COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KANSAS

by

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The study of commercial organizations is one that lends itself readily to approach from a number of different viewpoints. This thesis attempts a descriptive and historical analysis of such organizations within the state of Kansas. I have traced the development of commercial organizations from their beginnings until the present time and have given secondary consideration to the more intricate details of their operation.

A goodly portion of my time has been given to a discussion of the chamber of commerce, as it has been in the past, the leading commercial organization in the state, and bids fair to forge still further ahead in the future.

For much of the material herein set forth, I am indebted to a large number of Kansas commercial organization secretaries. Their co-operation and valuable assistance in answering personal letters and questionnaires and in granting personal interviews has done much to make this work possible. I wish especially to acknowledge the assistance given me by Mr. Claude L. Scott, secretary of the Lawrence chamber of commerce. The interest taken by the members of the Kansas association of chambers of commerce and their splendid co-operation is duly appreciated.

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Chapter I.
INTRODUCTORY.

The beginnings of commercial organizations.

The beginnings of organizations for commercial purposes date back to the time of the "town fairs" of mediaeval history. They were but crude associations but they made possible a wide exchange of goods, an exchange which brought considerable profit to those merchants who conceived the idea. In the United States, little is known of commercial organizations prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In 1869 there were about forty commercial organizations in the United States. Some of these were trading associations while others were of a more deliberative type. None of these, however, were commercial organizations in the more modern interpretation but the seeds were there from which the present conception of a commercial organization developed.

Of the associations in existence in 1869, the oldest was the Chamber of Commerce of New York city which began to operate on April 5, 1768. The next in age was the Chamber of Commerce of Charleston, South Carolina, incorporated

1. The words association and organization are used interchangeably in this thesis.
2. Merchants Exchange of Saint Louis and the Board of Trade of New York.
3. Chamber of Commerce of New York and the Board of Trade of Philadelphia.
February 6, 1784, but organized as early as 1773. The Philadelphia Board of Trade\(^1\) was organized in 1833, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce in 1834, the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce in 1839, the Board of Trade of Buffalo in 1844, and that of Cleveland in 1848. The Board of Trade of Baltimore dated from 1849 though a Board of Trade had been instituted in that city as early as 1821. Boston organized a Board of Trade in 1854 which succeeded a Chamber of Commerce dating from 1836.\(^2\)

Following this period, the example of one city was followed by another until, at the present time, commercial organizations are to be found in large numbers throughout the whole of the United States as well as in foreign countries. During the past two decades, the growth of such associations has been remarkably rapid. Almost over-night they have sprung up here, there, and everywhere to satisfy some new need arising from the modern development of business enterprise. There is an organization for almost every type of business enterprise and these types are far too numerous to lend themselves readily to classification.

In Kansas the development of commercial organizations has been of more recent date. Prior to 1900 there were few

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1. The Board of Trade of this period bore little if any resemblance to the present-day organization of that name. It was more of the chamber of commerce type. The two should not be confused.

such organizations of importance in the state. A chamber of commerce is recorded at Newton as early as 1880 while at Pittsburg a commercial club was organized in 1885 and in 1905 was reorganized as a chamber of commerce. The Kansas State Bankers Association\(^1\) became active in 1887 and in 1889 the Western Retail Implement and Hardware Dealers Association\(^2\) came into existence. By the year 1910 commercial organizations were much more numerous and retailers' associations had become prominent. As the development continued, credit associations appeared and by 1916 figured prominently in commercial activities. Since 1916 the growth of such organizations has been even more rapid. In 1917 the report issued by the United States department of commerce listed, as existing in Kansas, one hundred and four local and eleven state commercial and industrial organizations. The 1923 report shows Kansas with three hundred and seventy-eight local and sixty-four state organizations of similar nature.\(^3\) This is an increase of over three hundred per cent in a period of six years. The field is fairly well covered with commercial organizations and it is probable that future growth will be marked by an expansion of present organizations rather than the birth of new ones.

**Importance of Commercial Organizations.**

\(^1\) Letter from secretary, Kansas State Bankers Association.

\(^2\) Letter from secretary-treasurer, Western Retail Implement and Hardware Dealers Association.

\(^3\) Commercial and Industrial Organizations in the U.S., 1917 and 1923.
The need for and the importance of such bodies of workers was recognized in the very earliest stages of their development. In 1869, Hamilton Hill, then secretary of the Boston Board of Trade, in writing of commercial organizations, said: "Commercial associations give opportunity to the business men of a city to unite for the purpose of remedying local disabilities, promoting local improvements, and modifying or confirming local customs. The business man needs constantly to be reminded that he is not only a man, but a citizen; not only one, but one of many. He needs to be drawn away from his isolation; to be directed from the earnestness of his pursuits. He needs to be taught the advantage which lies in mutual confidence and in concurrent action. This is precisely what the board of trade or the chamber of commerce is calculated to do. Its whole effect is to socialize, to liberalize, to harmonize. It softens the asperities of competition, it reconciles the apparently conflicting interests and it demonstrates that common welfare is the best basis for individual prosperity."¹

The present-day need for co-operation and united action in matters of civic and commercial importance is apparent and gives to these associations added significance. Modern business development has made it so. Cities must be

¹U.S. Chamber of Commerce--Organization Service Bureau--News Letter no. 121.
improved, business conditions regulated, and civic welfare insured. The problems involved are complicated. To carry on this work and to help solve these problems is the purpose of the modern commercial organization with its many types and classifications.

The term, "commercial organization" has been used in so many connections and with so many connotations that its usage today gives, at best, only a vague impression of the type of organization under discussion. In the ensuing chapters the term, "commercial organizations" will be interpreted to include all organizations and associations dealing with business or civic enterprises and the problems therefrom arising, and that are not operated by private individuals for the purpose of securing any pecuniary reward that may result from such operation.

Unfortunately, both for the student who wishes to add to his store of knowledge and for him who would add to the present fund of knowledge, very little information is available on the subject of commercial organizations. Only the most meager records have been kept of the history and development of such organizations in the state of Kansas. A census of the commercial and industrial organizations of the state has been taken a number of times, and the report of the United States department of commerce carries lists of these organizations, but there is no record of a further exploitation of the field.
In this respect the following treatise is a pioneer in the field and, like the pioneer, the writer has made but a survey and does not attempt a detailed analysis of the many organization types. For the most part, the information herein set forth has been secured through various letters and questionnaires supplemented by actual observation and personal interviews. This thesis is offered, not as a work complete in itself, but as a beginning,--a basis for more elaborate studies in the future. It is offered in the hope that, as such, it will represent a worthwhile contribution to those interested in commercial organizations.
Chapter II.

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

A. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

A chamber of commerce may be defined as an organization of business men and others who share their viewpoint, for the purpose of advancing the best interests of a community in a commercial, industrial, and civic way. Its work is based on the fundamental principle that combined effort brings greater results than individual effort regardless of how conscientiously this individual effort may be applied.

Contrary to an opinion that is quite prevalent today the chamber of commerce is not a product of the modern industrial age. The first chamber of commerce is said to have received its charter in 1599 at Marseilles, France. This chamber is said to be the progenitor of the great brood of today.

Though of comparatively recent development in Kansas, the chamber of commerce is the leading commercial organization of the state, not only in numbers but in the scope of its work, if under the head of chambers of commerce, we include not only those organizations using that name but also community and commercial clubs. The latter are very similar in their purposes and organization and a close comparison shows their only true difference to be one of name. At the present time (1925) there is an agitation for the adoption
of the name "chamber of commerce" by all such organizations, and during the past five years the Chamber of Commerce of the United States has carried on an extensive campaign with this end in view.¹

A report compiled in 1923 shows that the name "chamber of commerce" is used by organizations in 85 cities and towns of Kansas. Ninety-two communities have organizations using the name "commercial club," and 18 have organizations using either the name "civic" or "community" club." Seventy communities reported no commercial organizations. Of this number 96 per cent were communities of the third class with a population less than 2500. All organizations of the type mentioned in this paragraph which are located in first class cities were using the name "chamber of commerce." Ninety per cent of those organizations in second class cities were using that name, while no organizations were using the name in cities of the third class.²

There is some question as to when the first Kansas chamber of commerce came into existence. There is record of a commercial organization of similar nature at Newton in 1880³ and of one at Pittsburg in 1885⁴ but the name "cham-

¹Concerning the reasons for the campaign a national chamber official says, "The title 'chamber of commerce' has quite a definite meaning, especially in foreign countries and,
³Letter from Secretary of the chamber of commerce at Newton--Dec. 12, 1924.
⁴Letter from Secretary of the chamber of commerce at Pittsburg--Jan. 20, 1925.
ber of commerce" was not used until 1905. There has been a civic organization in Salina since 1887 and one of similar nature at Holton since 1895. There is record of a commercial organization at Ottawa as early as 1890. It is quite probable that there were such organizations prior to this time but there is no way of establishing this fact. None of these earlier bodies, in the beginning, used the name "chamber of commerce" but they did identically the same kind of work on a smaller basis and without exception are using that name today.

The history of the typical Kansas chamber of commerce is replete with many reorganizations and periods of inactivity; with discontinuances and with periods of rapid growth. A roughly sketched graph of its progress reveals a peak at 1900, then a decline for a few years and another upward climb reaching its peak about 1911. Then follows a two-year period with little variation either up or down and then a sudden rise, in 1917, terminating in the highest peak yet reached. Following this increase there was a

1Letter from Secretary of the chamber of commerce at Salina--Jan. 15, 1925.
2Letter from Secretary of the chamber of commerce at Holton--Jan. 12, 1925
3Letter from Secretary of the chamber of commerce at Ottawa--Jan. 24, 1925.

As it is hoped we will very greatly extend our foreign trade, it seems well for commercial organizations to assume a title that is accepted as standard abroad...... where so many different titles are used there is bound to be some confusion as to the exact function of an organization bearing some other title than "chamber of commerce."
decline during the period from the latter part of 1917 to the first part of 1921, and then another upward climb, extending to the present period.

