

## Gave Up Much In Music Interest

Former St. John Man Could Have Made \$20,000

President John A. Cowan

Fine Tribute Paid to Him in Connection With the Kansas City Conservatory of Music—Story of a Battle and a Victory

(Musical Courier)  
The Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City, numbering 5,000 members, the greatest body of commercial men in the west, has set aside one day each year to be known as the Kansas City Conservatory of Music Day. At this time all problems concerning the conservatory and its relation to the musical development of the west will be discussed and steps taken to meet any emergency that may arise. Recognition of any improvement or campaign necessary for the further development of musical educational interest in the southwest will also be considered.  
Great Interest Centers on Initial Meeting  
The first meeting was held at the Baltimore Hotel, February 19. The great dining hall was filled to capacity with the leading men in the commercial, financial, social and educational life of the southwest for two and a half hours, these "captains of industry" during the rush hours of business routine, remained away from their own offices in order that they might actively participate in the great movement to make Kansas City the musical center of the vast territory west of the Mississippi. Addresses were made by the past president of the Chamber of Commerce, F. D. Crabbs; W. T. Kemper, chairman of the board of directors of the Commerce Trust Company and the Southwest National Bank of Commerce, the greatest banking institution west of Chicago, with deposits of more than eighty millions; B. A. Parsons, president of the Bank of Commerce; Cliff O. Jones, first vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce; Allen Hinchley, formerly of the Metropolitan Opera Company and now director of the vocal and opera departments of the Kansas City Conservatory of Music; and John A. Cowan, president of the conservatory. It was conceded by all that the enthusiasm at this meeting was only exceeded by the great meetings which had been held in the interest of the war campaigns during the last two years.  
F. D. Crabbs in a most dignified and eloquent manner called the attention of those present to the wonderful possibilities

ies of music as a civic asset. W. T. Kemper followed Mr. Crabbs in a complimentary eulogy on the development of the Kansas City Conservatory of Music and the devotion of its president, John A. Cowan, to his ideals and the high standard of efficiency he has established and maintained in the conservatory.

Mr. Cowan's Generous Gift

In part Mr. Kemper said: "I am not an orator, I cannot express my ideas in the eloquent manner in which the past president of the Chamber of Commerce has clothed his remarks. I asked for the privilege of speaking on this occasion because of the interest I have in the musical life of Kansas City and particularly in this Kansas City Conservatory of Music and to tell you what I know of Mr. Cowan. Before going any further, I want to say that my bank will pay Mr. Cowan a great deal higher salary than he is receiving from the Conservatory of Music. I want also to say, and I know that you gentlemen do not know it, that Mr. Cowan secured for himself a lease on the finest piece of property on Linwood Boulevard. A few days after he secured that lease he was offered a profit of \$20,000 for his lease, which he turned down. The next day, without any compensation whatever, he gave that lease and the Kansas City Conservatory of Music, which he had been struggling for nine years to establish in Kansas City, under hardships and privations of which you have no conception, to a board of trustees, of which I am one of the vice-presidents. Mr. Cowan did this in order that Kansas City might have, maintain and develop a great music school to be owned by the citizens of Kansas City and conducted for the benefit of the students throughout the southwest territory, a non-sectarian, non-profit sharing, non-money making organization, the surplus, if any, to be turned back into the institution to further the interests for which the conservatory was established."

"I want to tell you gentlemen, members of the Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City, that such a sacrifice on the part of Mr. Cowan for the benefit of the musical and educational development of our territory cannot and must not go unrecognized by the men and women whose fortunes have been made in the territory and upon whom must rest, to a great extent, the raising of the necessary funds for the higher development of our esthetic life."

Unusually Fine Voices Due to Western Climate

Mr. Hinchley followed Mr. Kemper and in a few brief remarks stated that he had studied under the greatest masters in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, London and New York and lately visited the leading studios of all the great musical centers in search of information concerning the standard of talent possessed by the students, and that nowhere in the world had he observed so many wonderful voices, such volume of tone, quality, color and natural resonance as he had found in the young men and women of this territory possessed. This, he added, existed in spite of the rapid climatic changes in Kansas City.

Mr. Cowan Makes Striking Address

In a stirring manner which held the attention of his hearers to the end, President Cowan said: "I feel today a great deal like the young man who had been going with the same girl for fifteen years. Shortly after he met her he proposed, she laughed at him, a year later he proposed again, she laughed at him, still later another proposal, she laugh came again, but not so heartily and after fifteen years she smiled and she finally consented to have the engagement announced but they were not then married. For fifteen years the Kansas City Con-

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kept down the overhead, how the printing let out by contracts would cost from 60 to 80 per cent. more than the printing now costs the conservatory under his method of conducting business affairs, etc. "Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Cowan, "you will understand such economy is practised only in connection with the business affairs of the institution. The educational affairs of the conservatory cannot be considered on a dollar and cents basis. Show me the educational institution in the United States that charges a normal sum for tuition, pays its professors an adequate living wage and in addition makes a profit for the owners or stockholders, and I will show you an institution of the third, fourth or fifth class. Successful educational institutions can only pay a profit in the educational developments of the students, and what is true in ordinary academic institutions is likewise true among the music schools, orchestras and grand opera companies. If the teachers are paid anywhere near what they are entitled to for their services, outside help must be secured in the form of endowments or public subscriptions to maintain the institution. The Kansas City Conservatory of Music cannot live, let alone pay a profit on the tuition fees it receives from its students. The highest grade of teachers only are secured and adequate compensation is paid for their services."

Faculty Composed of Best Teachers

"Now, gentlemen, I want to tell you something of the caliber of the men we have at the head of departments. In the management of these departments we have adopted the same business principles that are adopted by the great department stores of our city. The manager appoints a department head and he says to that department head: 'You have absolute charge of this department, it is up to you to so organize this department that it will be conducted according to the highest principles of business ethics and pay an adequate profit for the sum invested.' So I say to the heads of the various departments in the conservatory: 'Mr. Hinchley, you are at the head of vocal and opera departments. You must organize your forces that they will turn out students equal in musical efficiency to any of the students turned out by any of the great musical institutions of this country. If you cannot do so I shall have to get another man to conduct the department.' I say the same thing to Mr. Thompson, head of the piano department, and so with all of the heads of the various departments. Remember, gentlemen, I did not ask these departments to pay a dividend in cash. I demanded that the departments pay a dividend in efficiency and the artistic development of the various students who complete the course. They have a standard to go by, and to show you that they are maintaining that standard I have only to refer you to the leading positions held by the graduates of this school in the various educational institutions and in the operas, Chautauques and concert fields." Mr. Cowan further spoke of the needs of the conservatory, and he hoped the time would soon come when the Kansas City Conservatory of Music would have endowments of not less than two millions of dollars."

Chamber of Commerce Endorses

The Chamber of Commerce sincerely and heartily endorses the efforts of the conservatory and urges every member to take part in the campaign that is to be started immediately for the greater musical educational development of the southwest. Committees have been appointed to take charge of the advertising campaign setting forth the advantages offered students by the Kansas City Conservatory of Music. Suggestions were also made that since the board of directors of the conservatory was composed of some of the leading financiers of this section, it would be a good idea, when the time came, likewise for them to foster a greater Kansas City Symphony Orchestra and a Kansas City Grand Opera Company and let the Kansas City Conservatory of Music mother them all.

Mr. Cowan, here referred to, is a son of J. E. Cowan of Main street, St. John.

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