

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF
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THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC PAPER IN WEBSTER COUNTY

Frank Cowden Gives Interesting Report

The following is the report of the meeting of the secretaries of the various Commercial Clubs of the state, which was held at Lincoln in May. The report was furnished by Secretary Frank Cowden, of the Red Cloud Commercial Club, and read before that organization at an open meeting the latter part of May, and which for lack of space we were unable to publish last week:

Mr. President and Members of the Chamber of Commerce of Red Cloud - Gentlemen:

As your secretary and delegate to the annual convention of the Nebraska State Association of Commercial Clubs, I beg leave to make the following report:

The convention met in Lincoln at the rooms of the Lincoln Commercial Club, Wednesday and Thursday, May 5 and 6. About seventy-five towns were represented.

The first session was called to order on Wednesday at 2 p. m. by Mr. Ross L. Hammond, the state president, Mr. Willard F. Bailey of Kearney is state secretary. After an address of welcome by Homer K. Burkett, president of the Lincoln club, the regular business of the meeting began, the first business on the program being the roll call of secretaries and representatives of the different clubs from the cities

from over the state. The roll call proved most interesting to me, and, although I found on listening to the various responses that the Red Cloud Chamber of Commerce was right in line with most clubs of the state and that our ideas were as progressive, I learned that a good many clubs were putting these ideas into effect to the great good and advantage of the cities they represented. I found the association composed of a fine, intelligent class of men, who are conscientiously working for the upbuilding and advancement of their communities. In listening to these reports I learned a good many things that I thought would be interesting to our own members and citizens generally. One thing is certain, and that is the towns that are making the greatest advancement are the towns that have a united set of business men and good, live commercial clubs. It took about four hours for the roll call, which told of Nebraska's progress along the lines of public improvement and business betterment.

Albion reported a membership of one hundred and eighty-six, who devoted almost the entire past year to the good roads movement. They had lectures by qualified people on road dragging with the result that the roads are the best in the state. They also offered prizes of from ten to fifty dollars for the best work in dragging and keeping up the highways.

W. D. Fisher, secretary from Alliance, reported a membership of two hundred and eighty-four. This club has done wonders in advertising Alliance, and the secretary claimed a greater advancement in the last five years than any town in the state. They have a graduated scale of dues beginning with six dollars per year and going as high as fifty and seventy-five dollars per year, and in some cases as high as one hundred and seventy-five dollars. This gives the club a neat sum to work with and does away with

any soliciting among business men during the year. This money was spent for good roads, silo talks and farm demonstration in order to assist their local farmers in every way possible, as the country around Alliance is not as good as our country and has less rainfall. Alliance also maintains at all times an elaborate agricultural display at the Railway Exchange in Chicago at a very small expense and claims that this has been a profitable means of advertising Alliance and the surrounding country, hundreds of letters having been received from people who have seen the display at Chicago.

Other towns reported various enterprises, such as monthly and semi-monthly get-together dinners, good roads work, supporting a good musical organization and backing chautauqua assemblies for the entertainment and education of their people. The secretary from Fremont made a splendid address and told of the wonderful good accomplished by their credit department, boys' banquets, home patronage banquet, parade and free picture shows for their patrons.

It was really an inspiration to me and I would be glad if every member of this club could attend these meetings and see what is possible for Red Cloud to do and what it could do with a united effort on the part of our citizens and members of the club. We are as fortunately situated as any city of our size in Nebraska. We have just as good citizens as any city in Nebraska, and we should wake up to our possibilities and opportunities.

At the Wednesday evening session Dr. George B. Condra of the state university and Secretary W. R. Meltor of the state board of agriculture divided the time with two illustrated lectures:

The following program for the second day's session began at 10 a. m.:

"The Farmers, the Town and the Commercial Club"—Address by C. H. Gustafson of Mead, president Nebraska State Farmers' Union.

"Co-operation of the Railroads and Their Patrons"—Address by Byron Clark of Omaha, solicitor U. B. & Q. railway.

Discussion. "Co-operation in the Department of Nebraska Manufacturing"—By J. W. Stenmetz, Nebraska City, vice president Nebraska Manufacturers' Association.

Mr. Gustafson, president of the Nebraska State Farmers' Union, created an uproar by declaring that the farmers of the state are tired of having their affairs interfered with by the city people. He said: "We object to their sending out dairy trains and seed corn specials and farm demonstrators. If they insist on doing this in the future we will send city demonstrators to tell them how to do their work. The merchants and bankers don't know any more about running their business than the farmers do about running theirs." When asked who started the farm demonstrator business, the farmer or the business man, he said he didn't care who started it. "We don't want any more of it. What good does it do the farmer? The minute you increase farm production, you decrease the price paid for that production. We are continually hearing that we ought to make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. When we do that we only make conditions worse. It doesn't improve matters any to turn our farms over to the big land owners."

The discussion for this program was to bring out the community plan—a plan to bring the farmers and business men in closer communion—and Mr. Gustafson was called on to bring out the farmers' side of the question. His speech was very radical and the association got very little comfort out of his address. He was asked a great many questions by different members of the association, who tried to impress upon him that the intention of the cities was the best and they were spending their money in an honest effort to help the condition of the farmer generally and benefit the state as a whole. Mr. Gustafson seemed to take the stand that everything a town did for the farmers was for selfish purposes only.

Mr. Byron Clark made a plea for co-operation between the railroads and the public. The Burlington, he said, is doing its best to give good service, but it is seriously handicapped by the attitude of railway commissioners, state legislatures and so-called reformers. Mr. Clark claimed that if the railroads were given a little more freedom they would succeed in providing better depots, better freight houses, better crossing and better all-round service.

The afternoon session was given up to an address by T. N. Wetzen on "The Trenton Plan." Mr. Wetzen is a Trenton, Mo., business man and has made the community plan a special study, and is lecturing all over the United States and trying to bring the towns and farmers into closer communion. Mr. Wetzen made a great impression on the convention, and I have his speech, which I will be glad to give to any member of the club, or it can be read to the club if they so desire.

After attending this meeting, I am sure we are justified in keeping up this splendid organization and hope our membership will continue to increase, and believe every live business man should be a member and help build up Red Cloud and Webster county. There seems to be a feeling over the country generally that great prosperity and wonderful progress is in store for the United States. All eyes are turned towards America and thousands of worthy people are willing and anxious to become citizens of our country. What is Red Cloud going to do to get its share of the great prosperity when it comes? The thing to do is to advertise. We have the town, the location, the churches, the schools and a splendid citizenship to attract the best classes. Let's get together, not next week nor next month, but tonight, right now.

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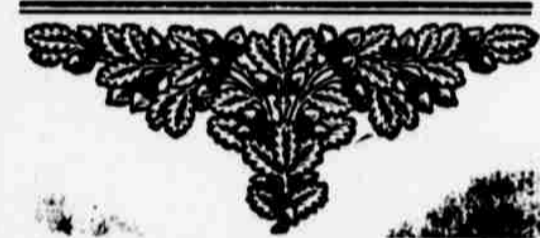
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