From a rather insignificant association of business men, poorly financed, weakly constructed, suggestive rather than active in its work, the chamber of commerce has in a twenty-year period established itself as the foremost organization concerned with business, civic, and social betterment. It has done much toward proving its worth and seems to deserve the recognition that it has gained. A report of 32 chamber secretaries gives us an indication of the general feeling toward the chamber of commerce. It shows that in 12 of the towns represented the majority of the people are co-operative; in 16 they are favorable; in 3, indifferent; in 2, mildly opposed; and in 1, strongly opposed to the chamber of commerce and its activities. The

1 For the purposes of this study, two sets of questionnaires were sent out to the secretaries of Kansas chambers of commerce. Thirty-three replies were received from the first set and thirty from the second. If not otherwise stated, all statistical information herein set forth is based on data taken from these replies.

(const. from p 9) While there are a few chambers of commerce that are not commercial organizations in the accepted sense, the number of such is very small. 79.4 per cent of commercial organizations are now using the name chamber of commerce. There are fifteen different titles used by organizations doing exactly the same kind of work in their various communities. While this may be fairly well understood at home, it is not understood abroad."--U.S. Chamber of Commerce--"Building and Maintaining a Local Chamber of Commerce."
development of the commercial chamber has been little less than phenomenal and the study of its plan of organization and its operation is well worth while.

B. ORGANIZATION.

Chambers of commerce are very similar as to methods of organization, maintenance and work done, the only important difference being one of extent. It will not be necessary to discuss a number of separate chambers but will suffice to take one such organization as typical of the field. This method will be used.

The impetus for the organization of a chamber of commerce usually comes from a small group of citizens who wish to improve the existing conditions in their community. They proceed to arouse interest among other citizens, an informal meeting is called and the movement launched. A temporary committee is selected and delegated to make plans for a permanent organization. A membership campaign then opens. A list of prospects is compiled and arrangements made to interview each prospect. This may be done by the committee as a whole or each member may be requested to interview a certain number of prospects.

The committee must also establish a dues rate which will be based on the estimated amount necessary to carry on effective work in a community of the size in which the chamber is being organized. A flat-rate basis may be used
or the members may be divided into classes and assessed accordingly. Memberships may be taken out for a definite period, as one year or five years, or for an indefinite period. When the membership campaign is ended, the members assemble, a constitution and a set of by-laws are submitted by the original committee and these are in turn discussed and voted upon. Then follows an election of officers as prescribed in the by-laws and this, with the selection of directors, completes the preliminary organization.

**The Board of Directors.**

The Board of Directors is the governing group of the typical chamber of commerce. The size of the board will depend on the size of the chamber. The most common method of selecting directors is by vote of the membership at the annual meeting. Of the 30 secretaries reporting on this point, 29 report an election by ballot of the membership. Two of the 29 reported balloting by mail and two reported the use of nominating committees, especially provided for in the by-laws of these organizations. In 27 cases the balloting is done from the floor. One secretary reported appointment of directors but the method of appointment was not explained.

The directors are responsible for the progress of the chamber. From them will come the initiative that keeps the organization alive and active. They are not salaried officials but must give liberally of their time to the work
and furnish the leadership that is so essential. In the main they are responsible for the planning of the program of work and must devise a means for carrying out the program, although some of this work is usually shifted to the Secretary.

The Officers.

The officers of a chamber of commerce will be in most cases three in number: a president, a vice president, and a secretary or manager. Some chambers have several vice presidents who serve as chairmen of various bureaus or committees but this is the exception rather than the rule. With the exception of the secretary the officers are not salaried. The president has general supervision over all chamber affairs and presides at all meetings of the members. It is essential that he be well acquainted with the purposes of the chamber of commerce and that he have the qualities of a leader. The secretary is a salaried official and devotes his entire time to chamber of commerce work.\(^1\) The vice president stands ready to take up the president's work during his absence. He may be called upon at any time to preside at membership meetings or to serve as an advisor for various committees.

Kansas chambers differ somewhat in the methods used in selecting officers. The tendency is toward selection by

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\(^1\)The secretary and his work is considered at length elsewhere in this thesis.
the board of directors. This method is used by 18 chambers of the 30 reporting. Twelve chambers select officers by an election of the membership at the annual meeting. There is little to choose between the two methods. If the directors are selected by ballot of the membership and they in turn select the officers, it amounts to an indirect election by the membership. In case the directors are appointed it is well to leave the election of officers to the members. The smaller chambers for the most part use the vote of membership method while the larger bodies seem to favor a selection by the directors. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule.¹

The reports of the 30 secretaries indicate that the tenure of office of chamber officers is fairly well fixed at one year. Twenty-five secretaries reported the one-year plan and four reported 2 years as the tenure of office. One chamber in a third class city installs its officers for a three-year period. The one-year plan meets with approval because it allows a greater number of men to contribute their services as officers and because many business men who serve as officers do not feel that they can spare the time from their business to serve as an official for more than a year at a time. Furthermore, the plan satisfies the desire that is ever present for a

¹The chambers at Wichita and Ottawa select officers by vote of the membership.
change in administration. On the other hand, officers are installed for longer periods of time in the belief that they can render more efficient service over the longer period than can be expected otherwise. It is maintained that the officer who has served a year has just about learned the work thoroughly and that to remove him is to throw away his most valuable services. As far as Kansas chambers are concerned the one-year plan has proved the most satisfactory and is rapidly replacing longer tenure plans.

Committees.

Chamber of commerce work is carried on very largely through the use of committees. The chamber, in even the smaller communities, finds its legitimate field of endeavor so broad that it cannot, as a whole, devise a solution for each individual problem. Such a plan would involve innumerable meetings of the entire membership and would prove to be a clumsy sort of procedure.

So widely different are the problems that demand the attention of the chamber that the average member is well informed on only a few of these and it is better to let those persons handle the problem who are best fitted for the work and not rely on the judgment of the entire membership. The use of committees makes this possible and serves also to bring a maximum number of members into active service. This results in an increased interest in the affairs of the chamber on the part of the individual member.
Committees are, for the most part, selected by the president working in conjunction with the directors. A few chambers select the chairmen of committees by ballot of the membership and allow the chairmen to choose the other members of their respective committees. This method is not encouraged. The membership at large is, as a rule, in no position to know the fitness of various members for committee work.

Committees may be classified as "standing" and "special." The special committee is further divided into an investigation committee and into an execution committee, while the standing committee may perform both the functions of investigation and execution.

There are certain very definite branches of chamber of commerce work and to each of these is assigned a standing committee. The personnel of these committees is, as a general rule, changed annually. There are, however, some exceptions. If the officers serve for more than a year the committees also serve for a like period. A survey of the field in Kansas reveals some interesting facts in regard to standing committees. There are many kinds of committees and there seems to be no very close resemblance between any of the Kansas chambers along this line. For the most part, the larger cities have more such committees but there are several towns of the third class that report
as many as 10. One chamber in a first class city maintains
20 standing committees and another reports 18. One chamber
makes use of only special committees but this is a very
unusual procedure. The standing committees most generally
used include: Membership, civic improvement, good roads,
etertainment, finance, industries, publicity and advertis-
ing, agriculture, and transportation.

It would be very difficult to compile a complete
list of the standing committees used by all Kansas chambers
but an insight into the field of work that the chamber of
commerce attempts to cover is given in the following list
which represents the committees used by 25 chambers in
this state. In addition to those mentioned above, the
list of committees includes: Public relations, military
relations, legislation, taxes, poultry, dairy products,
insurance and fire prevention, credit rating, education,
sanitation, public utilities, postal facilities, live
stock, trade extension, manufacturing, immigration, fairs,
radio, scout troops, housing facilities, conventions,
tourist camps, athletics, bands, parks, city ordinances,
speakers, traffic, executives, health, Americanization
and citizenship, meetings, and paving.

The first impression that comes with the reading of
such a list is that there are entirely too many committees
and that there should be a greater concentration of effort.
It must be remembered, however, that the individual chamber
has but a few such committees and maintains these for the particular needs of one community. The needs of all communities are not the same, hence the wide difference. No set of committees will suffice for chambers in all towns. It is for the chamber to evaluate the needs of the community and select its committees accordingly. This vast number of committees cannot correctly be construed to mean that a chamber of commerce dabbles in everything, that it has no definite plans and that it lacks unity in its operation. On the contrary, the chamber of commerce is established to serve the community and it probably cannot go about its work in the same way as does a chamber in a nearby city. The difference in community needs is apparent and this fact should always be kept in mind when discussing chamber of commerce work.

Many chambers of commerce in Kansas, and elsewhere, often have made one mistake. As soon as the chamber is organized the officers proceed to appoint a number of committees, one to fill every apparent need of the community. If the chamber is not sufficiently well financed at this early stage to attempt improvements along all lines it cannot well afford to distribute its power over a very wide field. If this thing occurs no part of the work is done thoroughly. The chamber should, by all means, select a few projects that it can handle and stick to these
until they are completed. Now, if the chamber appoints several committees and then limits its efforts to the field covered by one or two of these, the others remain idle and it appears to the general public that the chamber is inactive. It is far better to have two active committees than a dozen partly active. If there is no work for a standing committee to do or if for any reason that work cannot be handled within a reasonable length of time there should be no committee.

So much for standing committees. Even with such an array of standing committees the chamber of commerce cannot satisfy all the demands made upon it. Special problems are constantly arising and to solve such problems is the object of the "special" committee. It is selected to do a very particular thing and when that thing is done it ceases to exist. Such a committee may do nothing more than make an investigation and report or it may be responsible for carrying out a plan of action after the report has been made. The number and type of these committees will differ as do the problems that they must solve. Practically every chamber of commerce in the state uses such committees.

Committee action, then, is the basis of the power of a chamber of commerce. Committees should be selected with the utmost care; they should not be large and too cumbersome for speedy action. Committee work should be divided up among the members and no member should be asked to serve
on more than a few committees during the same period. As the committees act, so acts the chamber. Too much stress, therefore, cannot be placed on the necessity for a wise selection of committeemen.

