

# PAID THE CITY'S SERVANTS

JUST HOW THE 5000 MEN & WOMEN WHO CONSTITUTE THE HIRED HELP DRAW DOWN \$635,000 EVERY MONTH



VIEWING FOR WARRANTS IN THE AUDITOR'S OFFICE



THE BIG COPS GET THEIRS



THE FIRE CAPTAINS RECEIVE THE WAGES OF THEIR COMPANIES

## By Richard Burchmore

In the picture of life portrayed by the novelists the question of money never enters into the greater scheme of things which controls our destinies. The puppets they manipulate always seem to have plenty of loose cash and the checkbook is ever to the fore.

But in actual life every one is working against time to keep even with expenses. Those who hold jobs are around early and form long lines before the cashier's window to get their pay envelopes.

For proof, witness the city auditor's office, for here municipal life shows that all important side when the eager public servant arrives early for his warrant.

Book keeping is reputed to be a deadly science and the constant handling out of money depressing, but the city auditor and city treasurer find their positions quite the opposite. For before them a constant string of cheerful faces pass, impatient hands write their names in the auditor's big book and eager eyes watch as the sympathetic official lets the pile of warrants slip through his fingers until he comes to the right one. Catching that sidelong glance at the signature, if the face is not familiar to him, and hands it over.

"Take that to the treasurer's office," he says, pointing his finger in a crooked line to indicate that the city's strong box is in a more retired position down at the end of the hall. Then off goes the happy city servant waving a bit of blue paper. When he returns in a few minutes he has the look of assurance we all have when there is money in our pockets.

### Pay Day Shifts About

There is in most cases no definite date upon which warrants are given out by the auditor, although he pays all of any particular class of city employees on the same day, but it is nothing short of marvelous how fast the word gets around. The good news travels on the wings of the sea breeze that blows around the city, and from Burchmore to Land's End they come in constantly converging lines until they meet in a crash at the auditor's door. There they fall into rows that serpentine up and down the hall and out into the street.

Usually the policemen are paid off first as a rule on the day before the last day of the month. It is known in advance that the warrants are ready, and bright and early in the morning they begin to arrive. For the accommodation of the night watch, which reports off at 8 in the morning and is at the auditor's office five minutes later, the clerks in the office come down early that day. They are good fellows in the auditor's office and they do not like to keep the bluecoats waiting.

All morning long the policemen file in, the line lasting through the noon hour into the afternoon. During that time warrants are handed out for \$106,607 to 866 policemen.

After being out all night it would seem natural for the patrolmen to go home and sleep first and to send for the money by company, the captain collecting for the entire crew. This makes less of a line at the auditor's, but takes time at the treasurer's, as the companies need various sums of different denominations in order to make change.

Each fire company has a little money sack which reposes on all but one day of the month in a certain spot in the common desk. During the short time that it is a gone there is a restlessness about the fire house which is only

quieted by the return of the captain with the little bag bulging with gold and silver. It would not do for the whole company to go, but those who stay behind do not feel quite at ease about it until they are lined up and each is given his portion of the \$31,804 which goes out to cheer the 789 firemen each month.

Sometimes while the money is being handed around and the little sack is still heavy with its burden, an alarm comes in and then there is no time to finish. Whoever has it jams it into his pocket and off they go clanging through the streets. By and by when the excitement is all over they straighten out their accounts.

There is one particular day which is looked forward to in the auditor's office, the 4th of each month, when the 1,200 school teachers are paid. The rush comes after school hours, beginning at 3 o'clock; by 5 it is all over. In that short time the teachers receive \$112,113 in sums ranging from \$60 to \$100. In they come, for the most part women, not too staid to giggle, certainly not too old to receive a little compliment.

### Can't Come for Their Pay

The hospital nurses and almshouse attendants, like the firemen, must stay by the post of duty, so the money is sent out to them. When it arrives

they are called in the superintendent's office, from the operating room and sick bed, and take back with them that cheerful feeling which nothing but money can give.

It takes all sorts and conditions of people to serve the city's needs. Aside from the horde of clerks and deputies in the various departments, each branch of the city government needs experts. The board of health has a bacteriologist and toxicologist. The board of public works has great crews of bunkenmen, cribbers, street sweepers, and endless numbers of mechanics. The hospitals have a more variegated crew than a hotel, among others rat catchers. The coroner has a few grovome jobs, including one for a great number of water front characters, unofficially connected with his office, who are always on the lookout for bodies beating about the wharves in the tide. For each "find" they receive an order for \$10. There is no mistaking these men. As soon as they enter the auditor's office they are recognized, they are so distinctive in type. Like water front characters the world over they are characteristic of their kind.

The treasurer's clerk pays over the money perfunctorily on the auditor's order, but he gets a little of the general cheerfulness as he looks out through his cage, between the piles of gold, and sees the recipients go merrily away.

