

Governors of Ak-Sar-Ben on the Future of the Organization



CHARLES H. PICKENS
PRESIDENT



A. C. SMITH
VICE PRESIDENT



W. J. PENFOLD
SECRETARY



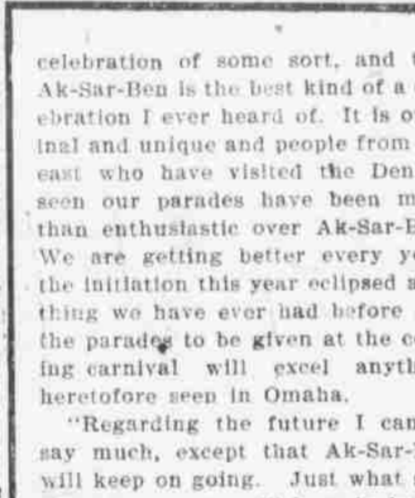
W. L. YETTER
TREASURER



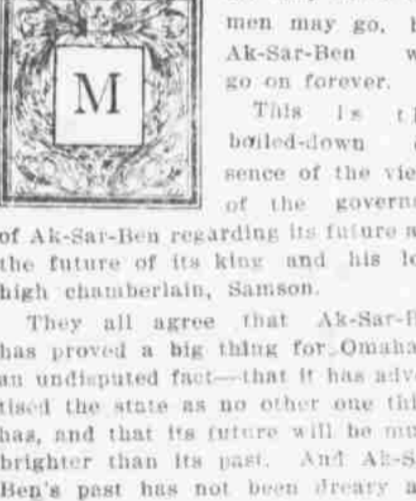
GOULD DIETZ



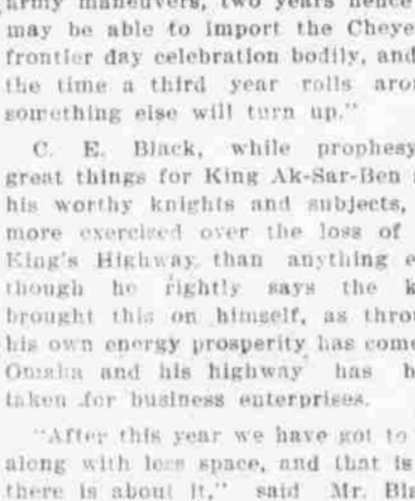
CHARLES E. BLACK



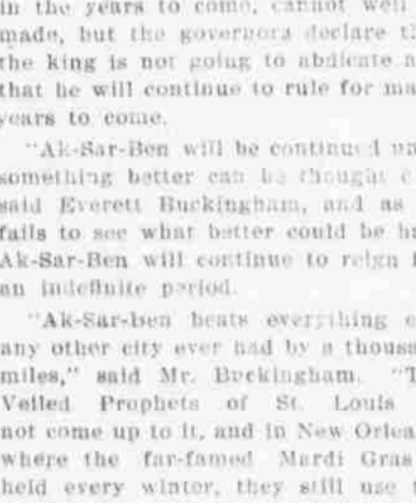
J. C. ROOT



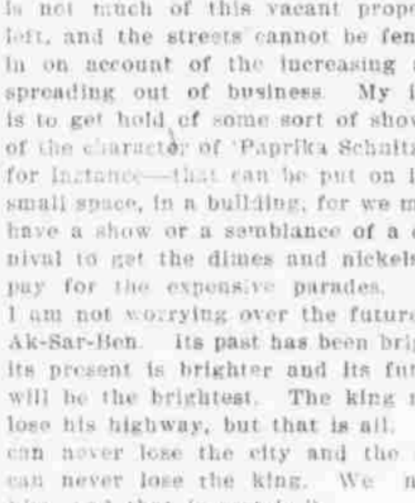
EMIL BRANDEIS



G. R. COURTNEY



E. BUCKINGHAM



JOSEPH BARKER

you cannot take away the affection in the heart of every Omahan, for Ak-Sar-Ben the Mighty, for he is mighty and has done mighty things for Omaha," said Mr. Boston. "I do not know just what will be the future of the King of Quivers, but it will be grand and glorious and no mistake. Probably next year we will have something of a frontier celebration, coupled with the maneuvers of the troops, but nothing has as yet been definitely determined upon. We are concerned about the present, not the future, just now.

