

Men Who Manage Commercial Affairs of Many Cities



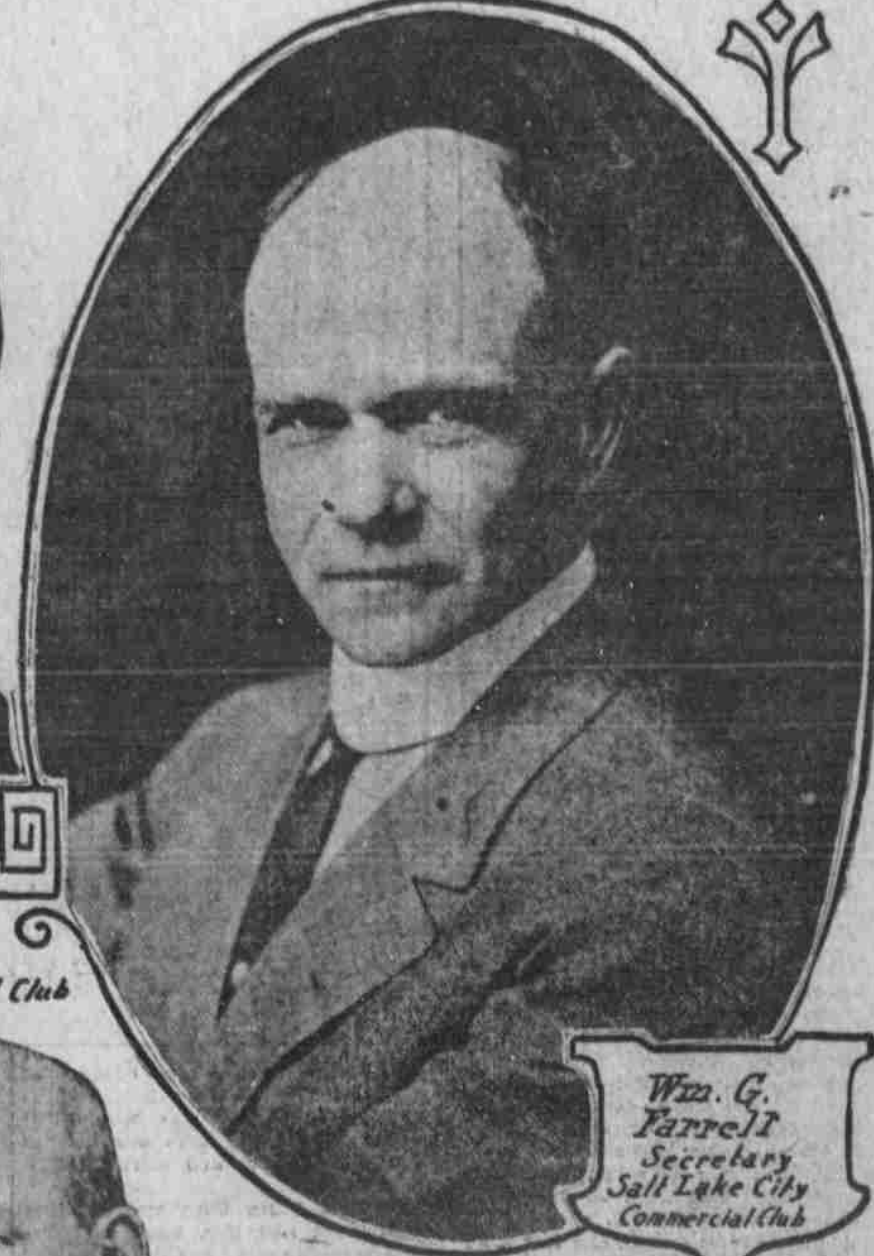
Gen. Sec. E. H. Clendening
Commercial Club
Kansas City,
Mo.



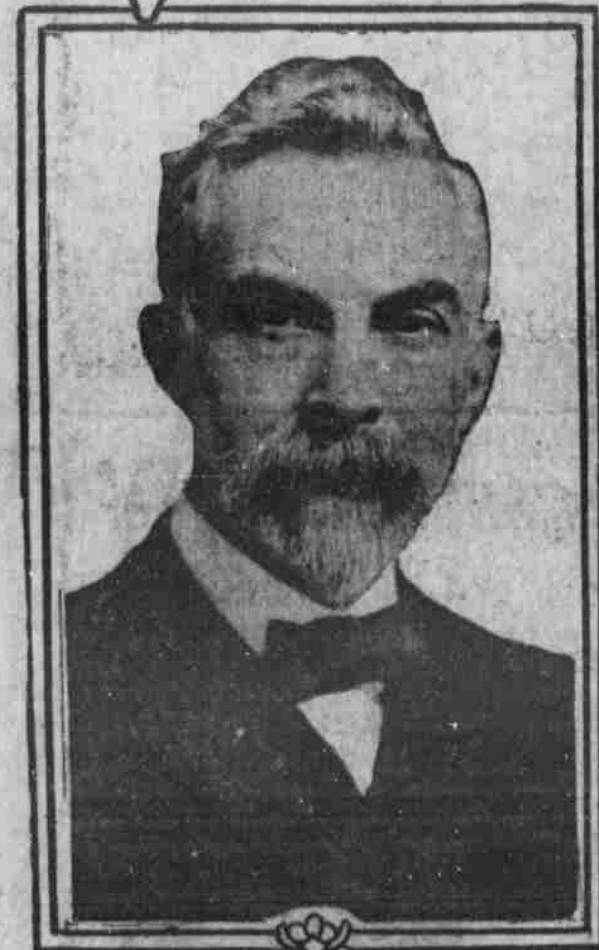
M. B. Trezevant
Gen. Mgr. New Orleans
Association of Commerce