C. THE SECRETARY.

In the earliest stages of the growth of the chamber of commerce the Secretary was the man who attended to routine office tasks such as preparing statements of dues, answering inquiries, filling out questionnaires, and so forth. He worked on a part-time basis and his remuneration was insignificant. Many chambers made no attempt to employ a salaried secretary but elected members from time to time to fill the job, and those selected gave little more of their time to the work than did the other officials. As the chamber developed, widening its scope of service and as its work became increasingly complicated, it became evident that there must be an official to devote his entire time to the work, to study the field and to map out the course over which the chamber would follow. There was need for an expert—an expert carefully trained and skilled. The present-day chamber of commerce bespeaks the progress that has been made toward the attainment of this goal.

The position of the secretary of a chamber of commerce has attained the ranking of a profession that cannot be properly filled by an untrained or inexperienced man.
"The last decade has seen an influx of able men into this field of work (commercial organization) which is rapidly gaining, if it has not already gained, the status of a recognized profession. The secretary whose glad hand was his one qualification, the professional town booster, is being replaced by the trained man. The passing of the old-style secretary has been coincident with the passing of the restricted and self-centered local association. Both have yielded to the demands of the modern chamber of commerce."¹

Simultaneously with the recognition of this need for an efficient expert, have come many means of training men for the position. Conferences, conventions, bulletins from the national chamber—all these have helped to make the secretary proficient. The coming of a special school to train commercial organization secretaries marks the most recent forward step in this direction.

The establishment of this training school was sponsored by the National Association of Commercial Organization Secretaries and the first plans were made in 1917.² Because of abnormal conditions existing at that time, caused by the world war, the complete organization was not effected until 1921. The first national school was held at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, from July 18

¹"Building and Maintaining a Local Chamber of Commerce"—p 17.
²"Building "—p 17.
to 30 of this year (1921) and the first session was attended by 181 secretaries. Elective courses in fundamental subjects and technical courses are offered. The national school was held at Northwestern University in 1922 and 1923 and in 1924 was attended by 300 secretaries. The school offers a diploma upon the completion of the course.\(^1\)

It is not too much to expect that in a few years the standards set in this new profession will be such, and the demand for skilled men so great, that it will be difficult for men to enter the secretaryship and remain in it for any length of time without having trained himself especially for the work of the profession.

The chamber of commerce has outgrown the idea that the secretary is engaged to do a certain amount of routine work. The emphasis has been shifted from detail work to community projects. The secretary has the task of being the project executive; his assistant handles the routine tasks and he is free to do constructive work. His position is one of responsibility and of recognized importance.

Qualifications of the Secretary.

Few professions necessitate a more general knowledge and ability to accomplish so many widely different tasks than that of the association secretary. He must be an expert, and yet

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\(^1\) Two Kansas secretaries have been granted diplomas upon the completion of this course.
he dares not limit his training to too narrow a field.

As a man, the secretary must be intelligent, possess the strength that comes with good health and he should possess a pleasing personality. He needs keen discernment and a well developed sense of fairness. Justice must prevail. A sense of humor is a never-failing help. Good nature and optimism are companions worth cultivating. The secretary should be patient and persistent, courageous, and conservative, diplomatic and determined. He should be a clever strategist, but trustworthy in all things.¹ These qualifications should be combined with good judgement, power of analysis, and enthusiasm.

The secretary should make use of all the available information relative to his work and should have the training necessary for the technical requirements of his profession. All these are essential, but, in the final analysis, the secretary is a "student and worker in the laboratory of human life;" his work is with men. He must be able to understand them, to lead them, and to follow their lead if need be. Unable to do this he cannot hope for success.

Duties of the Secretary.

To attempt to set down a list of the duties of a com-

¹Proceedings of the seventh annual meeting of the Southern Commercial Secretaries--1924--p 20.
mercial chamber secretary would indeed be a foolish thing. Even as the types of work done by the organization differ, so also do the duties of the secretary differ. It is not best to say that the secretary should do this thing or that or the other. He should be employed to devote his time and skill to the work in hand, namely, the planning and executing of projects for community betterment and directing the administration which necessarily goes hand and hand with his work. Such matters as answering inquiries, handling correspondence, arranging meetings, and keeping records should not burden the secretary. He should be a high-salaried expert, and if he is, the chamber of commerce cannot afford to have him spending his time with details. Others with far less training can do this detail work just as well.

The secretary's greatest task is to devote time and thought to planning projects and if he becomes ensnared in a net of routine tasks his true worth never becomes apparent. On the other hand, the impression should not exist that the secretary is a mere advisor who sits in his office and presents plans to a board of directors or an executive committee. He is an executive; he must provide the means for carrying out the plans and he must see that they are carried out, but it does not follow that he must do the actual work himself. What he does is to delegate authority.
The secretary is the representative of his chamber. He attends conventions, sessions of legislatures, visits other cities, informs himself as to their organization methods and brings back to his own association new ideas and new experiences. He must avail himself of every opportunity to study modern systems of city planning, zoning, traffic, fire prevention, health maintenance and other allied subjects. To be sure, the secretary cannot hope to become an expert on all such matters but he can know where the needed information can be secured and he must be able to assemble it on short notice should the need arise.

Some time must be given by the secretary to planning meetings, for the lively, worth-while meeting is the surest way of keeping members interested in the chamber of commerce. He should be able to obtain competent speakers for meetings and should make sure that no meeting is given over to useless discussion of nondescript topics. Business men cannot waste their time on such meetings; they must be assured a fair return on the time invested. Every meeting should have a definite aim and it is the duty of the secretary, either working alone or through a committee, to see that all meetings are what they should be.

Briefly, to summarize, the secretary's duty is to carefully outline the work of the chamber of commerce, map out a way for conducting this work and provide the incentive
that carries the proposed work through to completion. He is the leader, the executive, and his duties should include only those tasks that become an official of that type.

The Kansas Secretary.

Some interesting material is available relative to the secretaries of Kansas chambers of commerce. Of the secretaries reporting, the period of time spent in the profession ranges from 1 to 12 years with an average of 5½ years. This indicates the recognition given the profession as a permanent life work and not as a side line for a year or two.

The time spent in present positions held by these same secretaries ranges from 1 to 10 years with an average of 3½ years. It is noticeable that there is less changing about from one city to another and a desire on the part of the men to become fixtures in their respective chambers. This condition is being encouraged in the belief that the secretary can better serve the community as he becomes more thoroughly acquainted with its problems. It is the consensus of opinion that the secretary who serves one chamber for less than two years is unable to do his best work and to prove his worth.

As to the occupations held by secretaries of Kansas organizations prior to their entrance into commercial organization work there is wide difference. Among the number are 4 former merchants, 3 attorneys, 3 newspaper
men, 2 clerks, and 2 men in organization work of other kinds. The following occupations each have at least one representative: Banking, travelling salesman, credit rating, student, railroad agent, reporting, farming, insurance, cigar manufacturing, instructor, real estate, public utility management, and post master.

Compensation of Secretaries.

The compensation of chamber of commerce secretaries has increased rapidly as the new profession has been given recognition. In the early stages of the chamber's development secretaries were non-salaried officials giving no more time to the work than did the other officers. The next stage found the secretary in a part-time position with a salary based on the number of hours given to the work. In this period the secretary was often a business man who was able to handle the routine duties then connected with the office as a side line to his business. The evolutionary process continued until the position of the present-day secretary is one requiring his full time and carries with it a salary that is inducing a high type of men to enter the profession. It is no longer an odd-job but an attractive position that offers considerable financial inducement to trained men.

So, as the position has come to demand the greater skill of an expert, the salary has also tended to approx-
impute a figure that will fill the position with the kind of men needed. This does not mean that every chamber of commerce secretary in Kansas, or elsewhere, is receiving a high salary or even a fair salary. It does show the trend of such salaries and points out that they are higher today than ever before and there is an indication that the limit has not been reached. This increase is no doubt partially due to the increased size and scope of work that has featured the recent development of the chamber of commerce but it has resulted chiefly from the recognition of the value and importance of commercial organization work.

Nineteen Kansas secretaries of commercial chambers consented to state their salaries to the writer. A question regarding such a matter is quite personal and hence there is difficulty in securing the needed information. The 19 salaries are those of full-time secretaries and range from $1500 to $7200 with an average of $3226. The median salary\(^1\) is $2400 and the modal salary\(^2\) would fall either at $1800 or $2400 as both occur three times. In all probability, these figures are somewhat high, due to the fact that the secretaries reporting represent some of the most efficient chambers in the state. An average taken of the

1That salary which falls at the midpoint if the salaries are listed in consecutive order.
2That salary which occurs in the most instances.
entire state would be somewhat lower but nevertheless the above figures are in a way typical of Kansas chambers, and serve to indicate the levels to which secretaries' salaries are rising.

As is to be expected, the larger the city the larger the salary. There are exceptions but this is the general rule. The average for cities of over 10,000 population, reporting, is $3800; of cities between 4,000 and 10,000 it is $2135. One city of the third class reported an unprogressed secretary. The highest salary paid by a chamber in a second class city is less than the lowest salary paid by a chamber in a first class city. However, a chamber in one third class city pays its secretary more than the highest salary paid by a chamber in a second class city. This indicates that the smaller towns are not far behind, if any, in proportion to their size.

Firing a Secretary.

Until the recent recognition of the importance of the profession, the chamber of commerce secretary came into his position through an evolutionary process. He served the chamber, perhaps, in other capacities and sooner or later because of some special fitness fell heir to the job as secretary. This job he held as a side line to some other work. Gradually he became interested in the work and when the chamber found it necessary to employ a full-time
secretary he aspired to the position and became a full fledged commercial organization secretary. Occasionally, through necessity, the chamber went beyond the limits of its own membership to secure a man for the job but this was not general in the early development.

In the light of recent developments and especially because of the salary now connected with the position, chambers of commerce give more than casual attention to filling the secretary's position. The chamber in need of a secretary usually looks beyond the immediate field for a trained man. The United States chamber offers suggestions, and associations of secretaries are useful in filling vacant positions. It is difficult to obtain competent secretaries and many chambers do not hesitate to spend considerable time and effort in securing the right kind of a man. State chambers often help in this work and certain national associations can lend assistance. The matter of securing a secretary is no longer a hit-and-miss process of hiring the first available man. It is handled by careful selection, a sifting of merits, and a final choice after much deliberation.