"But no man can tell me that Ak-Sar-Ben is at an end and that his glorious reign should cease and the king abdicate in favor of some one or something else. They tried to tell us that we had reached the limit in initiations, that everything had been thought of and that nothing new could be put on. But look at this year. We have had the best, most original and most taking initiation of any, and while the Elks, Masons and other secret societies could not get enough members together to hold a lodge meeting, the king's Den has been packed every Monday night, no matter how hot the weather might be.

"Ak-Sar-Ben is here to stay and more glorious things await him in the future than he ever dreamed of, I believe."

Educational features are to be put to the fore in the future, according to C. H. Pickens. Samson is not necessarily to become a pedagogue and his knights all school ma'ams, but all the same Ak-Sar-Ben will attempt to put on programs which will be of an instructive nature. This first one will be next year.

"I believe that the maneuvers of the government troops will be the best kind of an educational feature," said Mr. Pickens. "More soldiers will be brought together here in Omaha, probably, than at any other western city in recent years. Their drills will be educational, entertaining, amusing and interesting in the extreme. People will come many hundreds of miles to see the soldiers."

Mr. Pickens is also somewhat concerned about a highway for the king in the future, but said he will have a highway as in the past.

"If some people do not like the carnival, those some do not have to go to it," said Mr. Pickens. "But the carnival meets with the approval of the great mass of people is proven by the gate receipts."

"Something new in initiation will be found for next year and the same old king with entirely new amusements will continue."

Gould Dietz can talk of nothing else but the soldiers next year. "No one has any idea what a big thing this is or will be," said he. "Ten to twelve thousand soldiers, taking a couple of hours to pass a given point, will make a parade that cannot be scoffed at. And then think of the maneuvers, the drills, that will be given right here in the city as well as at the forts. And King Ak-Sar-Ben got the soldiers. Mr. Pickens, early last summer took the matter up with Secretary of War Dickenson and the soldiers will

"Great and glorious have been the reigns of the last fourteen kings of Ak-Sar-Ben, more glorious and still greater will be the reigns of the next fourteen kings, and I thoroughly believe there will be many more than fourteen. You ask about the future; well, look at the past. Each successive year has been better than the preceding year, therefore it stands to reason that future years will be better than the present."

Mere diamonds are to be placed in the diadem to be worn by future kings of Ak-Sar-Ben, and as the years go by his lord high chamberlain, Samson, will become a still higher functionary, according to Charles W. Boston, another one of the governors.

"Take away the king's highway, take away his carnival if you will, but

provements would be made or what changes effected, though he said that it is a foregone conclusion that the king's future is bright.

"We have no highway, or will have none, and that is the principal trouble," said Mr. Courtney, "but the highway and the carnival is not all, and the reign of Ak-Sar-Ben and Samson will go on just the same. The king has captured the city and he is not going to abdicate yet a while. The new John L. Kennedy building at Nineteenth and Douglas streets will prohibit the use of the present highway after the present year. We cannot close Douglas street and thereby keep people away from this new building. The new Brandeis theater building has taken half of the block of ground on which stands the city hall and the Bee building, and this is another spike in the old carnival grounds. There is no use in talking about going out to the Vinton street park or some other location away from the business center for a carnival, as we cannot get the crowds out there. But sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, and we will meet future difficulties as we have met them in the past—with a smile that always wins."

