

## MODERN MILL OF COMMERCE WHERE SKILL IS THE GRIST

Commercial College Has Come to Be a Recognized Factor of Vast Importance in Everyday Business Life Throughout the Civilized World.



IN THE SHORTHAND DEPARTMENT



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READY-MADE train dispatchers, ready-made station agents, ready-made bank clerks, ready-made private secretaries, ready-made bookkeepers—all of these turned out while you wait, and, as a rule, the waiting period is limited to six months.

So much for the business evolution brought by the modern commercial college. Time was, not so very many years ago, when commercial schools were few, and in those days only the sons and daughters of well-to-do citizens aspired to collegiate training for business. Such schools were then located only in the larger cities, and the cost of attendance was looked upon as being almost prohibitive.

But the world moves, and the commercial school has moved forward in rhythmic consonance with the motion of the earth, so that now, every city, every town and even some of the villages have their business colleges.

The forthcoming conventions of the Central Teachers' association and the Western Commercial School Managers' association, which meet jointly in Omaha, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, May 26, 27 and 28, bring vividly to mind what an important factor in the world's work the modern business college has come to be. These conventions—they meet simultaneously, but they are two distinct organizations—will bring to Omaha a large delegation of representative business educators of this country. Notable among the visitors will be "Uncle" Robert Spencer of Milwaukee, of Spencerian fame, and Colonel George Soule of New Orleans. These are veterans in the work and each occupies a prominent place on the program.

The meetings will be held in the Boyles building, dedicated to commercial education, Eighteenth and Harney streets, and headquarters of both associations will be at the Rome hotel. A feature of the conventions will be the appearance of Miss Rose L. Fritz of New York, who at the present time is said to hold the world's record for speed and accuracy in typewriter work. Miss Fritz will give demonstrations daily.

Another feature which will add interest to the occasion is the Brown trophy contest. G. W. Brown of Jacksonville, Ill., has offered a handsome cup as a prize for excellence in typewriter work. The school winning the Brown trophy shall be allowed to retain it until the next meeting of the association, at which time it shall be returned for another contest. Any school winning the trophy for five consecutive years shall be allowed to retain it as a permanent possession.

While there will be many convention sidelights in the nature of entertainment, including among which is a banquet at the Rome hotel given by the Smith-Premier Typewriter company, the real purpose of each of the associations is to transact business for the general promotion of commercial schools and commercial education. The program is elaborate, taking in almost every subject that has a bearing on the main idea.

Following the banquet at the Rome hotel, there will be a theater party at the Boyd, where the visitors will see "Peter Pan," as guests of the Underwood Typewriter company. Four hundred seats have been engaged—probably the largest theater party ever given in Omaha or any other western city.

Many uninformed persons perhaps have the belief in a vague sort of way that the chief mission of a business college is to teach shorthand and typewriting. True, the pretty black-eyed stenographer, as well as she of the golden curls and azure orbs, is a commercial college product, yet the same is true of the clean-cut, clear-eyed young man who manipulates the telegraph key or who, perchance, enters your deposits on the big bank book back of the frosted window.

Not all stenographers, not all telegraph operators, not all bank tellers, not all bookkeepers are from the college, but a majority of them are today—and more will be tomorrow. Time was in the long ago, when a college education was not legally essential to the medical practitioner, but that time has been relegated into the scrap heap of antiquity. Time was, also, when the lawyer simply "read law" in Judge Somebody's office and then walked over to the court house to represent his clients. That method may have answered all requirements in that day and age, but the world moves and what was quite the proper thing a quarter century or so ago is passe in these onward days of prosperity and progress.

So, there comes the natural deduction that the commercial college is a fixed institution in the business world of today, and it is a fact that cannot be treated lightly that the big banks, the big railroads and other concerns of magnitude are turning to the training school for recruits to fill the places vacated by good old "has beens" who, with the encroachment of age, are dropping one by one from the service.

What future does stenography or telegraphy hold out to the aspiring youngster? From "pot hooks" to the presidency of a vast railroad system is a long jump, but C. M. Hayes is one man who made it. The name of Mr. Hayes is well known in railroad circles, not only in the United States, but in Canada also. Nearer home may be mentioned J. Francis, general passenger agent of the Burlington Route, who for many years was a familiar figure in Omaha. Mr. Francis began his service with the Burlington as stenographer in the office of a division superintendent in Lincoln. James B. Barr, high executive on the Seaboard Air Line, was once a stenographer in Burlington headquarters, this city. He was thorough in his work and his rise was rapid.

It is not generally remembered now, yet none the less a



IN THE BUSINESS DEPARTMENT



JOHN N. GREGG  
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B. F. WILLIAMS, CAPITAL  
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C. W. WETHERLY, PRES.  
JOPLIN BUSINESS COLLEGE  
JOPLIN, MO.



WM. A. DYER, GEN. MGR.  
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fact, that the late secretary of state, John Hay, was a stenographer of the early-day type, as was also F. A. Vanderbilt, ex-assistant secretary of the United States treasury, and Edward Bok, editor of the Ladies' Home Journal.

General Passenger Agent C. S. Fee of the Northern Pacific is another who journeyed from "pot hooks" to executive prominence. His road is one of the most important in the United States and any passenger official he ranks as a leader.

Everybody is familiar with the romantic rise of William Loeb and George B. Cortelyou. Some persons of pessimistic trend may shake their heads knowingly, declaring the while that politics and pull placed Cortelyou and Loeb on the pinnacles to which they have risen. Very well, grant that politics and pull might have sent them to the front. It is a certainty that politics and pull could not retain their positions for them, because there is work to be done and it takes workers to hold high places.