The indications are that in Kansas, secretaries are selected by action of the Board of directors. Of the 30 chambers concerning which information is available 28 use this method. Two chambers select secretaries by membership vote. The latter are both cities of the third class.
It is now generally recognized that selection by a membership vote is not advisable due to the fact that the average member is in no position to cast his vote intelligently. He does not know the needs of the position and is a poor judge of the qualifications that a secretary should have. A board of directors can make a much wiser selection and, acting as a small group, can investigate thoroughly the needs of the position as well as the qualifications of prospective secretaries. For each member to make such an investigation, thus properly preparing himself to vote, would be out of the question.

Tenure of Office.

The question arising as to the tenure of office of a chamber of commerce secretary is: Shall the secretary be employed for a specifically stated period or for an indefinite period depending upon the service he renders? There is difference of opinion and some substantial arguments pro and con. However, the leading authorities are now advocating, and most progressive chambers are adopting, the indefinite period. For the most part, they are finding it very satisfactory.

In the first place, as has been pointed out, the efficient secretary should be encouraged to stay with one chamber as long as possible providing of course that he is not too big a man for the position. The value of his
services tends to increase directly as the number of years he serves in a particular community. He must acclimate himself and he must study the problems of the particular field. This takes much time and even then the most versatile secretary cannot hope to learn everything about the field that he should know. To employ a man for one or two years or for any definite period is to imply that his term of service will probably terminate after the lapse of the contract. The man employed lives in doubt of his job. He fears the time when he may find himself suddenly out of a job and he is prevented from making any definite plans. In other words he never knows just how he stands. This applies as well to the capable and efficient employee as it does to the non-efficient and his work is thus impaired.

On the other hand, the secretary who is employed for an indefinite period realizes that he must make good if he is to hold his job. He is not protected by an iron-clad contract, to do as he pleases for a certain period, but can be removed at any time. He puts everything he has into the work and if he is fit needs not worry about his job. If he is not, the fact will soon become evident and the chamber will not be hindered by a contract from selecting a new secretary at once.

Furthermore, it should always be remembered that chamber of commerce work involves projects extending over long periods of time. Many are the instances in chamber of
commerce history where such organizations have laid the plans for certain improvements, the completion of which was not realized until ten or more years later. It is an evolutionary process; the public must often be slowly, even painstakingly, educated, and obstacles removed from time to time. Surely this is not a type of work the director of which should be often changed and a new man placed in charge every few years.

The only logical conclusion then is that the indefinite period plan is superior. The watchword of the progressive chamber should be: "Spare no effort to procure a good secretary but when you get him keep him until such a time as he may outgrow his position."

Twelve of the Kansas chambers covered in this survey have the indefinite tenure plan for the employment of secretaries. Without exception, the other 18 chambers employ secretaries for one-year periods. If the sample is indicative of the entire state it appears that Kansas chambers are a little behind the times. However, the five largest chambers in the state are found among the first twelve mentioned and sixty per cent of the remaining eighteen are located in cities of the third class. This shows clearly that the larger chambers are finding it profitable to employ secretaries on other than the specific period plan. The smaller chambers are coming around to the plan as they grow in size and enlarge their respective
fields of endeavor.

As to the secretary serving on the board of directors there is some question as well as difference among Kansas chambers. It seems obvious that the secretary should not serve on the board if employed by the directors yet four such cases were reported. The work of the directors is distinct from that of the secretary. He must know what they are doing and be ready to report to them at any time but should not be more than an ex-officio member. This rule cannot be laid down for all chambers but will hold for those organized along the plans heretofore suggested. Nineteen chambers of the 30 reporting do not install their secretary as a director. It is well that the secretary be closely associated with all directors but he should handle his work as separate in itself and not through the directing board.
Chapter III.

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. (cont.)

A. FINANCES.

Financing a chamber of commerce is by no means an insignificant item. Many chambers have been discontinued and others have been forced to curtail their plans, solely for financial reasons. As an organization, the chamber of commerce requires no little expenditure for operation and practically every undertaking of its personnel necessitates a further outlay. Improperly financed the chamber is severely handicapped and soon finds itself existing in name only.

Very little money comes into the chamber through other channels than those of membership dues, and it is safe to say that the chamber is financed by money paid in by its members. The rate of dues is determined in the very beginning of the organization as previously explained. It may be changed from time to time as the membership increases. The board of directors assumes the responsibility for keeping the rate space with the financial needs of the chamber. An estimate is made of the probable expenditures and the rate adjusted accordingly. It must be high enough to assure the chamber of the needed financial support and yet within such limits as will not overburden the individual member.

Dues are paid at stated intervals, usually annually or
semi-annually, depending on the chamber. It is well to secure payment in advance if possible as this assures the chamber a good financial working basis and tends to prevent over-expenditure. Some chambers find it necessary to make special assessments from time to time, over and above the dues payment, to provide for special contingencies. Others disapprove this practice and collect only definitely stated amounts from their members.

The apportionment of finances assumes the proportions of a difficult problem in large chambers of commerce and here again the board of directors, working with the secretary, assumes the responsibility. The problem is somewhat like that of a governmental unit and it needs only to be stated that care must be exercised in handling it. The chamber with its limited capital cannot go into everything, and the task revolves itself into that of spreading the available funds over the field in the way that will bring the most desirable results. It is certainly one that should command more than momentary consideration.

The budget system is perhaps the best available means of handling the chamber's finances. Under this system the chamber makes a very inclusive list of its probable expenditures and specifies the amount to be used for each item. The advantages of such a system are apparent. There is a far greater possibility of a fair distribution and less
probability of extravagance in any particular field. There is a disadvantage in that it is often difficult to forecast future conditions in making out a budget for a yearly period. Changes in the budget are possible, however, so this difficulty is lessened, and it can safely be said that the budget system injects into the chamber of commerce a business-like method of procedure which is valuable.\footnote{Twenty-three of thirty Kansas chambers reporting maintain a budget system.}

Two systems of membership assessment are in vogue. Under the first, or flat-rate basis, every member pays the same amount of dues. Under the second, or plural membership plan, the dues rate is fixed but large business enterprises are allowed to hold several memberships, thus increasing the chamber's revenue. The returns from the questionnaire showed 16 chambers using the latter method and nine using the former. One chamber secures all of its money through voluntary subscriptions. Another has no classes of members but makes a differentiation in the amount paid by the member. That is, one person may pay $10 for a membership while another will pay $25. Another chamber charges city members $12 and rural members $6. Still another charges traveling salesmen $5, ministers and professors $10, and all other members $25.

So we see that there is considerable variation in dues payment but this is accounted for by the different types of
members that go to make up the various organizations. Each chamber must devise the plan best adapted to its particular field. No iron-clad laws can be laid down. The amount of dues paid per annum by members of Kansas chambers reporting varies from $2 to $25 with the concentration at $25.¹

Figures on the total incomes of chambers of commerce serve to show, in a way, the extent to which these organizations are spending money in their respective fields of endeavor. The general reader will no doubt be surprised to know that the total income of 28 Kansas chambers in 1924 was $259,000 with an average of $9,250. The median income falls at $8,500 and the modal income for the 28 chambers is $12,000. No Kansas chambers reporting secure any revenue through taxation.

We have seen that the commercial chamber derives most of its income for regular expenditures from membership dues. It is to be remembered, however, that the chamber may carry on "special" campaigns to raise money for various enterprises and occasionally chambers carry on special finance campaigns for the sole purpose of raising money to maintain the chamber itself. Plainly, the chamber cannot give financial support to all worthy projects, with the limited amount of money that enters its treasury through taxation.

¹Fifteen chambers report a dues rate of $25.00.
membership dues. It can often assist such projects by conducting campaigns among the citizens of the community and this may become one of the chamber's major tasks.

The early struggle of the chamber of commerce for existence was in the main a struggle for sufficient finances to carry on its work. This problem is becoming less important as the chamber grows and tends to establish itself in public favor. More people are now willing to contribute and to contribute more liberally that the work may be carried on. There is less hardship connected with the matter of finances than ever before. This fact is quite evident; it is a pleasing one and yet there is still a problem of no mean proportions and the chamber of commerce in Kansas and elsewhere must not neglect it. The chamber cannot afford to lose itself in a haze of brilliant dreams and aspirations of a beautiful city with its civic improvements and its throbbing, pulsating business life. It must ever stay on bedrock—a bedrock of financial strength—it must move slowly but with a view for the future and it must prepare itself to pay as it goes.

B. MEMBERSHIP.

Who May Become Members.

As a rule, all men of good standing, interested in the commercial, industrial, and civic progress of the city are
eligible for active membership. In some cases, any person who is sufficiently interested in the type of work undertaken by the chamber to pay the assessed dues and lend his or her moral support to the work can become a member. Other than these the average chamber sets up no very strict rules for entrance. The clause that insures the payment of all assessments is, or at least it certainly has been, the keynote of membership requirements. There is little need for any age limits as the Junior chamber can enlist the services of the younger set and it is doubtful if a person ever becomes too old to serve such an organization as a chamber of commerce.

The chamber wants the public-spirited man—the broad-minded, farseeing individual. It desires a large membership, for more members means greater financial strength and greater financial strength means a greater capacity for community service. To keep the total membership figure as high as possible, the chamber is often willing to accept members who add nothing more than their financial support, but the chamber assumes that the person who pays dues into the organization will, at least, not oppose its operation and therein lies another advantage of large membership. The most conceivable state of perfection according to pres

1Yu.S. Chamber of Commerce—"Building and Maintaining a Local Chamber of Commerce." p 32.
dent standards, would be reached when every citizen in the community gave financial and moral support to the chamber. But it is doubtful if even Moore had such a vision when he set down his picture of the Utopia.

**Membership Problems.**

Generally speaking, the power of the chamber varies directly with the number of members, granting of course that the members are of at least average ability and means. The matter of membership, then, is one of big concern and it involves several problems. It is interesting to note that the 30 Kansas secretaries reporting are nearly unanimous in stating that they have membership problems. Only one secretary states that his organization has no such problems. Chief among the problems listed are: Keeping members interested; inducing certain types of business men to become members; division of interest among several organizations; attendance at meetings; and lack of knowledge on the part of the members as to the benefits of the chamber.