Sitting unobtrusively in a corner of the treasurer's outer office when the city's employees are being paid off, there are always two sisters of a mendicant order. One has a reticule in the folds of her garment, but it does not appear what her business there is until some hearty policeman flush with his \$120, or a young school teacher with her few gold pieces, comes over and offers a coin. The reward for the charity is won by the pleased smile on the Sister's face.

One day while we were photographing, a big, rough man, his coat plastered with mud, took several dollars from his small pile and with brusque courtesy dropped them into the reticule. That is where the Sisters are rewarded for the tedious hours.

The Sisters have been coming regularly for a long time and know the city employees quite as well as N. E. Maison and J. G. Hagarty, the deputy auditors, who have been giving out warrants ever since the new charter went into effect.

The school teachers raid the treasury



PAYING THE NURSES

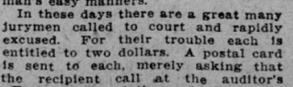
Major Mathewson, are members of the national guard and have the military man's easy manners. In these days there are a great many jurymen called to court and rapidly excused. For their trouble each is entitled to two dollars. A postal card is sent to each, merely asking that the recipient call at the auditor's office and present the card. Sooner or later they all turn up and when a warrant for two dollars is produced they invariably make a great show of surprise. Maison then asks each if he has recently been called for jury duty, then each appears to have a sudden light thrown upon the mystery of the two dollars. This happens with such regularity that it is a source of constant enjoyment in the office.

Most of those appearing for their pay know, or think they know, what they are going to get. Sometimes they fall in their expectation and then there is trouble. But they are registering their kicks in the wrong place. All the auditor knows is that he is to give a certain person a warrant for a certain sum. This he does and his duty ends there. But the disgruntled person remains to argue. Maison and Hagarty never attempt to respond because that would give the grumbler a chance to quote them. They will furnish him a pad and pencil so he can figure it out for himself, but that is as far as they will go.

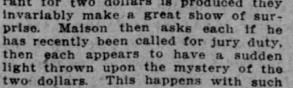
If the complaint is made in polite terms they are ready to help. The teachers, for example, are docked the days they are absent. When this happens they always want to do the subtracting for themselves and it is only rarely that their figures meet those on the warrant. If they are a few cents ahead, they go away elated. But if they are a few cents shy, there is a one-sided argument, until Maison discreetly withdraws.

Women whose husbands spend their pay in drink or fast living frequently try to head them off at the auditor's office. They find in Maison a sympathetic listener, but he is never able to give them any portion of their husband's salary, much as he would like to do it. His only chance to show his feelings is by letting go the warrant reluctantly when the culprit appears later and waits avidly for his pay. He would like to say something, but he is not there for that purpose and so restrains himself.

### TWO SISTERS OF CHARITY WAIT FOR DONATIONS



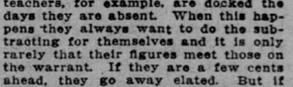
THE SCHOOL TEACHERS RAID THE TREASURY



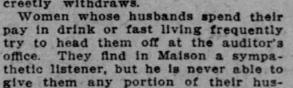
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Those most eager for their pay are the old watchmen and helpers around the city hospitals, who are practically inmates but who are given \$5 a month for tobacco money. They begin to telephone several days before their warrants are ready and are always down bright and early on the morning when they are ready to be given out.

### THE SCHOOL TEACHERS RAID THE TREASURY



PAYING THE NURSES



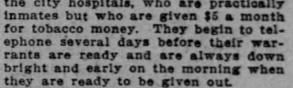
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Some of the warrants are for very small sums. There is one for 27 cents which has been waiting months, but the claimant refuses to take it as, in order to receive it, he would have to go before a notary and swear to an affidavit, and that would cost him 50 cents.

### PAYING THE NURSES



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In the course of a month 5,000 people are paid off this way, their combined pay amounting in a year to \$7,600,000.

### THE AUDITOR AND TREASURER HAVE BEEN KNOCKED ABOUT FROM PILLAR TO POST SINCE THE FIRE, BUT THEY WERE COMFORTABLY INSTALLED IN THE McALLISTER STREET WING OF THE CITY HALL UNTIL RECENTLY, WHEN THEY WERE MOVED INTO THE QUARTERS FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY THE DEFUNCT CALIFORNIA SAFE DEPOSIT AND TRUST COMPANY.

The treasurer had on hand over \$7,000,000 when they moved. It was placed in three big moving vans and taken sedately through the streets surrounded by mounted police. No sooner had the wagons drawn up before the former bank than the ill fated depositors began to arrive. They argued that this was the place where they had left their money, and here was money, millions of it, so why should they not have their share? The ignorant were not to be put off with a word and one Chinaman has returned every day since to ask in his bland way if they are paying off yet.

Many who were living comfortably on the earnings of their savings deposited in that bank are now among those who come each month for their warrants. It is the irony of fate that they should get it back slowly from the same window into which they handed it. It came hard when they saved it and they work hard for it now.