In the law stenography has been the stepping stone of thousands of men who are prominent legal lights today. Frank Walsh of Kansas City, for instance, who within ten years has amassed a fortune of three-quarters of a million dollars from legal fees. Mr. Walsh began life in a most humble manner, fought his way up little by little, worked as a newsboy, became a stenographer in a law office and eventually bloomed out as a full-fledged lawyer. Here in Omaha there are many successful lawyers who used stenography as a stepping stone.

Telegraphy is also a passport to a bright future. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that two-thirds of the really big railway executives of this country studied dots and dashes in the early part of their career. A general manager or a superintendent who cannot "jerk lightning" is an exception to the rule. Telegraphy and railroad operation are so closely allied that they are taken as matters of course.

But, once in a while, telegraphy is the stepping stone to great achievement in other lines of endeavor. The late Edward Rosewater, founder of The Omaha Bee, and who left a powerful newspaper and a magnificent building as monuments to his work on earth, began as a telegrapher.

Sir William C. Van Horne, whose name is known throughout the United States and

Canada as a high railroad official, and who was knighted by the British in recognition of his services in the industrial development of Canada, was once a telegraph operator for the Illinois Central railroad in Chicago.

W. C. Brown, the New York Central chief, was a telegrapher in the service of the Burlington in various parts of the west. Later he became general manager, with headquarters in St. Joseph, and upon leaving that system he took high service with the Vanderbilt lines.

Others who have risen from the key to take up executive work are Albert J. Earling, president of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul; Marvin Huggitt of the Chicago & Northwestern; Stuyvesant Fish, former president of the Illinois Central; Charles R. Hudson, president of the Mexican Central; A. A. Allen, president of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas; A. J. Davidson, president of the St. Louis & San Francisco, besides a host of active railroad officials and others prominent in the world of affairs.

Telegraphy and railroad work groove together so naturally that the two are almost inseparable, and it is easy at a glance to see how the wire is a stepping stone to future greatness in railroad work.

Stenography is an even broader stepping stone, for the man who takes dictation from the "boss," writing the boss' letters day in and day out, has ample opportunity to grasp ideas. By the very nature of his daily employment he becomes skilled in the technique of the boss' business—no matter whether that business be the operating of a railroad, a bank or a factory. Or, if it be law, he is daily enveloped in legal atmosphere, and there is no reason why, if he applies himself, he should not undergo the natural evolution and become a boss himself.

Naturally, with the general expansion of business and the modern way of doing things, the commercial college has grown. New ideas are being injected all the while and the journey from the primitive to the present is being rapidly covered.

In the early days of Spencer and Soule a commercial college was simply a school room where penmanship and a few other adjuncts of business were drilled into the craniums of bucolic students. Now-a-days the up-to-date commercial school is equipped with telegraph wires, make-believe



IN THE TELEGRAPH ROOM



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ASSOCIATION - PEORIA, ILL.

factories, etc., and the work-a-day routine of the business world is lived in exact reproduction. Thus the student goes from school to office, not as a novice, but as one well seasoned in the work that is to be taken up. Year by year the volume of students increases; year by year the scope of the schools expand; year by year new ideas are introduced. Gymnasiums have been made a feature of some of the more prominent schools and colors have been adopted after the fashion of the great universities.

The two conventions will bring to Omaha leading lights in commercial education all the way from New York to New Orleans, with especially large representation from the middle-western cities. Typewriters by the ton will be on display and pretty stenographers, blue-eyed girls, black-eyed girls, girls with raven tresses, girls with golden tresses—every type of stenographic beauty, will be in evidence.

If the man stenographer, as hereinbefore shown, has through his pot hooks found a stepping stone to future greatness, what of the girl stenographer?

She is not likely to become a railroad manager, division superintendent or general passenger agent; she is not likely to found a great newspaper or to become the guiding spirit of a factory.

No. Even the most sanguine of new woman boosters would hardly slate the girl for such executive place. There is a rising generation of bosses coming on. And there's nothing to hinder her from becoming the wife of one of the bosses-to-be. And meanwhile stenography removes her from drudgery, enabling her the while to enjoy the independence that woman derives from self-support. Go into any modern commercial school any day in the week and you will see a bright aggregation of future executives—and future executives.

It is probable that the late lamented Mr. Noah Webster would disown "executives" as a word, but the descriptive is so apt in its application to the girls who come from business colleges that its coinage is perhaps pardonable.

Now and then there comes from somewhere this pessimistic query:

"Do all commercial college graduates succeed in the business world?"

The answer is:

"No."

Whereas, there may with due regard to eternal fitness be propounded this counter query:

"Do all theological seminary graduates become distinguished preachers?" or, "Do all law school graduates develop into supreme judges?"

The same "No" that answer one question simultaneously answers the others.

But, a commercial college diploma, while not a blanket passport to success in business life, is beyond question the cornerstone of success, and in the vernacular of the street, "it is up to" the graduate to make the most of his opportunity.

The school simply helps the graduate to help himself—and, after all, that class of help is the best help.

With the cornerstone given, the resourceful young man or woman, as a rule, will find completion of the structure of success comparatively easy.

After all, life is what the individual makes it.

Graduates of Yale and Harvard are sometimes found ringing up fares on trolley cars, yelling "front" from the other side of a hotel counter, or washing dishes in the back end of a restaurant.

Education is the stepping stone to success, but no college can insure the graduate that his feet will not slip while climbing the steps.

The college has power to build the track leading to fortune, but it cannot undertake to perennially ballast the track—and without ballast no track is safe.

It has been ordained by the Creator of the universe that every individual must furnish his own ballast.

Therefore, it is not good logic to place blame upon the system of college education simply because now and then in isolated cases a college graduate makes a failure of life. Such failures are in spite of education, and not because of it.

### Prominent Figures in Omaha Conventions

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