None of these, save the first two, need elaboration. The first will be taken up in connection with the discussion of the relation of the chamber of commerce to other organizations and interests of the community. The second refers to a condition that has been discussed at length by commercial organizations throughout the state.
It is the problem of securing the support for the chamber of establishments whose management is not within the community. Managers of such stores often do not feel that they should belong to the chamber as they are not the owners, but merely representatives of the owners and thus do not reap any personal benefit from community enterprises. The chamber takes the view that since the store of this type comes into the community and takes its share of the business it should contribute to and support the organization which is serving that community.

Therein arises the problem. Twenty-eight secretaries replied to a question in regard to this matter. In all the towns represented there are some stores of the above type. Fourteen secretaries stated that they were having "no trouble" with such stores, 10 reported "considerable trouble," and 4 reported "trouble to a certain extent." In this instance the survey is more complete as it includes a large proportion of those cities that are large enough to have such stores and thus gives a good indication of the condition in Kansas. A further indication of this condition is the fact that at the meeting of Kansas Secretaries at Wichita on January 24, 1925, the assembled secretaries, as a group, tendered a statement to the effect that managers of such stores as we are considering are now, for the most part, supporting chambers of commerce in this state.

This, however, does not remove the fact that some
Kansas chambers are troubled with the problem. For example, during December 1924, a certain Kansas secretary attempted to induce one chain store company to take out a membership for its local manager. He received the following reply from a district manager of the company: "........the chamber of commerce.... is of no particular benefit to our company. In the first place we have stores in all towns of any size, and the main object of a chamber of commerce or commercial club is to build up or draw toward the center to which they are directly interested. If this is accomplished in our case, it is simply a matter of robbing Peter to pay Paul........."¹

Here at least is a good example of the attitude of one company. But the argument advanced is indeed a flimsy one. It would be difficult to show, for example, that by boosting the city of Lawrence through its chamber of commerce and thus supposedly to bring more business to its establishment in that city, that the establishment of the same company in Topeka---25 miles distant---would suffer a loss in business similar to the gain at Lawrence. Or for that matter it would be just as difficult to show that all the stores operated by this company in the state would suffer a combined loss equal to the gain at Lawrence. The chamber of commerce stimulates business in its particular

¹Letter from the secretary of the chamber of commerce at Fort Scott, Kansas, Dec. 15, 1924.
locality but it does not attempt to draw business away from other cities. Furthermore, granting that the argument advanced by the company is a legitimate one, the fact that the chamber's activities decrease business in one place and increase it in another is no reason why the company should refuse to take out memberships in all chambers of commerce in the immediate territory. If its business is helped by the chamber, the company should support the chamber for this reason alone if for no more altruistic motive.

There appears to be no logical reason why stores owned by outside interests should not support community enterprises and hence the chamber of commerce. After all, each store in a chain, for example, is as much a part of its respective city as is any other business establishment. It enjoys the very same privileges, the protection, and advantages of community activity. If the chamber of commerce induces a large industrial company to locate a plant in the city, thus bringing four thousand new residents, the chain store is benefited as much as any other. True it may be that the local manager of such a store should not be expected to take out a membership, anymore so than the clerk in a store, if we can make such a differentiation, but the owners of the chain company should provide the means and lend their support by taking out memberships for its local managers.
Recent developments indicate that this problem is becoming much less acute and that the owners and operators of chain stores are coming to regard the chamber in a new light. It is very likely that in a few years this problem will have entirely disappeared, having eliminated itself by a process of evolution.

There are other types of business establishments that hesitate about becoming members of the chamber of commerce. One secretary reports trouble with oil companies and the like, another with suburban stores, and still another has trouble with public service corporations. These, however, are not of major importance.

**Membership Solicitation.**

There are different ways of securing and maintaining the membership of the chamber. Chief among those used in this state are: (1) Campaigns at stated intervals and (2) continuous solicitation. Under the former plan, when the size of the membership begins to decrease, a drive is conducted and an effort made to arouse interest and secure new members. A certain time is allotted to the work and during this time the chamber concentrates every effort on the task at hand. When the drive is completed the problem of membership is shelved until a need arises or until the official time for another drive rolls around on the calendar of the chamber's activities.
Under the second method the task of keeping up the membership goes on continuously. A close check is kept on the membership rolls and new members are added from time to time. Prospect lists are constantly being revised and solicitation among prospects is almost an every-day occurrence. There are no intensive campaigns for the purpose of stirring up the community to a high pitch of enthusiasm and taking advantage of this wave of enthusiasm by signing up new members on every hand. The second plan is based on the assumption that it is better to fill the ranks as the army moves along rather than wait until nine out of every ten men are shot down, then attempt to rush in an entire new army with one grand flourish of the power of conscription.

The membership campaign plan seems to be the most prevalent among Kansas chambers despite the fact that the continuous plan offers many decided advantages. Its chief asset lies in the fact that it results in a more efficient type of members as greater care is taken in selection. The new member is given more attention than if he happens to be one of a hundred that are rounded up during a drive that temporarily sweeps everything before it. It is important also to keep a close check on the membership and this check is facilitated by the continuous plan. Some members must occasionally be removed and others will need continual prodding. It is essentially an every-day and
every-minute problem and cannot be solved in a week or a month, no matter how successful the drive may be. The inevitable result of neglected membership is a gradual decay that leads to disruption of the chamber.

One chamber reports "voluntary" membership, meaning that no special effort is made to secure members. No other cases of this kind are known to the writer. Such a system might prove successful in certain instances but it is extremely doubtful if the average chamber of commerce could maintain an active and efficient membership personnel if it contented itself with waiting until persons signified their intention of becoming members before taking action on the matter.

Mention has been made of the membership committee. It is responsible for carrying on the various tasks outlined above, regardless of the plan used. The standing membership committee is advisable and is common among Kansas chambers. If the membership is kept intact and up to a fair standard of efficiency there will be sufficient work to keep the committee busy at all times.

Women as Members.

The chamber of commerce originated as an organization "for men only." The rush of women to the professions and into business during the last decade, however, has produced some noticeable changes. It is now quite a common
thing to find the names of women on the rolls of the commercial chamber. This is a very logical procedure as there is no reason to believe that women are less interested in civic affairs than men, or to doubt their ability to be of service to the chamber.

Concerning the question of women members, one commercial secretary says, "We do believe that there are certain great matters that are essential in a well-rounded and well-equipped city and that numbers of these matters are better known by the women of the community than by the men.............she is the one who knows whether play grounds are adequate........she knows the condition of the schools........the partnership of woman and man in the family should be reflected between the woman and the man in the community."

Many cities have their Business and Professional Women's Clubs but these are not common in Kansas. This fact has had some bearing on the increasingly large number of women members in chambers of commerce. Twenty chambers reported the presence of women members. Ten reported no women members but this is not to be construed to mean that women are denied the rights of membership.

Membership and the Kansas Chamber.

The results of the questionnaire revealed some inter...

1Proceedings of the seventh annual meeting of the N.A.C.O.S. 1921 pp 70-71.
Interesting facts as regards the membership of Kansas chambers. They are hardly extensive enough to permit the drawing of many conclusions but are valuable as samples of the field. The estimates of 27 chambers showing the percentage of business men in the respective communities who are registered as members of the commercial body ranged from 35 per cent to 90 per cent with an average of 78 per cent. The answers to a question relative to the percentage of members that had been active workers in their organizations during the past year (1924) were rather interesting. The figures ranged from 10 per cent to 100 per cent with an average of 33 per cent, which is to say that only one third of the total membership represented was active in chamber work. If this is an indication of the true situation over the entire state, some radical changes are in order. Either there is need for a general weeding out of delinquent members or there is need for a better type of leadership.

It is rather difficult because of constant changes to secure accurate information as to the total membership of a chamber of commerce. The twenty-six chambers reporting, at the time of their reports, had a total membership of 10,187 with an average of 388 and a median membership of 300. Membership increases since 1920 have been much smaller in most of these chambers than the development of the organization, as a type, would lead one to believe. Twenty,
chambers, including 10 of the foremost in the state, showed a combined increase of 1705 members or an average of 85 for each chamber. One chamber in a city of the first class reported a decrease for this period. These facts do not necessarily indicate that the chamber of commerce has been on the down grade during the last five years for this period has plainly been an abnormal one and post-war conditions have had an effect on business which is reflected in the progress of the chamber. Also, it should be remembered that a membership increase is not a desirable thing at all times even in the case of the chamber of commerce.

In conclusion it is well to emphasize certain salient facts. The chamber can be no greater than its members; generally speaking, the larger the membership the greater the power of the chamber; a continuous membership plan appears to be best for the purposes of the chamber of commerce; some emphasis should be placed on quality as well as number in membership solicitation; and finally, the chamber that neglects its membership problems cannot hope to function properly.

C. THE CHAMBER IN ACTION.

"As long as there is a margin between what American cities are as places to live and work and what they may become, there is work in every community, large and small,
for a modern chamber of commerce."¹

Types of Chamber Work.

The chamber of commerce may be limited in financial power and there may be limits beyond which the numbers of its members cannot go but it is hard to place any limits on the work that the organization can legitimately attempt to do. Lack of money may limit the undertakings of the chamber to a comparatively insignificant number but never does it place a limit on the sphere of activities from which the few undertakings may be selected. The chamber is interested in results; it must keep pace with the fast moving wheels of modern industry; it dares not pause long for reflection. Yet after all, the modern chamber is a visionary organization. It looks far ahead into the future and charts its course accordingly. It is not here today and gone tomorrow. It is a permanent association of public-spirited men and women organized to stand until the community which it serves shall no longer exist.

We have seen that the chamber's work is essentially a work of community betterment. The types of work are but divisions of this general field. The chamber begins by ascertaining the needs of the community and ceases its efforts when these needs are satisfied. It devotes a large

part of its effort to improving business conditions, for
the welfare of business is closely interwoven with that of
the community, most of whose members are engaged in business
pursuits of some sort. It endeavors to improve marketing
facilities, increase production, expand manufacturing,
introduce better industrial methods and to extend markets.
It devotes its efforts to the solution of every problem
arising from the complexity of industrial relations.