The carnival is but incidental to the great work of Ak-Sar-Ben, and if the highway is taken from the king it will not make so much material difference, according to Emil Brandeis. Mr. Brandeis, however, agrees with the other governors that the highway and the carnival have played an important part in Ak-Sar-Ben in bringing in receipts and helping to defray the expenses of the parades, but the carnival is not everything by a long shot and the loss of the highway will not mean that the king will have to abdicate.

"The knights of Ak-Sar-Ben are not in the carnival business—they are concerned in boosting Omaha, and the carnival is only incidental," said Mr. Brandeis. "Great things have been done by the knights under the leadership of Samson, and many people have heard of Omaha through the Ak-Sar-Ben who otherwise would hardly have known that Omaha was on the map. But Ak-Sar-Ben is not only a good thing for Omaha, but it is a good thing for the entire state, and has advertised the entire state."

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bring thousands of people to Omaha." Mr. Dietz favors some kind of a pioneer day celebration to go along with the soldiers' maneuvers, in this agreeing with others of the board of governors. None of the board members have given much thought, seemingly, to the Ak-Sar-Ben of 1911 and future years—all are concerned with the Ak-Sar-Ben of 1909 and a few preliminary plans for 1910, for they can not wait until 1910 to prepare the program for that year.

With the large den and the entire block of ground on which it stands paid for and clear of debt, Joseph Barker, the governor in charge of the annual Ak-Sar-Ben ball, does not worry so much about the loss of the highway as some of the other governors.

"We are going to have the finest balls this year, and if the balls on successive years are better than on preceding years, why would it not stand to reason that in the future they will be still better? The children's ball this year will be the prettiest thing you ever saw and the Japanese tea party will be a dream.

"But about the future, the prospects for another year. Fine, I say. It is practically certain that we will get the maneuvers of the government troops and that is worth going miles to see, and we will of course have other attractions. The knights of Ak-Sar-Ben were never known to fall down on anything yet and we do not intend to in the future."

Mr. Barker agrees with most of the governors that the carnivals must be kept up in some form, not so much on account of the imperative necessity of getting revenue for the king for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the parades, as to furnish cheap amusements to the thousands who have always packed the carnival grounds and come away thoroughly satisfied.

"I would rather you would come around after this year's carnival and ask me about the future of Ak-Sar-Ben, as then I will know more about it," said H. J. Penfold, another of the governors. "No business man plans much for the future until he has struck a balance sheet showing the result of the past. Our balance sheet will not be struck until after the carnival. After that I could give you yards of 'dope,' I believe you call

it. "But suffice it to say that Ak-Sar-Ben has a future and a bright one, I think. The king has not reached the end of his rope by a good deal, and I see no reason why we should not reign as long as England's Queen Victoria, and she reigned pretty long."

Arthur C. Smith said the governors and the knights were too much concerned about the present to think much about the future, but that there is a future there is no doubt in his mind.

"The carnival, or the possible lack of it, may hamper us some in other years, but I think we will be able to find some suitable location for a neighborhood near the business center. I know some people object to the carnival and would like to see it done away with, but my answer to these people is not to go to the carnival if they do not want to. No one has to visit the carnival unless he likes, and I have noticed that the great majority like to."

"If any one can point out where we can get the \$20,000 or \$30,000 which we get every year in gate receipts at the carnival we will do away with it, but until some other plan offers I think we will keep the carnival going."

"Next year we will have the army maneuvers and that with a few 'stunts' from the Cheyenne frontier day will give the people a pretty good entertainment."

"Two years is too far ahead to think about. We governors may all be dead before then, but King Ak-Sar-Ben will live forever, at least he ought to in consideration of the great good he has done Omaha."

M

EN may come and men may go, but Ak-Sar-Ben will go on forever.

This is the boiled-down essence of the views of the governors of Ak-Sar-Ben regarding its future and the future of its king and his lord high chamberlain, Samson.

