

TAKE IN KANSAS CITY.

A bill has been introduced in the lower house of the Missouri legislature for the benefit of the city of St. Louis, which should be so amended as to be applicable to Kansas City as well. In the outline, at least, the provisions of the proposed law are needed in the government of this city, and the people have very recently had occasion to fully realize that fact. It is proposed to regulate the disposition of franchises to the streets and alleys of the city by selling franchises asked for to the highest bidder.

Such a law would undoubtedly be of inestimable benefit, provided the proceedings in relation to the sale were properly guarded against abuses. The initial movement in the premises should, as now, be made through the council, which can pass upon the question of expediency. And that body might well place a minimum price, below which no bid would be entertained. The provision in the bill as introduced, that no franchise shall be so disposed of until it has been advertised for ninety days, is a good feature, which alone would be a protection against jobbery.

The JOURNAL has long taken the ground that these privileges belong to the people and that the council has no right to give them away. The city has passed that period in its growth when it is necessary for it to take a paternal interest in enterprises by which corporations expect to make money out of the people, in order to induce them to go into business here. Every privilege which it has to grant is worth money, and if the proper precaution is used in the disposal of future franchises, the time will come when the income from this source will pay a very large part of the expense of the city's government. To repeat the practices of the past is to continue to use the streets and alleys as a nursery for the schemes of sharpers and promoters, and then see the corporations into whose hands the privileges drift fatter and grow arrogant on the money which they yield.