Chamber Report Shows Service of Great Value

Commercial Body Makes Gain in Financial Condition and Good Will Created.

By FORD E. HOVEY,
Chairman Executive Committee.

It is gratifying to me to be able to report on some of the outstanding accomplishments of the Chamber of Commerce in 1924. In mentioning them we must not forget that they are the result of the generous co-operation of every member of the chamber.

The improvement which the chamber has made financially is of great importance, because freedom from financial difficulties gives this organization a better opportunity to serve the community as it should. Every membership in the chamber helps to give this financial freedom, and while some members of necessity may be more active than others in the work that has gone ahead, nevertheless we can all share alike in a feeling of pride.

This does no mean, however, that the chamber has done all that can be done. While it has made a good showing in the last year, it can, and will, make a better showing in 1925.

Commends Membership.

In issuing this report I wish to commend the membership as a whole, the committees which have taken an active part in the work done, and the staff of the chamber whose task it is to attend to the infinite detail that is a part of Chamber of Commerce activity.

The chamber could not have had a more capable and inspiring leader than John L. Kennedy, who has always given his energy and time to upbuilding this community. The progress of the chamber during the last year is very largely attributable to Kennedy.

The Omaha chamber is fortunate in having as its commissioner Clarke G. Powell, under whose leadership it has greatly progressed in public favor and financial stability.

The work of Montagu A. Tancock, manager of the publicity bureau, has been outstanding and the results obtained in conventions and the publicity for Omaha has shown the publicity bureau, under his management, to be one of the most valuable departments in the organization.

C. E. Childe, manager of the traffic bureau, has conducted his bureau in a way that has brought national recognition to him and has saved thousands of dollars to Omaha shippers and consumers.

The woman's division, by taking charge of the Chamber of Commerce dining room, has rendered an invaluable service in a most efficient manner. Relieved of this burden, the Chamber has been able to direct its attention more efficiently in other fields. The woman's division also brought credit to the Chamber by underwriting and successfully sponsoring the Omaha Symphony orchestra and by putting on, at popular prices, five concerts at the Municipal auditorium.

Bureau of Publicity.

The bureau of publicity during the year conducted a display advertising campaign in the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, Sales Manager and other publications, as the result of which, more than 6,000 inquiries were received concerning Omaha from all parts of the world.

The bureau also conducted an advertising campaign in 133 newspapers in Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri and Wyoming.

More than 300 editors of Nebraska and western Iowa were entertained in Omaha as guests of the bureau of publicity.

This bureau also conducted a direct by mail campaign advertising Omaha. This campaign was recommended by an advertising expert, speaking before the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, as "the best used by any city in the United States."

The bureau is one of the few in the United States that keeps its manufacturing and wholesale statistics up to date. The figures for 1924 have just been compiled. They will be published in book form and 100,000 will be circulated throughout the nation.

The publicity news bureau has sent a story a week to 700 newspapers in Omaha trade territory, to 700 metropolitan dailies and to the national press service. Two hundred and sixty-five Nebraska papers have published regularly each week the publicity bureau service called "Notes from the Metropolis." Several stories a week have been sent to 400 Nebraska papers. Special articles, photographs and miscellaneous data have been sent to nearly 100 magazines, encyclopaedias, feature writers and others.

Speakers' Bureau.

The bureau has maintained a speakers' bureau and speakers for Omaha have attended various functions in the trade territory as representatives from this city. An average of one speaker a week has been provided in this way. This activity has done a great deal towards creating friendships between Omaha and the surrounding territory.

A new convention record has been established with 172 conventions in 1924. The previous record was made last year when there were 163 conventions. Up to the year 1920 Omaha's conventions record was 117 meetings in one year. Conventions secured during the past year to be held in 1925 promise the greatest convention year yet. In 1925, in addition to the American Legion, there will be the Disabled Veterans of the World War, six other national conventions, a large number of regional conventions and more than 100 state conventions.

During the last year the publicity bureau staff registered 44,000 people, provided meeting places and badges for all conventions held and gave the closest co-operation in making the meetings successful. In addition to conventions the publicity bureau met and entertained a score of delegations passing through Omaha, and arranged tours through Omaha plants for 10 groups of school children from various parts of the trade territory.

