

DON'T EXPECT MUCH DROP IN COUNTY'S RATE

Based on Present State Rate, It Would Be \$2.28.

COMMISSIONERS MEET

The problem of determining the county tax rate for 1922 will be decided by the Marion County Council at the annual meeting of two days' duration, which begins tomorrow morning in the county commissioners' courtroom.

The council has the power to accept, increase or decrease the county tax rate as proposed by County Auditor Leo K. Fesler.

Mr. Fesler will urge that his figures be accepted because he is of the opinion that the State rate will be increased.

At the meeting, he is recommending to the council a budget totaling \$1,514,375 for next year and a county levy of 27 cents as compared to the present rate of 31 1/4 cents, hoped to offset the expected raise in the State levy. Mr. Fesler, on the eve of the meeting of the council, admits it is almost a certainty that the total rate in Indianapolis, Center and some townships will be increased by a higher State levy. It would not be surprising, he said, if the State levy is increased from 20 to 27 cents.

MARKS GOV. FESLER

Even based on the present State levy and considering the city rate and the rates that Mr. Fesler will recommend to the county council, the rate would be \$2.38 for next year as compared to the present rate of \$2.42. An increase State tax rate of even a small amount would result in an increase in the total tax rate for Indianapolis-Center. Although the present Republican Administration has attempted to trim the budget for next year an amount other expenses, it becomes evident as the time for the council sessions nears that regardless of Mr. Fesler's efforts to decrease the county rate, the expected increased State rate will offset this reduction not only in boosting the total tax rate in Indianapolis-Center but some other townships.

Even figuring on the 20-cent State levy, West Indianapolis faces an increase from \$2.48 to \$2.65; Irvington-Warren may have a reduction from \$2.74 to \$2.60, and Indianapolis-Washington may be increased from \$2.64 to \$2.69, according to Mr. Fesler.

The main thing which accounts for the increase in West Indianapolis, figuring on a 20-cent State basis, is the concrete road bonds," Mr. Fesler stated.

In Irvington-Warren no county roads have been built lately, which explains a possible decrease in the rate for next year if the State rate is not boosted too high.

There is every indication the council will engage in some lively debate over requested appropriation items for running certain branches of the county. A warm debate is expected over an item in the budget of \$22,000 as salary of courthouse employees, including the custodian, janitor, elevator man, watchman and others.

This tremendous figure for cleaning and guarding the courthouse is only \$3,000 less than is asked for heat, light, water and power for the courthouse, jail, garage, power-house and street.

The courthouse janitor system, if it can be called a system has been nothing more or less than a means for the Republican party, paying off "political debts" to the public workers. Most of the janitors at the courthouse are negroes and all of them are very active in politics at election time.

The political "king bee" of the courthouse employees is Benjamin Peirce who is a Shrank Republican and closely allied with both the Republican nominees for mayor and President Franklin D. Shrank, it is said, has his political eye cast on the county auditor's job as he graduated from master into the commissionership.

LESS A MOUTH JANITOR SALARIES.

At present the total pay roll for courthouse employees amounts to \$207,50 for a two-weeks period. The pay roll which was allowed for the period from Aug. 15 to Aug. 31 totals that amount.

Of that amount, Mr. Peirce as custodian receives \$75.00; Asst. Auditor for county automobiles, \$60; Earl Storms as file clerk, \$37.50; Marie Seller, as matron, \$45 and John A. Fox, as elevator man, \$3.50.

The following five janitors each received \$4.50 each: John Crittenden, John Crenshaw, James A. Paul, Elfe Grissey, Henry Levy, Henry Fraizer, Spencer Clegg, George Yerrell, John Fisher, Robert Hollord, Harold Caldwell, Victor Alexander, Mike Lewis, Victor Verner, James and Daniel Lee, making the total paid for janitors alone per month, averaging \$1,250.

For some time, County Councilman Russell T. Byers has been studying the janitor problem at the courthouse to determine if the council should advertise for bids and award a contract for janitor work instead of the present system which is nothing more than a plain tree to be shaken to pay political debts for petty politics.

It is expected Councilman Byers again will suggest to the council that steps be taken to award the janitor work to competitive bidders. It is argued the enormous present cost would be reduced to a point which would compare with the legal office buildings. A year ago, the commissioners decided they were interested in such a plan, but did not take the leap which would have ruffled the political waters. During the past twelve months, there has been considerable protest against the dirty conditions of the courthouse. Up to the summer months, following these protests, the courthouse has been in a little better shape, but during the past three months, certain parts have been filthy. Even a few days ago there was loud protest over the extreme unsanitary condition of the men's toilet.

It is argued a contract awarded on competitive bidding will remove the petty political aspect of the janitor situation. It probably will take a lot of "blasting" to turn this political plum tree, if ever it is clinched.

Another point of possible controversy is the proposed increase in the salary of County Surveyor John Griffith from \$2,400 to \$4,500 and the assistants in the office from a total of \$2,000 to \$12,250 or more. The new salary of the surveyor and his assistants is \$12,250.

Divorces were granted as follows:

Twenty-nine to women for abandonment and six to men.

Twenty-eight to women for cruelty and nineteen to men.

Twenty-four to women for failure to provide.

Eight to women for other causes.

Total divorces granted, 128.

150 DIVORCES IN SUPERIOR COURT, 2.

In Superior Court, Room 2, 567 civil cases were filed and 621 disposed of in 1919.

Divorces were granted as follows:

Twenty-two to women for abandonment and twelve to men.

Twenty to women for adultery and two to men.

Eight to women for criminal conviction.

Fourteen to women for cruelty and four to men.

Eight to women for failure to provide.

Twenty-four to women for other causes.

Total divorces granted, 56.

1919 FIGURES SHOW INCREASE OVER 1918.

Official records and figures for 1919 shows an increased number of divorces granted over 1918.

In the Circuit Court, 1,862 civil cases were filed and 1,757 were disposed of that year.

Divorces were granted as follows:

One hundred and one to women for abandonment and thirty-six to men.

Twenty-six to women for adultery and four to men.

Seventy to women for cruelty and eight to men.

One to a woman for failure to provide.

Twenty-nine to women for other causes.

Total divorces granted, 123.

In Superior Court, Room 2, 652 civil cases were filed and 633 disposed of in 1919.

Divorces were granted as follows:

One hundred and one to women for abandonment and fifteen to men.

Six to women for adultery and six to men.

Eighty-one to women for cruelty and thirty-three to men.

One to a woman for failure to provide.

Twenty-four to women for other causes.

Total divorces granted, 60.

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