

The Forward Kansas City Committee
407 R. A. Long Bldg. Victor 8347 Kansas City, Mo.
May 31, 1939.

TO: Hon. Bryce B. Smith, Mayor and
Eugene Zachman, City Manager Kansas City, Missouri
Gentlemen:

On May 25th last, Mr. J. W. Perry, as Chairman of the Forward Kansas City Committee, expressed to the Mayor our views, particularly with reference to the suit for salary claims for City Employees which was then pending. Referring to your problem with reference to the City's affairs as a whole, that letter contained the following paragraph :

"This leads me to say that in the opinion of our Committee there are many steps which you have not yet taken which are required, if you succeed in furnishing convincing evidence that you intend to go all the way in eliminating completely the influences and conditions which have produced the existing chaos in our City's affairs. In order to accomplish this, drastic changes in the City's personnel will be required, as you must know. We trust that it may not be necessary for our Committee to suggest the changes which must be made. Your pledge of good faith to the public is involved, and you cannot delay much longer in removing those who are a part of the political system which has caused so many tragedies in our community."

Thus far no reply to this letter has been received by Mr. Perry.

With the thought that perhaps we should be more specific in our suggestions as to certain immediate steps which should in our opinion be taken, we make these further concrete suggestions.

We are convinced that you will be unable to inspire in the minds of the citizenry of Kansas City confidence in your announced purpose of effecting a genuine clean-up in the City's affairs, without taking immediate action toward the elimination of at least certain of the heads of departments of the City Government.

Without now referring to the question of the fitness or unfitness of other department heads than those herein mentioned, it is necessary, if you are to gain the public confidence, to cause the dismissal of the following department heads immediately:

1. Fred Bellemere, City Counsellor.

He is a recognized ward political leader. He was chairman of the Board of Election Commissioners from 1954 to 1937, during which time elections were accompanied by unprecedented fraud and violence. During his administration as Chairman of the Election Board an unbelievable registration pad was permitted, and there was an orgy of vote stealing and false certification of election returns. He now sits in the key position as your legal advisor in this time of crisis. Unquestionably his record can not inspire public confidence.

2. Jerry J. Ryan, Director of the Welfare Department.

Section 39 of the Charter provides: "The Director of Welfare shall be a person trained and experienced in public welfare work." We are advised that prior to his present position Mr. Ryan was a boiler inspector. In any event, he was not a man trained and experienced in welfare work.

His appointment was made squarely in the face of the clear letter and spirit of the above charter provisions. Furthermore his record demonstrates his unfitness to continue in this position.

3. Preble Hall, Director of the Personnel Department.

He is well known as an intensely active worker in machine politics.

He has utterly ignored the spirit of the charter in passing upon applicants for City employment. Examinations required to be given under the charter have been an absolute farce. Under his administration service to a political machine rather than fitness for position has been uniformly the determining factor in placing applicants on the eligible list. As a faithful public servant he has completely failed, and his record has demonstrated his unfitness for the position of Personnel Director.

4. W. J. Teefey, as Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies has ignored the provisions of the City Charter as to the requirement of bona fide competitive bidding resulting in enormous waste of the money of the taxpayers, and has notoriously and persistently shown such gross favoritism that he has forfeited public confidence.

5. Matthew S. Murray, Director of Public Works.

With his acceptance of the position of Director of Public Works of Kansas City, the taxpayers of this city had the right to assume they would receive the benefit of his undivided time and effort. Afterwards he accepted a position as Administrator of the

W.P.A. for the whole State of Missouri. He now holds both positions with a salary from each. Although Kansas City is entitled to his full time, the fact is that by far the greater part of his time is devoted to his work as State W.P.A. Administrator, rather than to his duties as Director of Public Works of Kansas City. For these reasons alone his dismissal as Director of Public Works should be immediately demanded.

The mere dismissal of the heads of the Departments hereinabove named will be of no consequence whatever if they should be replaced by men intimately allied with and obligated to the political machine which has brought about the present deplorable situation in the City's affairs.

Public confidence can only be restored by replacing these heads of departments with citizens who have special qualifications for these respective positions, and who are completely free from obligation to or dictation by any political organization.

While these suggestions are not to be interpreted as covering all of the many steps that must be taken for the restoration of public confidence in our City Government, they do indicate certain steps with respect to which immediate action must be taken.

Yours very sincerely,

FORWARD KANSAS CITY COMMITTEE

By S. W. Perry, Chairman.

[MS. illegible], Jr, Secretary.

MEMBERS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE,

Paul Barnett, John T. Harding, R. L. Gray, [M.S. illegible], M. J. Grant, Robert Nelson Spencer, [M.S. illegible], Edgar Shook, [M.S. illegible], F. M. Lee