But the chamber of commerce goes further than the
field of business. Long ago it enlarged its conception to
include more than factory location or street improvement.
It now embraces the fields and farms of the surrounding
territory and attempts to solve the rural as well as the
urban problem. It strives to break down the barrier be-
tween rural and urban workers. It realizes that the farmer
is as much a part of the community as the business man and
that his problems are also the problems of the community.

Even this work, involving as it does, large financial
outlays with its erection of industrial plants, its high-
ways and streets and its municipal buildings, is probably
the least significant part of the work of the chamber of
commerce. Surely it is so if the amount of expenditures is
the standard but when we consider the work that the modern
chamber undertakes in the development of the citizen-
power of the nation we are prone to say that such is not
the case. Schools, playgrounds, housing conditions, parks and other recreational centers, libraries, vocational education, pure water supplies, garbage and ash disposal, public health, social evils, the city beautiful and the city clean—all these and others receive an equal share of the modern chamber's attention. The results of this type of enterprise cannot be measured in mere dollars and cents, nor can we determine the extent to which it may increase business in a particular mercantile line, but we do know that it makes for a higher type of citizenship and reflects itself in the social and moral status of any community. The chamber of commerce is a builder of men as well as a builder of cities.

The chamber of commerce is not a governmental organization. It does not attempt to usurp the functions of the local city government but co-operates with and assists the governing and other proper agencies authorized for special purposes. It is not a political body but may lead in a community protest against corrupt political and governmental practices. It is apart from the governing agencies and attempts no interference as long as those agencies are serving the community as they should.

Kansas chambers of commerce are similar to others in the work that they do. A question concerning types of work called forth much the same answer from all reporting cham-
bers. The secretaries made no attempt to list the many enterprises receiving the chamber's attention and their general statements can thus be summed up: The chamber of commerce deals with all those things that make for the general welfare of the community. Several secretaries answered the question with three words: Commercial, industrial, and civic. "Anything for mutual good" is the guiding principle of one chamber, while another secretary said, "Our activities include anything which will make our city a better place in which to live." Some chambers have a much broader outlook than others, as is seen in this statement, "Our work includes all activities that tend toward the advancement of the community, state, or nation."

The chamber of commerce has, from time to time, concerned itself with community welfare work. It has been the general custom in the past, however, to leave this work to other organizations. Answers to the questionnaire showed that all of the 30 reporting chambers have some interest in welfare work though chiefly in an indirect way through financial donations. Only 9 of the 30 chambers devote time to welfare campaigns. The other 21 chambers leave the active work in the field to other organizations, for the most part, to the "luncheon" clubs.¹

Welfare work cannot be handled to the best advantage

¹Such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Civitan, etc.
by any one organization alone but there is need for a directive body, especially under such a plan of procedure as that of the community chest. The chamber appears to be the most logical organization to assume this responsibility.

With this discussion of the types of work, the scope of the field in which the modern chamber of commerce spends its energies is quite evident. The chamber is not organized to do this particular thing or that particular thing and nothing else. It serves the community and there must be a new type of work for each new community need. It is, or at least establishes itself to be, the one all-community organization. No matter what the question affecting the general interest of the community, the chamber of commerce stands as the impartial advocate of public interest.

In such fashion, in broad outline, is the commercial chamber functioning today—-a body of business men and women acting in their capacity as citizens, not as the representatives of any special group or class but devoted to the material and cultural advancement of the whole community.

How The Chamber Functions.

Previous mention has been made of the committees of the chamber of commerce.¹ Through these committees the

¹See page 15.
work of the organization is carried out. Unfortunately perhaps, in many cases, the chamber cannot merely decide that something should be done and proceed at once to do it. The chamber is vested with no power other than that given by the sanction of the community. Before it acts it must wage a campaign—often long and tedious—to arouse public sentiment and whip public opinion into line. If this campaign is lost the project is killed. The chamber cannot go ahead and carry it out for in the final analysis the chamber, as a unit, never carries on such projects itself. It points out the need, indicates the way, and prods the lethargic community out of its inclination to "let well enough alone" or "to let Jones do it," to the extent that the community puts across the project.

So it is that the commercial chamber must spend much of its time in preparing the ground and in getting the community properly lined up. This is the task of the chamber in carrying out its plans. If every citizen appreciated the needs of his community and was open-minded there would be much less need for a chamber of commerce. Suppose, for example, that a certain chamber decides that its community needs a municipal auditorium. Not only is it necessary to arrange to have a vote taken on the matter, but a lengthy publicity campaign must first be undertaken. The people must be made to see the advantages that would
accrue from the presence of the auditorium. They must be given accurate statements of costs. The chamber will bring speakers to the city to tell of similar undertakings in other localities. In brief, the proposition must be sold to the voters. They must be interested, convinced, and made to act on the matter. This is an extremely difficult task and the chamber must be neither easily discouraged nor fearful of defeat.

The chamber of commerce carries on its work in a rather unique, if somewhat roundabout, method. It is not a powerful body in the sense that we speak of the power of a branch of the government. It cannot assume the authority of making contracts for a community. Nor can it represent the community without due authorization. It has no means of forcing action, if such are desirable; it exacts no penalties and makes no demands. By enlisting the aid of business men it may bring considerable force to bear on those who would maintain unethical business practices but alone it could not go to the merchant and say, "you must not advertise dishonestly." It is not an entity; its status is restricted. Its existence, or perhaps we should say its active existence, is in the hands of the public. It is subject to the whims and caprices of the modern citizen.

Yet the chamber of commerce continues to exist and to
function with very great certainty. It carries on its work despite apparent handicaps. Our modern citizen has come to recognize in the chamber of commerce a true community leader and is much quicker to follow this new found leadership than ever before. So long as the chamber continues to lead the community aright it will continue to carry on its work with less and less difficulty.

**Effectiveness of Chamber Work.**

Lest the unknowing reader be led to visualize a picture of this so-called modern chamber of commerce that is far too rosy and without legitimate basis, it is well to indicate that the chamber does not achieve all the noble aims that are so glowingly described wherever and whenever you find a chamber of commerce secretary discussing the work of his organization.

Judging from the many interests which the chamber purports to serve, it would no doubt be hailed as the panacea of all modern evils if—-and the "if" must be emphasized—-it dealt successfully with its many enterprises. But this is not the case and there is considerable difference between that which the average chamber establishes itself to do and the actual results of the organization's efforts.

The chamber of commerce is not an organization possessed of something that approximates divine power, as a
few chamber of commerce advocates would have the public believe. It is human; its members are but average citizens and its faults are many. It is not for us to glance casually at the "outline of purpose" of the chamber of commerce and proceed at once to the conclusion that its organization and progress offers the greatest known possibility for the advancement of civilization. We are primarily interested in what the chamber of commerce is, rather than in what it hopes to be.

Let us look then at the chamber of commerce from another angle. Is it an effective means of community betterment? To what extent does it accomplish those things which it sets out to do? Is the chamber of commerce a success?

Perhaps the best test of effectiveness is a survey of results, directly and indirectly, of chamber of commerce activity. It would require much space to even list these results if every chamber in the United States were considered. We are primarily interested in Kansas chambers and will consider only the ones in this state. But even within the state if it were possible to trace accurately all the projects that have received their impetus from chambers of commerce we would certainly find the list to be a very long one. Kansas chambers were directly responsible during the year 1924 for projects in their respective cities ranging from the simple task of erecting signs for the convenience of tourists to the erecting of hospitals.
and public buildings some of which were valued as high as $250,000.00. These projects alone do not prove that the chamber of commerce is doing effective work. There is no evidence that other agencies did not contribute to their success and it would not be a difficult matter to point out commercial chambers that have done practically nothing during the past year (1924).

There is no way of accurately determining just how much actual good accrues from chamber of commerce work or what the cost of the good is. We cannot say that the work of a certain chamber resulted in so many dollars worth of good for a particular city, nor can we say that since no worthwhile projects were completed in this city during the current year, the chamber of commerce is not functioning effectively. Too many conditions enter in to allow for any such definite statements.

Consequently, it is not advisable to say that Kansas chambers are, or are not, effective in their work. It is now quite evident, however, that the advent of the modern chamber of commerce has resulted in a quickening of the public pulse in matters of civic concern. It has filled the need for a representative community organization and has provided a common meeting ground for public-minded citizens. The recognition that is now universally given the chamber, the interest of our government in fostering
a national association to assist the local chamber of commerce—these are but tributes to the effectiveness of the organization in general. The chamber cannot long exist if it does nothing. The minute it ceases to function it ceases to exist though it may continue as an organization in name only.

Those who would condemn the chamber of commerce for its ineffectiveness need not look far in this state or elsewhere for illuminating examples. There are many of them—chambers that cannot justly be credited with doing more than holding so many luncheon meetings a year—chambers that are little more than combinations of merchants with a view of personal gain—and there are others. But this is not a condemnation of the type of organization but of the way in which a few chambers are operating. The evil is not inherent in the organization as a type but is a result of an abusive use of the chamber of commerce idea. At present there is no regulation as to what kind of organizations may use the name "chamber of commerce," and some organizations are operating under the name that in no way resemble the true chamber of commerce.

There are others who ever that the chamber of commerce is ineffective because it attempts to "dabble in everything." However, when one organization attempts to deal with all the problems that effect life in a city, or even in a small town, is there little wonder that such a
condition appears to exist? There is also a fallacy in this condemnation. The chamber of commerce should never be criticised because it seeks to serve too many interests. Its vision should not be narrowed, for the entire field must be covered. The chamber can be condemned for attempting to do too many things at once and doing none of them well. It must concentrate its efforts but its scope of work must also be broad. Such a combination is in no way impossible.

There is sufficient evidence in Kansas to show that the chamber of commerce can do effective work, and a goodly portion of the chambers in the state are doing such work. Where the work is ineffective, the probable cause is either from mis-management or lack of co-operation from the citizens. Remove every chamber in the state and the effectiveness of their work would become very much apparent.¹

D. THE CHAMBER AND COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

The chamber of commerce is not alone in its particular field of work. Its interests must often come into contact with the interests of other community organizations. There are many very vital community interests and since the chamber

¹We do not need to remove them or substitute for them. The aim should be to bring about a higher development of the present chamber and thus increase its effectiveness.
sets itself up as the one all-community organization it is well to consider the relation existing between these interests and the chamber.