Traffic Bureau.

The traffic bureau, whose task it is to protect Omaha's transportation interests, was directly responsible for saving Omaha shippers $185,000.

The bureau filed a case before the Interstate Commerce commission which if successful will put Omaha in as favorable a position to secure industries and trade as Chicago and St. Louis enjoy at present.

The traffic bureau is responsible for the organization of the Central Western Regional Advisory board. With headquarters in Omaha, this organization represents shippers of Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and Idaho, in seeking transportation service.

Due to the traffic bureau's activity in legislative matters C. E. Childe, manager of the bureau, was elected vice president of the National Industrial Traffic league.

During the year the traffic bureau quoted 7,000 rates, issued 78 circulars and received and filed 35,135 tariffs.

The traffic bureau preserved to Omaha shippers relative rate equality with Nebraska competitors and obtained a 15 per cent reduction in express rates throughout the west, saving Omaha express shippers $250,000 annually.

Rate Reductions.

It obtained reductions on rates of bi-carbonate of soda from the east to Omaha. It prevented large increases in transportation charges on furniture between points east of Chicago and Omaha. It prevented increased rates on linoleum and floor covers and stopped increases of cost on sand and stone from Nebraska to Iowa.

It obtained suspension in increased rates on hay from Omaha to New Orleans and southern lower Mississippi valley points. It aided in obtaining passage of congressional acts permitting shippers to file claims for overcharges after the lapse of the statutory period. It obtained a reduction of 6 cents a ton on south Kansas and Missouri slack coal to Omaha, saving Omaha consumers $60,000 a year.

It secured suspension of increased class rates between Omaha and points in Missouri and secured withdrawal of increased rates averaging $10 to $15 a car on rough granite and marble from eastern quarries to Omaha, and obtained suspension of proposed increased rates ranging from 2½ to 11 cents per 100 pounds on cattle from the southwest to Omaha.

The bureau also prosecuted formal complaint before the interstate commerce commission in behalf of 30 Omaha companies.

Agricultural Bureau.

Some of the more important activities of the agricultural committee during the last year include the following:

Endorsed and strongly urged the work of eradicating tuberculosis among the cattle of Nebraska.

Requested the executive committee to appropriate $250 in prizes to the boys' and girls' clubs.

In January and February the committee organized the Nebraska Dairy Development society for the purpose of encouraging the dairy industry throughout the state.

The committee raised in subscriptions for a five-year dairy campaign $47,500 from among the business men of Omaha. This Dairy Development society has produced widespread interest among the farmers and dairymen of the state and the results of the first year's work have been satisfactory.

A farmers' dairy special train was sponsored by the Dairy Development society in September, and carried nearly 100 farmers from Omaha to the important dairy districts of Wisconsin and to the national dairy show at Milwaukee.

Joining with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad company, the College of Agriculture at Lincoln and the breeders of dairy cows in the state, the Dairy Development society assisted in the distribution of 31 purebred sires in 30 counties of the state. These purebred sires were given in even exchange for scrub sires, and the interest was so great all along the line the attendance running from 1,500 to 5,000—that this one effort alone will doubtless be worth more than the entire cost of the dairy development work thus far. More than 70,000 people, mostly farmers, viewed this train and were very enthusiastic over the donations of purebred sires.

The committee, with the assistance of Earl G. Maxwell, county agent, put on the usual farm tour of Douglas county in October.

Requested the executive committee to urge upon President Coolidge the appointment of some middle western man on the farm investigation committee; also urged the appointment of a capable man from the central west as a successor to the late Henry C. Wallace, secretary of agriculture.

Took up the proposed 20th amendment to the constitution, known as the "child labor" amendment, from an agricultural standpoint and invited speakers to discuss the question from both sides.

Completed the raising of $6,000 among the business men of Omaha as a cash donation to the Central Nebraska Supplemental Water association.

Municipal Affairs Committee.

The municipal affairs committee has kept in close touch with Omaha's municipal needs, urging efficient operation of the suburban police patrol system inaugurated last year, and studying the city's financial problems.

This committee was largely instrumental in passing the city charter amendment, providing for proper settlement of municipal obligations at maturity, assuring fair competitive methods in city paving and in other ways rendering more efficient the expenditure of public moneys. The committee also was active in putting over the bond issue for the proposed river drive and for the modernizing of Omaha schools.

