

ROCKEFELLERS GOVERNMENT "O. K."

Champions of John D. Rockefeller Point With Pride to the Tribute Paid Him in an Annual Report Published by the Interior Department

The widely discussed tribute paid to John D. Rockefeller in a government report will be found on pages 1340, 1341 and 1342 of the report of the commissioner of education published in 1904 and issued under the form of the annual report of the department of the interior.

The government's tribute to Rockefeller is, in full, as follows:

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

"John D. Rockefeller was born in Richford, Tioga, county, N. Y., July 3, 1839. In 1853 his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where, at the age of fourteen, he united with the Erie Street Baptist church. The family, the school, and the church were the centers in which his character was formed. In his home prudence and economy prevailed; the Christian virtues were cultivated. Time was not wasted. At nine years of age he was raising turkeys and loaning money at 7 per cent. The alertness of his life began to be developed. In the church he was careful to attend the services not only upon the Sabbath, but midweek also, and he sought to stimulate others to fulfill religious obligations, especially to pay off a church debt. In school he came under the influence of such teachers as Miss Chamberlain (afterward Mrs. Lyons), Prof. E. White, Prof. Andrew Freese, teacher and superintendent. With these teachers the unfolding of his character became indicative of his future career. Finding that his circumstances demanded his leaving school before the high school course was finished, he found difficulty in securing the employment desired, and so anxious was he to have an opportunity for work that he engaged with Messrs. Hewitt & Tuttle without the assurance of a definite amount of pay, but only that he had an opportunity to try. He accomplished the tasks assigned him so well that he received some \$4 per week for the time employed. The next year he won a reward of \$25 per month, and at the end of fifteen months was given the position of bookkeeper and cashier at \$500 per year. Before he was nineteen he had decided to undertake business for himself, and, with a few hundred dollars of his own, aided with \$1,000 loaned by his father, for which he paid 10 per cent, he launched out, trusting to his industry, his energy, and Divine favor. He enjoyed no advantages but those afforded to like effort in the same community. Before he had begun to control capital largely he needed a small loan, which the banker, Mr. T. P. Handy, accorded him in his confidence of what he had already done and on the promise he gave. He met his obligations faithfully and adopted the habit of living within his income. Nothing was allowed to come within his observation which he did not question for some lesson for himself. He early found out that what he was to be must come out of his own ability and attainments and opportunities afforded him. His qualities were early manifested; he discriminated between the real and the false. He early became superintendent of his church Sunday school and remained in that responsibility thirty years. His fondness for children was very manifest. His own experience had taught him how it might be used.

"It is unfortunate that there is no more in literature to indicate more of the growth of his mind and of his methods of business and principles which he has adopted. He early began to appreciate the efforts to secure cheap lighting—illumination. Crude petroleum was offensive to the smell. He saw what was needed, and out of his school chemistry he was aided in devising methods of purifying the crude oil, saying to one of his teachers, 'I think I can relieve this substance of its offensive smell.' His efforts were successful. Whale oil was disappearing from the market; the new substance was soon widely demanded by the trade; fabulous results followed his efforts.

"At the age of twenty-five Mr. Rockefeller married the daughter of H. B. and Maria Spelman, Miss Laura C. Spelman, with whom he had become acquainted in school as a girl of excellent sense and refinement and marked scholarship, with like home training as himself.

"As his income increased he began to use it according to the fundamental principles upon which his character was based. At first his benefactions were limited to his church denomination, but later his gifts have been freely bestowed

outside of his church limits in aid of worthy objects. His methods of giving may be said to be discriminating. In order to quicken the gifts of others, he often promised a half of what was called for if others would give the other half. In this way he has added greatly to the benefactions for different objects. No effort is made here to trace the variety of his gifts. There has been a natural recognition of relations. A worthy teacher who married a minister receives unannounced annual gifts together with a house for her residence. In a multitude of unseen ways like these has his aid been bestowed on worthy objects. Unostentatiously he pays the expenses of a reunion of his school associates. Mr. J. G. W. Cole, president of the chamber of commerce, when announcing Mr. Rockefeller's gift to the city of Cleveland, remarks: 'His modesty is equal to his liberality, and he is not here to share with us this celebration. The streams of his benevolence flow largely in hidden channels, unseen and unknown to men, but when he founds a university in Chicago, or gives a beautiful park to Cleveland, with native forests and shady groves, rocky ravines, sloping hillsides and level valleys, cascades and running brooks and still pools of water, close by our homes, open and easy of access to all of our people, such things can not be hid. They belong to the public and history, and the gift itself is for the people and for posterity.'

"A considerable number of citizens afterwards called at the Rockefeller residence, and in response to their expressions of gratitude Mr. Rockefeller said: 'This is our centennial year. The city of Cleveland has grown to great proportions and has prosperity far beyond any of our anticipations. What will be said by those who come after us when, one hundred years hence, this city celebrates its second anniversary and reference is made to you and to me? Will it be said that this or that man had accumulated great treasures? No; all that will be forgotten. The question will be, What did we do with our treasures? Did we or did we not use them to help our fellow-men? This will be forever remembered.'