The Social or Civic Club.

Certain of these interests are represented by organizations of a definite type. For example, there is the social or civic club, as it is sometimes called. Chief among such clubs in Kansas are: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Civitan, Optimist, and Exchange. These organizations are more commonly known as luncheon or classification clubs. In general, these organizations are banded together nationally or internationally, having a standard constitution and by-laws and whose mottoes emphasize service and community building. Just what particular kind of service is intended, is not always clear.

To the extent that the luncheon club does emphasize community building it is evident that its work might easily overlap that of the commercial chamber. This may be a bad thing if it tends to divide the strength of the community, thus weakening both divisions. It may prove beneficial in case the chamber is not able to dominate the field as it should and finds that it has more than it can reasonably expect to handle in the way of community work. In either case, however, the luncheon club presents a problem. There is the ever-present difficulty of secur-
ing the necessary co-operation, although it appears that certain Internationals are favorable.¹

Vastly different opinions have been advanced relative to the chamber's relation to the luncheon club. "My own experience leads me to believe that luncheon clubs are a valuable adjunct to the chamber of commerce," says a former manager of the Canton, Ohio chamber.² The secretary of the Saint Joseph, Michigan chamber voices the opinion that the classification clubs are organized on an entirely different basis and for very different purposes than the chamber. According to this secretary, they desire not to interfere but rather to assist. A certain South Dakota commercial secretary says, "There are some clubs in this state that are running hog wild. The Kiwanis club is going into towns of 1400 population and putting in clubs. It is evident that in small towns you cannot have two clubs and as soon as the Kiwanis or other club is established there is an immediate division. In towns under 5000, as a matter of economy, the business men cannot afford to be members of both organizations.....the luncheon club is causing dis- sention in the communities. They are going against the

¹Proceedings of the ninth annual convention of the N.A.C.C.S. (1923).---For example, the Kiwanis club international has always maintained the policy of supporting the chambers of commerce in their various activities and never has advocated a policy of superseding them in any way....it believes that clubs such as the Kiwanis have a distinct-- (con)
²Proceedings of the ninth annual convention of the N.A.C.O.S.--1923.
very principles that they enumerate in such a grandiose way at their international headquarters.\textsuperscript{1}

In Kansas, luncheon or classification clubs are many in number and form. Judging from the replies received from certain chamber secretaries in the state in answer to a question relative to the existing relations, it appears that the chamber of commerce is favorably disposed toward the luncheon club. Twenty-five secretaries answered the question, 22 of them to the effect that such clubs were helpful to the chamber. Three secretaries believed the clubs to be detrimental to the interests of the chamber, for as one says, "The Rotary and Lions clubs are composed of men, nearly all of whom are members and boosters of the chamber of commerce but the financial burden of belonging to their respective clubs often causes them to decrease their subscriptions to the chamber and also causes a division of interest. Most men have just about so much time and thought that they feel they can give to the community and when a good part of this is given to the classification clubs the chamber consequently suffers."

\textsuperscript{1}Proceedings of the ninth annual convention of the N.A.C.C.O.S.--1923.

*(con. from p 64)*
The majority of the evidence given in the above paragraph indicates that the average chamber in this state is not sufficiently strong to cover the field and is glad to have some assistance from other sources. It does not prove that a withdrawal of such clubs from the field in which the chamber operates, thus giving one organization complete power, would not be decidedly beneficial. That is to say, if all the time, effort, and money that goes to the classification clubs in the interest of community projects were given to the chamber of commerce, the resulting good might be much greater. Because two types of organizations are apparently operating nicely in a certain field of endeavor there is no reason to assume that greater efficiency would not result if one organization took over the entire work. The evidence might even be construed to mean that the chamber of commerce is unable to establish itself as the dominant community organization.

The whole question goes back to the assumption, previously made, that the chamber of commerce should be given a clear field in its work. Efforts put forth in that field by other organizations are not objectionable but should be directed by the chamber. Needless to say, there are many communities in which the chamber has neglected its work, and it is well that there has been such an organization as the classification club to supplement it, but this detracts
nothing from the fundamental principle. In such communities the chamber should be built up and so strengthened that it need not leave its work to other organizations.

A more thorough study of the classification club might reveal other objectionable features. We are not interested in these, if there are any. Granting that there is a place for such an organization and that its work is helpful, there still needs be no interference with the work of the chamber of commerce. If the expansion of such clubs tends to cause interference, this expansion should be curtailed and not that of the chamber. So long as there is harmony between the organizations and no overlapping of functions, as seems to be the case in Kansas, all is well. If a community cannot well support more than one organization, the classification club must be sacrificed in favor of the chamber of commerce.

Division of labor in the work of community betterment is as essential as it is elsewhere, but there should be one dominating civic influence to direct and control this labor. This influence can best come from the modern chamber of commerce.

Business Interests.

It has been pointed out heretofore that the chamber turns much of its effort in the direction of business because the welfare of the community hinges on business
conditions and because the majority of the citizens of any community have more than a passive interest in these conditions.

It should be made clear in the beginning that the chamber of commerce makes no attempt through any authority of its own to regulate business conditions. Even if advisable this would be impossible for the chamber has no power to make such regulations as would be needed. In no case is the chamber an instrument of the law. It does make investigations, report conditions to the public and bring the force of public opinion to bear upon those who are duly authorized and who can take action in the matter. It is not usually necessary to enlist the aid of every citizen, as the business men themselves, by concerted action, can bring sufficient pressure to bear. Often it is only necessary to point out the evil practices to discourage them.

The chamber is interested in seeing that the citizens of the community are allowed the benefit that comes from fair and just business enterprise. If fraudulent means are being employed by certain firms, the chamber feels called upon to investigate and remove, if possible, the business nuisance. In brief, the chamber looks after the interests of the community in the field of business.

It will be pointed out later how some chambers have found it beneficial to maintain credit rating bureaus and retailers' bureaus as a method of serving business interests,
as well as the community's interest in business. In fact, there are chambers in Kansas whose principal work points in this direction.

A question arises here. How far should the chamber go in its relation to business interests? Unless the chamber is a large one, the real one all-community organization with sufficient membership to enable it to spare the time of a regular committee for such work, it cannot afford to become absorbed with such intricate details as finding out and publishing data on "how promptly John Jones pays his bills." Not that such information would not be beneficial to those persons engaged in business and indirectly to the community but the chamber of commerce must devote its time to larger and more constructive projects. The chamber that pays a secretary $3000 a year to operate a credit bureau is making a sad mistake.

The reader should not be lead to believe, however, that the chamber of commerce, if organized on a large scale and as the sole organization in its field, could not combine the functions of the credit bureau, the retailers' bureau, the advertising club and the like. In fact, this is not only possible but there are many legitimate arguments to support such a plan. It is true that the average chamber of commerce in Kansas is not so organized and hence must not be concerned too greatly with the many problems of business until some changes are made.
In so far then as the chamber can better the community in which it operates it should be concerned with the business interests in that community. This is equally true of the chamber's relation with any particular community interest, but nevertheless it is not possible to lay down any more specific principle. There is little danger that the chamber will go too far in its relation to business interests so long as it stays in the general field without directing all its strength into one channel as often becomes the case when credit bureaus are operated by the chamber. There is no danger that the chamber will come to control business interests and assume a dictatorship in that field. The chamber, in its present status, depends too much on the support of business men. Plainly, the chamber cannot well dictate to business.

On the other hand, there is a danger that the chamber may be dominated by these same business interests. Not only is there danger but the condition actually exists, not only in this state but elsewhere. It is especially the case in the smaller chambers of commerce. It is not necessary to look far to find the chamber that is nothing more than an association of business men combined for the sole purpose of furthering the interests of their respective mercantile establishments. There is nothing wrong with an association as such, but it cannot operate honestly under the name "chamber of commerce."
The chamber of commerce is not an association of any particular set of citizens. It embraces not only business men, as such, but men in the professions, private citizens, and farmers as well. It can legitimately maintain a committee to look after the interests of particular groups for the purpose of efficient organization. Nor is there any reason why a group of merchants cannot form an association separate and apart from the chamber if they so desire, but the minute the chamber becomes the organization of such a group to the exclusion of others it ceases to be a chamber of commerce in the true sense of the word and should be enjoined from using that title. Unfortunately, due to lack of any restriction, there is much abuse of the name "chamber of commerce" with resulting detriment to the true chamber. There is need for some reform along this line and it is to be hoped that the United States chamber will take the necessary action to place at least some restriction on this wanton injustice.

In the light of what we have seen of the chamber's relation to business interests, it is not difficult to understand how the chamber of commerce may come to be dominated by these interests and become as a mere tool in the hands of a business men's organization. Generally speaking, business was responsible for the chamber's development, business men have always been the leaders in the organization, and the chamber of commerce is, even
today, looked upon as more or less an association for business men. Business men hold by far the majority of memberships in the average chamber and it is but natural that the interests of business men dominate.

The fact alone that business men have been dominant in the chamber is not to be criticized severely. In the most part, they are broad-minded and public-spirited individuals, willing to give their time and efforts to community projects as well as their vocations. They have made the chamber of commerce what it is today. In the future it will need their loyal support. But the chamber of commerce has reached a new era of growth. No longer can it be maintained for the benefit of a certain group. Its scope of work has greatly enlarged and it now reaches far beyond the field of business. It is the community organization and as such must serve with impartiality the many community interests. It can play no favorites.

**Educational Interests.**

Education, as a community project, has not received any great amount of attention from the chamber of commerce to date. Kansas chambers differ somewhat from the average in this respect. Twenty secretaries stated that there was some relation between their chambers and the educational agencies of their respective communities. The nature of this relation is not clearly revealed and in many cases it
may be little more than a casual knowledge of each other's problems.

Educational progress is a vital factor in community betterment, and it is a matter of conjecture as to why the chamber has not put forth a greater effort in this direction. It is possible that the chamber has found plenty to do in the branches of the general field with which it first became associated and has not felt that it could spare much time or energy on educational projects. Again, it may be that the chamber has been unable to find a satisfactory way of serving educational interests. It is not unlikely that those persons in charge of our educational institutions have resented what they may have considered to be the interference of an outside body.

