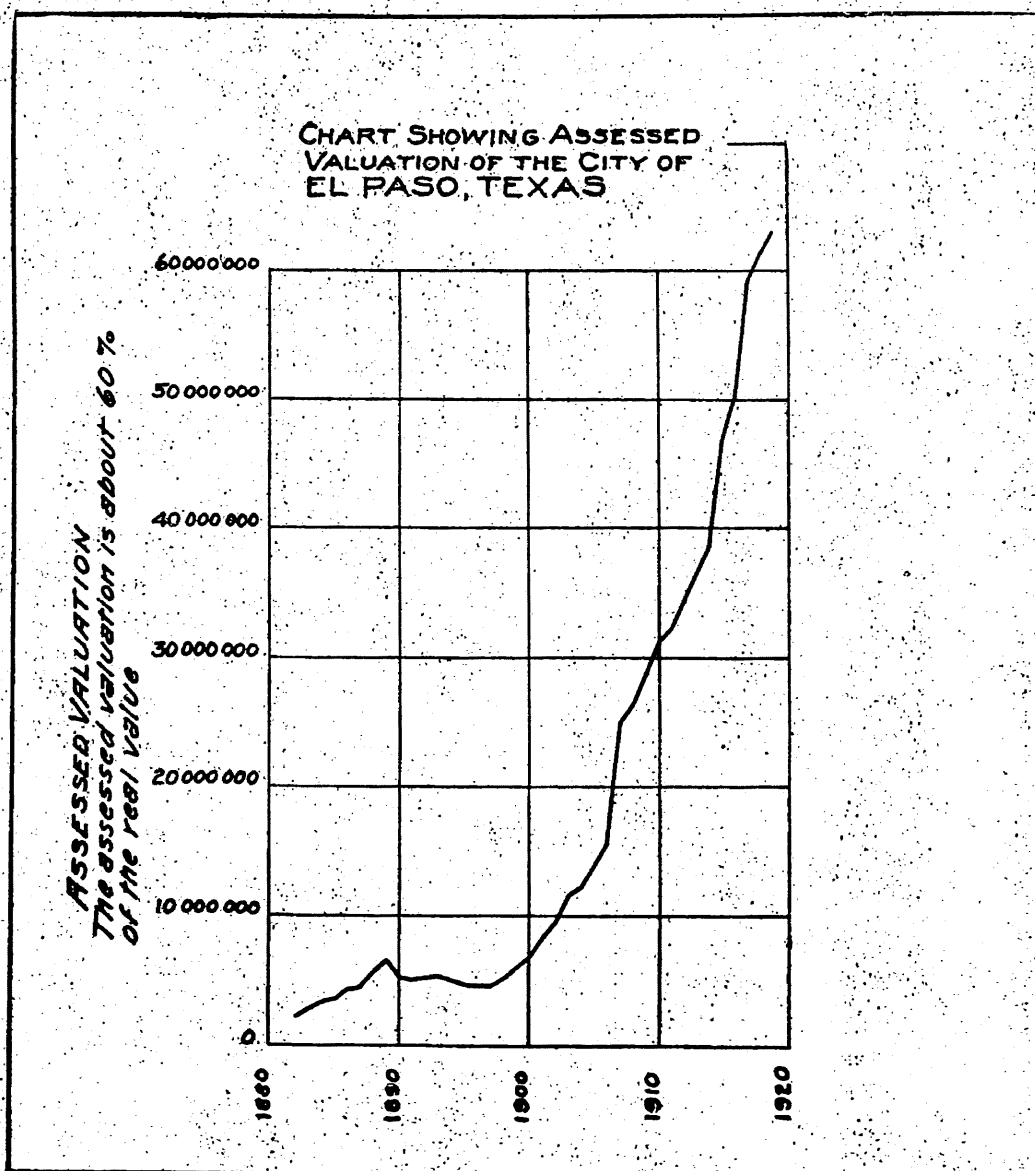
The City Employment Bureau, situated in the basement of the city hall which is maintained for the benefit of the citizens of El Paso in order that they may procure competent help, is open from 7:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m., on all days excepting Sundays and holidays. The bureau takes orders for help one day in advance.

The help furnished covers about everything in the male line from laborers to bookkeepers and in the female line from wash women to stenographers though the latter are very few. The bureau does not send out a woman to work unless she has some kind of a recommendation and even at that we are sometimes mistaken on account of women not being competent, but we do make a special effort to obtain honest women.

The bureau averages about 80 women a day who leave for washing, ironing and housework. In the last 23 days the bureau has placed 22 ex-soldiers in permanent work, 40 men in positions other than laborers, 454 laborers, 110 women by the week and 1867 women by the day. There is a scarcity of women to work by the week as the Mexican women have an objection to working permanently. The bureau does not set any price on anyone's work but only tries to get the employee in touch with the employer and does not advise any woman sent out about the wages to be paid as that is something beyond the power of the Bureau.

Engineering and Construction.

The engineering and construction work is under the immediate supervision of the city engineer, who is appointed by the mayor and council, for a two year's term, at a salary of \$3,000.00 per year. He supervises the work of 17 employees in making the surveys and establishing the grades, in preparing the estimates and the specifications, and in making the inspection on all street construction work done by the city. At the present time in El Paso there are about 90 miles of paved street. Of these 90 miles, about 75 miles are Bitulithic



pavement, all of which has been laid by the El Paso Bitulithic Company. Since 1915, this company has laid about 45 miles of streets.

The cost of street improvements are assessed against the abutting property owner, with the exception of the intersections, which are paid by the city. The intersections, according to the engineer's office, amount to about one-third of the total cost of the improvement. The city covers this expense by bond issues. The assessment of the improvement against the abutting property owner is set up in the original estimate by the engineering department. The assessment is calculated on a front foot basis. The property owner pays his assessment in five installments. The El Paso Bitulithic Company has been making these collections since September 1st, 1915.

A street improvement is generally begun on a petition signed by sixty per cent of the abutting property owners. This petition is presented to the council. If the petition is granted, council adopts a resolution authorizing the street paved. The engineering department then prepares a report showing cost of improvement to each property owner. This report is then adopted by the council, and a public hearing is set about five weeks in advance of first publication. After the hearing, the assessment ordinance is passed, and the city clerk is instructed to advertise for bids. This advertisement is published ten times, and the bids are opened one week after the final advertisement. The best bid is then accepted by the council, and the contract is let.

In the engineering department men are always available and working on sewer repairs and maintenance work. Surveys and estimates for sewer construction are also prepared in this department. There are about 110 miles of sewers in El Paso and many improvements and extensions in the sewer system have been made during the last year.

License Fees and Permits.

Licenses and permits are issued by several different departments in the city's administration. The money collected from these licenses and permits together with interest money and the fines levied by the Corporation Judge amounted to \$66,000.00 in 1919.

The city clerk issues a wagon license for \$9.00 per year; a hack license for \$18.00 per year; an omnibus license of \$18.00 per year; an auto truck license for \$15.00 per year; a public auto license for \$25.00 per year; a jitney buss license \$50.00 per year; an electrician's license for \$50.00 per year; a plumber's license \$25.00 per year; employment agencies license for \$80.00 per year, and a messenger service license for \$50.00 per year. These licenses are payable quarterly, and the revenue amounted to \$8,708.25 during 1919.

In the department of public buildings are issued all electrical, building, plumbing, and sewer permits. The fee charged for a building permit is \$1.50 for the first thousand dollar valuation, and \$1.00 for each additional thousand. The charge for an electrical permit is