Sec. H. V. Eva
Duluth Commercial Club



Wm. G. Farrell
Secretary
Salt Lake City
Commercial Club



Wm. Geo. Bruce
Sec. Merchants and Manufacturers Assn
Milwaukee, Wis.



J. H. Jenkins
Sec. Chamber of Commerce
Pueblo, Colo.



J. M. Guild
Commissioner Omaha Commercial Club



Joseph H. Beek
Gen. Sec. Association
of Commerce, St. Paul, Minn.



P. L. Cherrington of the Graduate
School of Business Administration
Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.



H. F. Miller, Business Manager
Chicago Association of Commerce

professional conferences?" said some to themselves. Four secretaries, with J. M. Guild of the Omaha Commercial club as the fifth, got their heads together some years ago and wondered about this thing. Each remembered that whenever he had met a commercial secretary anywhere, he had had much in common to discuss with him. He had many problems to thrash out with him. So these five men wondered some more, and the result of their wondering and planning was that in 1909 a meeting of commercial secretaries of the central states was called at Cincinnati. The call soon proved that many others had felt the need of conferences for they jumped the trains from every state included in the list and flew for Cincinnati. There the organization was perfected, and in 1912 the first real meeting with a good scheduled program was held in Milwaukee, the next year in Chicago, then in Indianapolis, until this year the fifth annual meeting is to be held in Omaha September 22 to 24, inclusive.

Almost simultaneously rose the other sectional associations, such as the Pacific States association, the Southern States, the New-England States and the Canadian. Some of these make all officers of commercial clubs eligible to membership. The Central makes only secretaries of commercial clubs eligible. This restriction is held to on the common sense ground that the problems of the secretary are not the problems of the president and treasurer of the club. The official's field is to devise and announce policies. The secretary's province is to wrestle with the problem of carrying out these policies. So the secretaries have troubles of their own, troubles that the other officials can never share with them.

So the secretaries swap ideas, not only of ways and means that have brought success, but also of methods and paths that have led to failure. Each profits by the other's failure as much as by his success.

Last January at the first annual dinner of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States at Washington, D. C., President Taft said: "As you go on forming these local boards of trade, and now this central one, the National Chamber of Commerce, you are making necessary a new profession, just as the Young Men's Christian association have made another. The functions of the secretaries of those associations were so peculiar and needed so much experience in order that they might be effective, that schools were created for the education of secretaries. This is what you will have to do in respect to the secretaries of the boards of trade and of chambers of commerce. You will have to have a school from which the new chambers of commerce can draw their secretaries, who will train the new membership in the way in which the organization can be built up, and give them a prac-

tical knowledge of how they can do what they are organized to do."

Following this suggestion both Harvard university and the University of Wisconsin have instituted courses for commercial secretaries. P. L. Cherrington, an instructor in the Harvard school for secretaries, is to be here for the meeting in Omaha and is to be on the program. Civics and Commerce in August, 1913, said concerning the work of the secretary of a commercial club: "He must not only be a man of enterprise and energy, but must possess a knowledge of the scope and mission of commercial organizations and carry out its aims and purposes. He must be familiar with all current economic and civic problems of the community and stand ready to propose, initiate and execute desirable innovations and improvements."

Aside from getting a bundle of valuable suggestions out of a meeting of secretaries who are located in a section of the country having common lines of pursuit, the secretaries carry away with them something that is a great asset in their future work. This asset is nothing other than the acquaintance they have made at the meeting. So when the Omaha secretary wants to write to the secretary in New York City in the future regarding important commercial business, he can address him as "Dear Bill, or Mike, or Frank, or John," who rubbed elbows with him at the banquet during the convention. The Wichita secretary can address the Milwaukee secretary, with whom he smoked a particularly rotten stogie while attending the conference. A certain intimacy is developed. And acquaintance is fundamental with the secretary.

