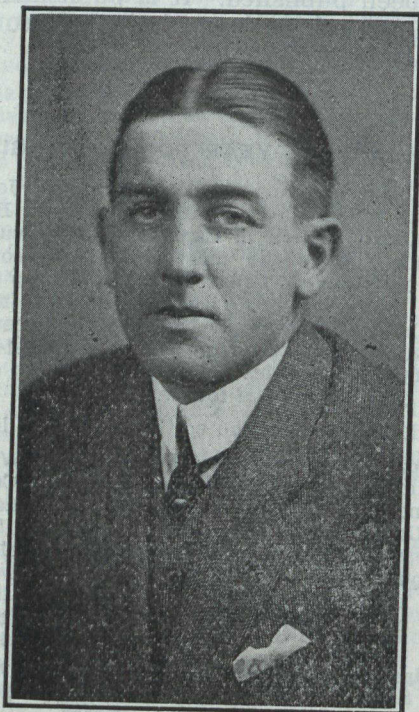


THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE A GREAT FACTOR IN CITY DEVELOPMENT

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Successful organizations such as chambers of commerce are only possible to-day when a fair percentage of the representative business men, and a large percentage of the young men, who are to become the future business men of the city, interest themselves in the work.

To arrive at this point it is necessary that every citizen understand well the importance as well as the indispensable need of a well organized Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade. Conditions to-day are not what they were ten years ago. Competition has sprung up among cities and it is a case of the survival of the fittest. Municipal progress must be thoroughly understood by all, and it is only through the agency of the Chamber of Commerce that this knowledge is to be obtained and imparted to others.

Municipal progress depends mainly upon knowledge, broadmindedness, civic pride, and the theory of the survival of the fittest, but the dynamic force back of it all is the process of education and conversion of those who do not understand, through the efforts of the progressive leaders of modern day development. To say that a man is not progressive and has no civic pride should not be interpreted to mean, in all cases, that he lacks these elements of progress, for there are many individuals who possess a spark of progressiveness and civic pride, which merely needs a bit of nursing and education to fan it to a point where it is easily recognizable. Many cases there are who need but an explanation or a little advanced education to win a human unit for the ranks of progress.

The most useless person in a community is the man who, although he has means, the power and some influence, will draw his curtain of seclusion around him in the midst of surroundings, that have offered him during his life, the main opportunity to place himself in a position of ease and comfort.

Some communities are somewhat shackled and handicapped by the influence of money power of a few narrow minded individuals, and their conversion to the principles of progress and good citizenship is beyond accomplishment. But what a terrible thing it must be for such individuals to realize that, when, at the last call they pass beyond, the whole community experiences a feeling of release, like a rose tree which is permitted to blossom after the frost has disappeared.

Where a true application of the great value of combined effort in city upbuilding is understood, the spirit

of co-operation should be no difficult task for any Chamber of Commerce to create. No merchant or any kind of business man can accomplish as much, working single handed in correcting abuses in trade, in the upbuilding of commerce and trade, or securing of improvements along different lines, in a community, as when banded together with his fellow merchants in an organization that acts as the medium through which the individual views are expressed, and when united and crystallized into the sentiments and co-operation of the whole, naturally, carries more weight than the expressions and actions of the individuals.

A Chamber of Commerce is the medium through which the business men speak. It is an important factor in promoting just and equitable principles in trade, protecting the rights of its members, and in advancing the best interests of the city or community. When a Chamber of Commerce is composed of active, progressive representatives of various lines of business, it voices public sentiment, and directs public thought in matters affecting public policy.

Everyone engaged in business, be it one line or another, should devote a certain amount of his time to the community interests. He should not feel that the community owes him something, and rest at that. If everybody reasoned along these lines there would be no Chambers of Commerce.

Every citizen who gives up some of his time and help in matters of public policy is a community asset. While we have a few such citizens in every community who give freely of their time and efforts in behalf of the public weal, there is also a large percentage of those who can be considered community liabilities, as they lend no help whatever.

But how should a Chamber of Commerce be started, and when started, how should it be carried on?

I would suggest the following:—

An organization campaign for membership should be created.

A defined programme of work for the ensuing year.

The formation of committees to carry out each part of the programme.

The issuing of an annual bulletin dealing with the success of the different committees in carrying out the programme of the year just past.

This bulletin would also include all work accomplished not included in the programme, as well as the new programme for the next year.

The hiring of an aid secretary who could devote his whole time to work of the Chamber and instruct the different committees.

The organization committee should be formed to prepare a careful and thoughtful plan, in which the future service of the Chamber of Commerce to the community would be paramount. It must be realized at the inception that the proposition, to stand permanently, must be made to appeal to the business men of the city, from the view point of service and material gain through both direct and indirect benefits. It should be understood that to build substantially, the business men must come to a thoughtful consideration and conviction of the need and the value of an effective Chamber of Commerce. It must be made to appeal to the citizens as a cold-blooded business proposition, rendering service to its membership.

This is a day of community thought. Individual prosperity and the prosperity of the rising generation demands that men give thought to community progress just as they do to progress in their own business. At no time in history have men and women too, given such earnest thought to civic and commercial progress, especially that which comes from organized effort. Never before was that trite expression: "Cities are built by men" more true. In fact community progress to-day is dependant so much upon organized effort that cities without such effort are, as a rule, making little headway.

In any big forward movement there must, first of all, be a foundation laid. A proper reorganization means a proper foundation and it is going to depend on the character of this foundation, as to the stability and permanency of the superstructure.