"He has appeared to discover the possibilities of Chicago as a great center of civilization in need of a great university to lift its interests. He is said to have reached the amount of \$15,000,000 in his gifts to that institution. Among other benefactions may be mentioned his gifts of \$200,000 to medical research; at one time to Brown university, \$500,000, besides smaller sums; Mount Holyoke college, \$50,000 for a hall of residence and \$2,000 for a skating rink; Granville university, \$200,000; Vassar college, for general endowment, \$25,000; for a building for recreation, \$100,000; for Strong hall, \$35,000; for Davidson house, \$110,000, besides several thousand dollars for sundry objects connected with the college; for Spelman seminary, Atlanta, which bears the name of his wife's father, nearly \$285,000, and during the last year a loan of over \$94,000; Barnard college, \$250,000; Columbia university, \$100,000; Horace Mann School, \$50,000; Tuskegee, \$10,000; Rochester, \$100,000; Newton Theological seminary, \$150,000; Des Moines, \$50,000; Wellesley, \$100,000; and in aid of education in the south recently, \$1,000,000.

"It is of interest that the training of the family is yielding results like those displayed in his own character. His son, a graduate of Brown university, is already walking in the ways of his father, and the whole household enlists in the plan of benefactions which he is working out and which is promising more than is already accomplished."

DID ROCKEFELLER WRITE IT?

Referring to "the government sketch of Rockefeller," the Springfield (Mass.) Republican, says: "The laudatory biographical sketch of John D. Rockefeller which the United States government has lately been accused of publishing in an alleged document entitled 'Educational Benefactors,' has been run down and definitely located. It may be found in the bulky second volume of the last annual report of the United States commissioner of education, beginning on page 1340. A score or more sketches of men who have given large sums of money to education are printed, and among them is the sketch of Mr. Rockefeller. The authorship of the entire lot is credited in the volume to John Eaton, formerly United States commissioner of education. The article on Mr.

Rockefeller possesses uncommon interest at this time, when severe attacks are made upon his character, and for the benefit of the reader substantially the whole of it is reprinted in another column.

"The radical difference between Mr. Eaton's sketch of the oil millionaire, and the blistering articles on the same subject that have lately appeared in a well-known popular magazine scarcely needs to be pointed out. The government publication is blissfully innocent of the fact that Mr. Rockefeller's connection with oil in America is the foundation of heated controversy. 'It is unfortunate,' says the government writer, 'that there is no more in literature to indicate more of the growth of his mind and of his methods of business and principles which he has adopted.' Yet the late Henry D. Lloyd's 'Wealth versus Commonwealth,' a book devoted entirely to the Rockefeller 'methods of business,' had been published fully ten years before this wonderful sketch was produced; and as for Miss Tarbell's work in exposition of Standard Oil practices, principles and ethics nothing need be said, for there remains an abundance of 'literature' concerning Mr. Rockefeller's activities in business to be found in state and federal reports of official investigations into the goings-on in the oil trade the past thirty years. The drollery of the passage on the building up of the Rockefeller fortune is thus doubly apparent, coming as it does from a solemn and heavy government report. The paragraph deserves to become a classic:

It is unfortunate that there is no more in literature to indicate more of the growth of his mind and of his methods of business and principles which he has adopted. He early began to appreciate the efforts to secure cheap lighting—illumination. Crude petroleum was offensive to the smell. He saw what was needed, and out of his school chemistry he was aided in devising methods of purifying the crude oil, saying to one of his teachers: "I think I can relieve this substance of its offensive smell." His efforts were successful. Whale oil was disappearing from the market; the new substance was soon widely demanded by the trade. Fabulous results followed his efforts.

"No one would dispute the fact of the 'fabulous results,' but is it not a bit inadequate to sum up the history of the dearly beloved Standard Oil company as a mere case of smell and the young Rockefeller, armed with his chemistry textbook? It is a beautiful little story—the youth saying to his teacher that he could render petroleum odorless—and the United States government may be congratulated upon its discriminating effort to reveal Mr. Rockefeller as one of the great scientific discoverers of the age. Yet was that all?

"It would, perhaps, be cruel to criticize this extraordinary sketch at other points. Yet one is tempted to inquire whether it was actually written by a man who was once United States commissioner of education, or whether the 'copy' came from Mr. Rockefeller's own hand. There is something in its literary style that smells of the oil king. Is it probable that John Eaton would have used the words, 'he launched out, trusting to his industry, energy and divine favor?' Mr. Rockefeller was always trusting to 'divine favor' in his business enterprises, and the employment of the expression, which so much reminds one of his addresses in Sunday school, raises the suspicion that Mr. Rockefeller was the real author of this sketch. The article, too, is written so clumsily that one hesitates to believe that Mr. Eaton actually composed it. Here is a passage that increases our reluctance to hold Mr. Eaton primarily responsible: 'He early became superintendent of his church Sunday school and remained in that responsibility thirty years. His fondness for children was very manifest. His own experience had taught him how it might be used.' How what might be used? His fondness for children? Such awkwardness of expression could hardly have emanated from John Eaton.

"It has been intimated somewhere that Mr. Rockefeller furnished the 'material' of this sketch. Will not the bureau of education inform us kindly whether the sketch was printed in the very language that Mr. Rockefeller himself used in shaping the 'material' that he sent to the government officials. If we have here a real autobiography its value can not be overestimated."