

94 DETECTIVE SERGEANTS FACE FIGHT FOR JOBS

Merit Board Asserts Men Hold Their Positions Illegally.

BY HENRY M. HYDE.

Here are some facts that may help to explain why the detective bureau of the Chicago police department has not been more successful in preventing crime and in capturing criminals after crimes have been committed.

The first fact is that the ninety-four so-called first class detective sergeants in the bureau are not detectives at all. At least, they are not first class detectives in the eyes of the law.

About half of them have never passed any examination as detectives. They are really desk sergeants or patrol sergeants or "holdovers" from the days before there were any civil service laws. Through the favor of some chief of police or mayor they happened to be serving in the detective department when the so-called reorganization ordinance was passed by the city council in December, 1912.

Capt. Coffin Explains.

"One clause of that ordinance," says Capt. Coffin, president of the city civil service commission, "provides that all these patrol and desk sergeants and 'holdovers' shall become senior or first class detective sergeants. But that clause is clearly in violation of the civil service law. In passing it the city council clearly went beyond its legal authority. All these so-called first class detective sergeants are holding their offices without shadow of right.

"Legally, if the rank of first class detective sergeant is to be continued, a promotional examination must be held which will be open to all the detective sergeants on the force—535 in all."

\$300 Advantage in Pay.

There are a good many advantages in holding the title of a first class detective sergeant. The greatest one is the fact that a first class sergeant draws \$1,750 a year, which is a flat \$300 more than an ordinary detective sergeant is paid. And all the detectives of both orders share the advantage of wearing citizens' clothes and not being compelled to appear in uniform or to travel by beat.

Thus, by order of the city council, which is now declared to be an illegal exercise of authority, some forty or fifty men who have never qualified as detectives at all have been drawing for some years much higher salaries than their colleagues on the force who have actually taken and passed the civil service examinations.

The fact that a few men, by council favor and without going through the civil service mill, have enjoyed this larger salary and the special privileges which go with the title, has long been a disturbing factor in the detective bureau. It has been the cause of continual jealousy and dissatisfaction. It has prevented team work and has entirely destroyed esprit de corps.

Reorganization Is Rumored.

It was reported about the city hall that Chief Schuettler would take advantage of the decision of the civil service commission to completely reorganize the detective department, putting a number of young, keen, and active men in the place of the so-called first class detective sergeants who are now said to be holding their places illegally.

"I cannot discuss the matter in detail," said Chief Schuettler. "It is still in the hands of the civil service commission. If Capt. Coffin and his colleagues decide that these first class sergeants are holding their positions illegally, there will be nothing for me to do but to reduce them to their former rank of patrol and desk sergeants."

Sergeants Plan Fight.

"The civil service board has thoroughly discussed the situation," said Capt. Coffin last evening, "and it was unanimous in the opinion that these first class detective sergeants are holding their jobs and drawing their salaries illegally. We have not yet made our formal order to that effect a matter of record, but will do so in a few days, as soon as its form can be finally passed on by our attorney."

That the first class detective sergeants are not willing to be demoted without making a fight was made clear by the employment yesterday of legal counsel in their behalf. Some eighty men who now hold the "first class" title united in hiring an attorney, who, it is reported, will apply for an injunction to restrain the civil service commission and Chief Schuettler from interfering with them. Until the whole question has been passed on by the courts.