Since there have been no schools of commercial secretaries thus far until the Wisconsin and the Harvard ones were instituted, the commercial secretaries up to this time have usually been selected from two classes of men, newspaper men and railroad men. These two classes of men seem to be peculiarly fitted to take hold of a job like this and make a success of it.

On account of the comprehensive program arranged for the Omaha meeting, many prominent commercial secretaries from great distances are coming to attend, although not members of the Central association. William G. Farrell, secretary of the Commercial club of Salt Lake City, is one of these who is making a long trip to be here. An-

other who comes perhaps as far as any other and is to be on the program is P. L. Cherrington of the graduate school of business administration, Harvard university, Cambridge, Mass. All the way from New Orleans comes M. B. Trezevant, general manager of the New Orleans Association of Commerce. He is president of the American Association of Commercial Executives, which will hold its annual session in St. Paul immediately after the adjournment of the Central Association of Secretaries at Omaha. M. V. Eva is to be here also from Duluth, Minn. He is secretary of the Commercial club at that place. Other prominent men will be here from New York and other eastern cities.

All the clubs in Omaha will be thrown open for the commercial secretaries and the courtesy of these organizations will be extended to the visitors. Invitations are constantly coming to the local Commercial club from the packing houses, the stock yards, and all large concerns in Omaha asking that the secretaries take time to visit these plants while in the city.

Here is an organization that doesn't believe much in addresses of welcome. "We are going to take it for granted that they are welcome," says Commissioner J. M. Guild of the Omaha Commercial club, and are going to spend very little or no time listening to long addresses of welcome." Monday evening though will be devoted to getting acquainted. Then Tuesday morning the first thing on the program will be the talk by M. B. Trezevant of New Orleans, on "Value of Acquaintance." Tuesday night J. H. Sunderland is to address the secretaries, and he will incorporate in his talk a little of an address of welcome. Also Mayor Dahlman has been asked to speak to them at this time. But in the meantime the men expect to do business on the assumption that they are welcome.

Wednesday evening on adjournment here, many of the secretaries will go at once to St. Paul, Minn., where the national association is to meet. The Sioux City Commercial club has wired an invitation for these to stop over at Sioux City in the evening for dinner as the guests of the Sioux City club. The adjournment in Omaha is to be arranged in time to allow the delegates to reach Sioux City in time to fill this engagement.

Some of the larger cities that are to be represented at the convention in Omaha are: Chicago, New York, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, Sioux City, Denver, Kansas City, Topeka, St. Joseph, St. Louis, Fort Dodge, Des Moines, Clinton, Toledo, Dayton, Grand Forks, Fargo, Belle Fourche, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Peoria, Winona, Madison, Milwaukee, Salt Lake, Wichita, Shenandoah, Kalamazoo, Sioux Falls, Dallas, New Orleans, Grand Rapids and a host of cities and towns of Iowa and Nebraska.

Speaking of the benefit to be derived from such conferences, J. M. Guild of the Omaha Commercial club says: "Attendance of a secretary at this meeting is the best possible investment a commercial club can make of its secretary's time and the club's money. This is a chance for a secretary to get a course of professional training in three days that will make a secretary an expert to that extent. If I could get every secretary in Nebraska to attend I would be going more for Nebraska than I can do in any other way. For if we can make twenty-five or thirty secretaries of commercial clubs in the state work more intelligently it will be a boon to the commonwealth."

SHORT talks and long discussions are to characterize the sessions of the Central Association of Commercial Secretaries which is to hold its fifth annual convention in Omaha Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. The secretaries believe in giving delegates a chance to spout their views, instead of giving the floor to one man with a paper to read as long as a boulevard. So the papers will be short. Then for the backfire. If the man reading the paper has made suggestions that have brought admirable results in St. Louis, the man from Des Moines will within a very few minutes be able to get the floor to tell whether or not the same suggestions have been found helpful in his town. If the man from Hastings, Neb., gives a bright suggestion as to carrying out commercial club policies in his town, the man from Chicago will, before he forgets, have an opportunity to say whether or not such a suggestion is of any value in handling the problems of a big city like the windy town.

For the commercial secretaries, or rather the secretaries of commercial clubs and chambers of commerce of the central states, are live wires and they believe in moving right along in their sessions. To this end they have planned their program with but one adjournment per day. This is the adjournment for sleep—the evening adjournment.

Oh, of course, these fellows eat, but their noon luncheons will be partaken of through round table discussions, so that business will be popping while watermelon and spring chicken suffer.

It is a new idea to have the commercial secretaries get together in association meetings. That is, it is not more than five years old in the central states. For years secretaries of commercial clubs plodded along taking care of their routine work without finding out how the other secretary of the other commercial club was working. The awakening came. They suddenly realized that they are a bunch of men of tremendous numbers in the United States. Also, they sensed the fact that their business is one that requires skill, tact and experience. In short, they discovered that their business is a profession, nothing less. The business of commercial secretary as a profession is less than ten years old.

"If we are professional men why not have pro-