They all agree that Ak-Sar-Ben has proved a big thing for Omaha—an undisputed fact—that it has advertised the state as no other one thing has, and that its future will be much brighter than its past. And Ak-Sar-Ben's past has not been dreary and forlorn by any means. Concrete prognostications of the future, of the carnivals and entertainments to be given in the years to come, cannot well be made, but the governors declare that the king is not going to abdicate and that he will continue to rule for many years to come.

"Ak-Sar-Ben will be continued until something better can be thought of," said Everett Buckingham, and as he fails to see what better could be had, Ak-Sar-Ben will continue to reign for an indefinite period.

"Ak-Sar-Ben beats everything else any other city ever had by a thousand miles," said Mr. Buckingham. "The Velled Prophets of St. Louis do not come up to it, and in New Orleans, where the far-famed Mardi Gras is held every winter, they still use the old-fashioned boats lighted by torches carried by negroes walking along beside them. It is proper that the largest city in the state should have a fall

W

ELL, you have your gall to ask me to go back into the cells of my memory and dig up the trials and troubles I went through as chairman of the ball committee for King Ak-Sar-Ben," said Gould Dietz, who for many years has been one of the most active workers for King Ak-Sar-Ben, and who two years ago was chosen king in honor of his efforts in behalf of Omaha and the organization of Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben. "Isn't it enough that for years I had to do a large bunch of the work in connection with these coronation balls without having to jar up my memory and tell about the annual events which have made Omaha famous all over the western country?"

It has been a custom among the knights that when a member is elected king, his term

Brief Confessions of a Coronation Ball Manager

of service on the board is over, but such is not the case with Gould Dietz. He is too good a caten to let escape. It is also known to the knights that for the last six months C. H. Pickens, chairman of the board of governors, has carried the resignation of Mr. Dietz around in his inside pocket, but that is as far as the missive ever got, for Mr. Dietz is not going to be permitted to escape. While he will not have charge of the ball this year, he will be the guiding hand in the big parades which Samson is preparing for the thousands of people who will visit Omaha during the fall festivities. This insures to the public that the parades will be the big success they always have been, and that everything connected with them will be run off with style.

"I'll state in the beginning that the job

of chairman of the ball committee entails a vast amount of work, but you know work never troubles me. If work will let me alone I'll let work all alone and not trouble it. Some of the experiences of the chairman of the ball committee are really funny, and I had a lot of fun as we went along."

"Tell us some of your experiences," interrupted the interviewer.

"Well, I think about the funniest experience I had was with one of the out-of-town maids. (Mr. Dietz was not married then). I received a telephone call a few years ago, a couple of days before one of the big balls, and a feminine voice wanted to know if I was the Mr. Dietz who was managing the ball. She said that she wanted to see me very badly, and said that if I was going to be at the office

for a while she would come down. I told her to come along.

"She came and was as pretty as a peach. She said that she was in a quandary and wanted some expert advice. Then she began to describe the gown she had made to wear at the ball. I looked wise, although I did not know a thing about what she was trying to tell me. When she had finished she said:

"Now, Mr. Dietz, I did not know whether that dress would do to wear to the ball so I thought I had better come and see you about it. If you say it will do I will have it sent here and if it will not do I want to get another."

"I'm sure it will do," replied Mr. Dietz, just like that, as though he knew all about women's clothes.

During one fall when Mr. Dietz was chairman of the ball committee he was the only unmarried man on the board of governors, so a resolution was passed by the board that it should be the duty of Mr. Dietz to look after all the visiting maids of honor. Mr. Dietz heard the motion passed, but thought it was just a joke motion and paid no further attention to it.

The night of the ball arrived and the maids had all come to Omaha and were quartered around at the various hotels. It was about time for the big ball to start when it dawned upon Mr. Dietz that no provision had been made to escort the maids to the ball. Then the old motion dawned upon him. Gould Dietz is not a man to be stumped by any emergency of that kind, so he at once got busy. He realized that he could not call upon any other member of the board for help.

(Continued on Page Nine.)



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JOSEPH BARKER



CHARLES W. DEATON