Civic Improvement Committee.

This committee investigated the cities' methods of assessments for paving and other municipal improvements and played an important part in the passage of the city charter amendment, permitting the paving of boulevards under the same system that applies to street paving. It has investigated the possibility of condemning property for street widening and has been active throughout the year in assuring Omaha's adaptability for future growth. Representatives of this committee and municipal affairs committee appeared before the city council to protest the rejection of low bids for paving a large number of improvement districts. As a result of this protest about 60 per cent of the work has been awarded at a low price, all other bids being rejected.

RETAIL SALES GAIN 5 PER CENT

Omaha, the leading retail center between Chicago and Denver, experienced a substantial growth as a retail city in 1924. Sales in 1924, according to the Associated Retail bureau, will aggregate more than $157,500,000, or 5 per cent more than 1923. The aggregate sales in 1923 amounted to $150,000,000.

Rum Runner Slain.

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 31.—One rum runner was killed in a battle today with prohibition officers at Newport beach, near here, a prominent yachtsman arrested and $35,000 worth of bonded liquor, two automobiles and the schooner "Nigger Boy," seized.

1924 Wholesale Total in Omaha Is $479,689,434

Volume for Year is $3,391,441 Below 1923 Figure; Many Products Not Included.

The volume of Omaha wholesale business was $3,391,441 less in 1924 than in 1923, according to figures compiled by the bureau of publicity of the Chamber of Commerce. The figures follow:

Agricultural implements	$ 8,948,790
Autos and trucks	37,715,990
Auto tires and accessories	26,950,585
Bakery products	2,729,190
Bakery supplies	1,716,000
Beverages	704,000
Boots and shoes	3,265,000
Boxes and bags	3,930,000
Building material	14,066,990
Butter and creamery products	918,000
Candy	2,161,000
Cereals	4,036,000
Chemicals and drugs	2,659,723
China and glassware	1,926,000
Cigars and tobacco	8,804,250
Clothing and furnishings	7,521,588
Coal and coke	20,476,735
Commission and produce	9,936,655
Concrete and cement	4,748,260
Cooperage	704,000
Cordage and twine	1,405,320
Crackers	6,948,000
Surgical and dental supplies	1,136,800
Dry goods and notions	17,606,000
Electrical goods	8,525,700
Fish and oysters	1,578,000
Flour and mill products	17,930,336
Fruit and vegetables	14,453,000
Furnaces and supplies	3,017,215
Furniture and bedding	5,150,000
Furs, hides and wool	2,195,000
General merchandise	18,732,220
Groceries	[illegible]
Hardware	[illegible]
Harness and saddles	900,000
Hats, caps and gloves	967,000
Hay and feed	2,710,000
Ice cream	917,670
Jewelry	1,704,000
Junk and paper	1,471,405
Leather and shoe findings	926,000
Light and power	4,525,000
Lumber and mill work	28,652,700
Machinery and supplies	13,442,155
Metal products	2,180,000
Millinery	930,000
Miscellaneous	4,179,257
Motion picture films	4,000,000
Office fixtures and supplies	3,429,595
Oil and grease	30,341,818
Optical goods	880,000
Paint and glass	9,932,000
Paper, books and stationery	11,698,000
Phonographs and talking machines	1,590,000
Plumbing and heating	7,343,840
Rubber goods	2,350,000
Seeds	1,530,000
Sporting goods	1,184,260
Stock food and serum	2,279,000
Stock and bank fixtures	831,000
Structural steel	2,969,466
Tea, coffee and spices	3,234,000
Tractors	1,484,180
Wall paper	950,000
Wooden and stone ware	949,505
Total, 1924	$479,689,434
Total, 1923	$483,689,434
Year's decrease	$ 3,391,441

The wholesalers employed 10,752 persons and had an aggregate payroll amounting to $21,990,000.

The above figures do not include products manufactured in Omaha and sold by the factories. Packing house products amounting to $198,393,582; creamery products amounting to $24,331,395; structural steel amounting to $2,082,534 and macaroni amounting to $1,540,000 are among items of this kind which are listed under "manufacturing" and therefore are omitted from the items listed under "wholesaling."

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