

chased and is being sown on the tract. The four sandstone, drum columns which were used to support the east wing of the old treasury building at Washington were purchased by Hon. Cotter T. Bride of Washington, D. C., and presented to the city of Lincoln to use in the park entrance. These sandstone columns are the columns between which Abraham Lincoln stood to review the troops during the civil war and were presented to the city of Lincoln because the city was named for the martyred president. These four columns, weighing forty tons each and standing thirty-two feet high, almost five feet in diameter, have been transported to this city and have been erected as a part of the O street entrance to Antelope park. Complete detailed plans have been prepared by a landscape architect for the Antelope park extension and are on file in the engineer's office. They include the plans for straightening the Antelope creek channel—the work on which has been completed—grading plans—which have been practically completed—boulevards—which have been already laid out and almost completed—planting, seeding, plans for grass, shrubs, trees, flowers, etc., the work on which is under way. The plans also provide for wading pools, playgrounds, etc. Elaborate plans have been made and approved by the council, and are on file in the engineer's office, for the entire Antelope park extension from O street to J street. These plans include a beautiful mall that will extend from the park entrance at O street, of which the historic columns form the central part, to M street, at which point a pergola will be erected. These park plans include walks, ornamental lighting system, fountains, etc., the work on which can be carried out as soon as additional funds are supplied. The contract has been let for the completion of the park entrance on O street, amounting to \$4,300, and the masonry work on the same which extends the full width of the park tract on O street—a distance of 300 feet—and connecting up the historic columns is practically completed. The grill work is under construction and will be shortly put in place, completing a most beautiful and artistic park extension, the total cost of which, including the transportation and erection of the columns will amount to about \$6,000. The purchase of the ground, the completion and approval of detailed park plans, and the clearing of the ground, cutting a new creek channel, grading and filling and road building—which is practically completed—the sowing of grass seed, the planting of shrubbery and trees—which is well under way, the erection of the park entrance—which will soon be completed—has carried out the Antelope park extension from O street to J street, which was financially provided for by a \$50,000 bond issue and by the \$10,000 park levy, making a total of \$60,000, which amount was placed in my hands by the council to carry out the plans outlined and pledges made when I urged the bond issue be submitted and voted to extend the Antelope park from J street to O street, for the purpose of opening up a beautiful park system that would bring the city park within easy walking distance of the heart of the city for the convenience of the wage earners.

#### DOLLAR GAS CASE

During the past year the suit by the city of Lincoln against the Lincoln Gas Company to compel the gas company to return to the gas consumers about \$500,000 illegally collected by the gas company in overcharges, and which was won by the city in the federal district court, as set forth in my report of last year, was appealed to the United States supreme court. The United States supreme court has recently granted the city's request to advance the hearing of the gas case and set the hearing for the first of October, 1917. The supreme court at the same time refused the request of the gas company to have the case reopened for further testimony. This is another important victory for the city and the gas patrons of Lincoln have now every reason to expect that the gas case will shortly be decided in their favor and that the upwards of \$500,000, held by the federal district court in the form of a bond, will be distributed to the gas patrons who are entitled to the refund.

#### IMPROVEMENTS AT CITY JAIL

Constructed new modern cell house with six cells, with abundance of natural light, fresh air,

and provided each cell with city water to remedy the conditions, which were inhuman.

Provided additional ventilation in "bull pen" at the city jail.

Constructed a three car garage for police station.

Constructed a three car garage and a store room adjoining new cell house for the water and light department.

Put in new steam heating system that heats by steam the new cell house, "bull pen," police station garage, woman's ward, police court room, health department office, No. 1 fire station and office of superintendent of streets.

The construction of a new jail kitchen with hot and cold water, with kitchen sink, natural light and ventilation, and heated by steam.

The city has been enjoined from selling and issuing the \$50,000 garbage disposal bonds voted by the people, the court holding that the city charter did not give the city authority to issue bonds for the construction of a garbage plant. The city will carry the contest to a higher court, believing that the position taken by the district judge is not correct.

#### FREE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT

The free legal aid department established in 1915, has handled upwards of 600 cases for the weaker members of society, who were unable to employ an attorney of their own. These cases include the collection of wages, settlement of disputes, requiring the county commissioners to put into effect the widow's pension act, protection against chattel mortgage sharks, which have given this class of people a different conception of what protection the government can afford and has resulted in making good, law-abiding citizens out of a number of people who formerly believed that it was necessary to take the law into their own hands in order to protect themselves from people who take advantage of them.

#### MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

The free municipal employment bureau established in 1915, has received more than 600 applications for work and has found employment for more than one-half of the applicants. The work in these two departments is growing in volume as more and more people learn that these bureaus were organized for the purpose of protecting wage earners and to assist them in finding employment.

The passage of a milk ordinance that would have permitted grocery stores, meat shops, fruit stands, etc., to sell milk without license or inspection, was successfully resisted.

Prevented the construction or re-location of lunch cars within the fire district.

City employes vacation with pay was limited to two weeks.

City employes sick leave on pay was limited to two weeks, which resulted in keeping more men in active service on the police department.

City hall employes given half holidays on Saturday during summer months, for the purpose of increasing efficiency.

Initiated the movement and assisted in securing a hearing in the city of Lincoln by the members of the farm loan banking board for the location of a farm loan bank at the capital city of Nebraska.

#### SETTLEMENT OF STRIKE

The strike of day laborers on the Terminal building in the spring of 1916, which extended to all the day labor on construction work in the city and threatened to cause a strike of all the labor employed in the city in the building trades was amicably settled through an arbitration plan suggested by the mayor in conference with the labor organizations, owners of buildings on which strikes were in progress, and the building contractors.

Acceptance of cash bonds by the police department was prohibited to prevent possible graft.

Depositing cash with police department to be paid as reward, prohibited.

Double pay for police department while working on city's time prohibited.

Require financial report be made to the council showing the receipts and disbursements of all money coming into the hands of the police department.

Police department instructed by resolution of the council to remove slot machines and punch boards, on account of being gambling devices,

from all places of business in the city, and to enforce the ordinances against other forms of gambling, and to enforce the law against the social evil.

Secured the passage of an ordinance by the council prohibiting the use in pool halls of slot machines, punch boards, chips, checks, premiums, prizes, or giving of merchandise, or any other form of gambling.

#### LEGAL DEPARTMENT

The legal department has successfully handled many important lawsuits for the city and protected the city against loss in unjust damage suits. In addition to the reports made by the legal department and filed the first of January, 1917, the department during the fore part of the present administration prepared forms for bonds in the police court which has prevented straw bonds being accepted by the police judge during the past year and a half.

Has discontinued the custom of the city paying the cost of transcript in appeal cases from the police court to the district court, thereby greatly reducing the number of cases appealed.

The city legal department has handled without additional paid help or expense to the city 600 cases for the legal aid department; has handled without additional expense the more than 600 applications in the free municipal employment bureau; has disposed of about twenty-five cases in the district court that were appealed from the police court under former administrations, and has disposed of practically all of the appeal cases from the police court that have been carried up under this administration.

The doing of work other than attending to the city's legal business on the city's time, with the city's stenographic help, or at the city's expense, was discontinued at the beginning of this administration.

#### SIDEWALK DEPARTMENT

The sidewalk inspector as the head of a separate department was abolished at the beginning of this administration, the sidewalk business placed under the city engineer, and the business pertaining to sidewalks has been handled by a deputy engineer under the general direction of the mayor, on whom the sidewalk department was wished immediately following his election.

The handling of the sidewalk business through the engineer's office has been very successful and satisfactory. More miles of sidewalk have been laid and more miles of sidewalks have been straightened in the past eighteen months than have probably been done in any three years of the city's history.

Some of the more important improvements in sidewalk construction, sidewalk lines, grades, and in sidewalk widths, were the straightening of the sidewalks on South Twelfth street, from L to J streets, the building of sidewalks on either side of Seventeenth street from Vine street to the entrance of the state fair grounds and the construction of sidewalks from lot line to curb stone on either side of O street from Sixteenth street to the Rock Island tracks.

#### GREATER LINCOLN

The mayor suggested and publicly advocated the merging of College View, University Place, and Bethany with Lincoln. Realizing that this consolidation will have to be brought about in the not distant future to protect the health of the people of Lincoln and to protect the taxpayers of Lincoln and suburban towns against the expense of duplication of schools without regard to location, duplication of all forms of public utility service and expense of maintaining four separate governments, a bill was prepared and introduced in the legislature providing for the merger, subject to the approval of the voters of the suburban towns affected, but through sincere but misinformed opposition the bill was defeated.

After investigating the available men in the ten different cities to fill the position of fire chief of the city of Lincoln, to succeed Chief Clements, who resigned, the mayor came to the conclusion that Neill T. Sommer, captain of the St. Joseph, Mo., fire department, was the best all round man for the position. He recommended to the members of the Lincoln city council the appointment of Captain Sommer for the position of chief of the Lincoln fire department and the council made the appointment. Since