On the basis of what has been done, it is difficult to outline any possible future developments. In the past the chamber's relation with educational interests has shown itself in such things as boosting for various school activities, aiding schools in their efforts to secure new buildings and equipment, providing speakers for classes, and like matters. Many chambers have contented themselves with boosting school athletics and with securing equipment for athletic teams. In the main, such things as these have to do with the public schools or with colleges or universities. There are other educational interests which the chamber has aspired to serve. For example, chambers of commerce have
been instrumental in bringing business colleges to their communities and in establishing night schools. At the present writing, a number of Kansas chambers are giving their support to what is known as the "Merchants Short Course" which aims at the instruction of business men who have not had the advantage of special training in modern methods.

All these things are for the best and point in the right direction but there is need for a more organized plan to replace this somewhat random method of procedure. The chamber of commerce should have as definite a plan for educational promotion as it does for business and agricultural development. The present-day needs of the average community for educational development warrant something more than a hit-and-miss plan of action on the part of the chamber. Present conditions would justify the chamber in giving more attention to education and less to business, if need be.

The appearance of the standing committee on education indicates that the chamber of commerce is coming to realize the importance of the community's educational interests. Of the 30 Kansas chambers reporting, 5 have such committees. It is quite safe to predict an increased interest in educational needs on the part of the chamber.
Agricultural Interests.

The last decade has seen a general awakening to the importance of the agricultural industry in every section of the United States. The chamber of commerce has shared in this awakening and recently has given considerable thought to plans for agricultural development.

In defending a plan of agricultural development for the chamber of commerce it is only necessary to point out a few salient facts relative to the bearing which agricultural pursuits have on community betterment. The secretary of a North Carolina chamber made a recent investigation in five southern states, making use of nine chambers of commerce. He discovered that in the nine towns investigated, 57.4 per cent of the business comes from the rural sections surrounding them. He says that, "if a secretary in any of the above towns is drawing $3600 a year, $2067.40 is coming from outside the city limits, whether he has any actual members out there or not. If you take away the 57.4 per cent of the business that your banks get from the rural section, you will have no bank members. If you take away that 57.4 per cent of business from your merchants, you will have no merchant members. The real support in the South for the chamber is coming from the farm."

Pro"ceedings of the seventh annual convention of the Southern Commercial Secretaries' Association---1924---p 85.
It is safe to assume that similar conditions prevail in any state that recognizes agriculture as its foremost industry. The question is, "what can the chamber of commerce do to help the farmer?" The answer must be left largely to the individual chamber for each locality has its own problems. The important thing is for the chamber to carefully analyze the field and determine exactly what the problems are, before taking any action. It may be a question of marketing or crop rotation or even a matter of exterminating such a pest as the boll-weevil which, it is estimated, cost the South $600,000,000 in 1923. Again it may be a problem of labor or co-operation. In every case the chamber must find out exactly what the problem is before it enters the field.

It is not the chamber's duty to send someone out to tell the farmer how to farm or what to do with his produce, simply as a matter of advice. Nor is it enough for the chamber to go out into rural districts and sign up a large number of farmers as members, in the belief that the farmer will be benefited by attending chamber meetings. The chamber of commerce must first do something for the farmer. It must inject something into its meetings that will interest him, just as it does for the business men. It must be remembered that agricultural development largely involves rural agencies and forces and that no plan of agricultural development should be attempted until a reasonable amount
of harmony between the constructive forces of the city and country has been secured. The relation of the chamber of commerce to agricultural interests may be said to revolve around the problem of bridging this gap between city and country.

Results of the questionnaire show that 26 of the 29 reporting chambers are devoting some attention to agricultural development. One secretary reported that the development plan was hard to maintain. The efforts put forth in this direction by Kansas chambers have been in connection with such projects as agricultural displays, public markets for farm produce, good roads, and dairy development. One Kansas chamber secretary has outlined a very practical plan of agricultural development and is advocating its adoption generally.\(^1\) It includes among other things a thorough survey of such matters as: general type of agriculture best suited to the community, average crop yield, soil fertility, diseases of crops and animals, suitable manufacturing plants for agricultural products, and transportation facilities. A survey such as this would give the chamber of commerce a splendid foundation upon which to work out a plan for agricultural development.

Kansas chambers are now considering farmers as very

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\(^1\) H. A. Russel, (Fort Scott, Kansas) --- "A Practical Plan of Agricultural Development."
desirable prospects for membership, and are making special provisions for the rural member. In several instances a low membership charge is made for persons living beyond the city limits. The farmer can seldom find a great deal of time to devote to chamber work, but this does not mean that the co-operation secured through his membership is any less a valuable asset to the chamber.

Considered from any angle, the chamber of commerce will find it advantageous to lend its assistance to the rural community as it does to the urban. The chamber that is without a definite plan for agricultural development is lagging far behind; for to neglect the needs of the rural districts is indirectly, if not directly, to neglect the needs of the town or city. Taking the long-time view, no city can develop faster than its surrounding territory. It may go ahead for a time, spurred on by artificial devices, but in the last analysis it must develop hand in hand with the rural sections. The chamber of commerce that would serve its community best cannot afford to neglect agricultural interests.
Chapter IV.

COUNTRY, JUNIOR, STATE, AND NATIONAL CHAMBERS.

A. THE COUNTY CHAMBER.

The county chamber of commerce, save for the fact that it embraces a larger territory, differs little from the city chamber. Its problems are much the same, as are its organization plans and its work. For this reason, it will be only necessary here to point out its existence and importance in Kansas.

The county chamber idea has never gained much of a hold in this state. The 1923 issue of "Commercial and Industrial Organizations," published by the department of commerce, lists only three such chambers in the state of Kansas.\(^1\) It is possible that some were overlooked in this census but it is likely that there are not more than ten such organizations in the state at the present time. Neighboring states, especially Missouri and Nebraska, show very much the same tendency.

The county chamber came into existence through a need for an organization that could serve the community interests of the many towns that were too small to maintain an efficient chamber. The largest town of the county, usually the county-seat, would organize a county chamber of com-

\(^1\) "Commercial and Industrial Organizations of the U.S."—pp 133-139.
merce with representative members from the other and smaller towns of the county. It is difficult to see how an organization of this type could function effectively and there were no doubt many perplexing problems. There could be but little harmony of interests for it is extremely doubtful if the members of such an organization would feel like contributing much of their money or effort to projects that might benefit other portions of the county rather than their own immediate vicinity.

Nevertheless, the county chamber accomplished some good, and those existing today should not be entirely discredited. It was, in a way, the forerunner of the modern city chamber and very clearly emphasized the need for such an organization type. It helped to hold the smaller communities together and to unify their efforts. It was at least a bureau for the exchange of ideas, a thing which in itself is often very beneficial. Furthermore, the county chamber was the first organization of its kind to give consideration to rural problems as well as urban. The county chamber has always given attention somewhat more equally to business men and farmer. In this respect it was many years in advance of the organizations that succeeded it.

With the rapid growth of population and the concentration in urban centers, the number of towns too small to support a chamber of commerce has greatly diminished. Also,
the city chamber is rapidly branching out into a larger field, and is giving consideration to rural needs. As a result, the county chamber is being displaced. There is no longer a very urgent need for such an organization. It is well that the various city chambers in a county keep in touch with each other and co-operate in certain types of work but under present conditions a central county organization is not advisable. The added burden of its maintenance would be greater than the returns that could be reasonably expected.

The next few years will very likely witness the complete passing of the county chamber. Its day of greatest usefulness is over. When a central body becomes necessary to bring the various local chambers into closer harmony ———and it may be needed now——a state organization of some type is best. A separate organization for each county would not facilitate matters to any degree in the advent of such a condition.

B. THE JUNIOR CHAMBER.

There has been no end of argument over the relative advantages and disadvantages of the Junior chamber of commerce. On the one hand, there is the opinion that there will always be constant jealousy and lack of harmony between the senior and junior chambers and that at best the junior chamber can only be considered as a necessary evil.
Those who advocate the junior chamber are loud in their praise of what it has done. They say that it provides for the young man between the time he leaves school until he becomes a business executive, that it has helped tremendously to solve the youth problem of our cities and that the junior chamber idea has taken the country by storm.

It should be made clear at the outset that there are two distinct viewpoints from which to look at the junior commercial chamber. From the first, the organization becomes an association of the younger men of the community for the purpose of assisting the senior chamber. The junior members have certain definite tasks to perform separate and apart from such enterprises as concern the senior chamber. From the second viewpoint, the junior chamber is regarded primarily as a training school for future chamber of commerce members. In the latter case, the junior members do not form themselves into an association and proceed directly to a solution of community problems. They are closely supervised by the senior members and what actual constructive work they do is undertaken by way of assistance in projects of the senior organization. The junior members are given some opportunity to work with senior members and thereby gain some practical experience, but the emphasis here is placed on training in the fundamental principles of good citizenship or on an effort to acquaint the youth of the community with its problems and to get them interested
in civic improvement. Here it is not a matter of how much actual good will accrue to the city directly in the way of material improvements.

There is a question also as to the age limits for junior members. By some, the period between the ages 16 and 21 is thought best, while others would place the limits at 18 and 35 years respectively. The former age limits are the most desirable. The junior organization should be made up of members who are not too young to have an interest in community affairs and are not old enough to be active members of a senior chamber. Having reached the age of 21, most young men are able to carry their share of the work in a senior organization. A secretary of a senior chamber in a southern state regards the 18-35 age limits as altogether too long. He is of the opinion that a man's period of community-service usefulness would wear out in that time, before he has a chance to join the senior chamber.

The junior chamber of commerce is not prominent in Kansas at the present time. Only three of the 30 chambers that answered a question as to this body, have junior organizations. However, these three junior chambers are proving to be very worth-while organizations and the idea behind the movement seems to meet with the approval of many other senior chambers. The fact that the junior chamber originated with certain of the larger eastern commercial organizations and that the movement has spread to this
section rather slowly probably accounts for the small number of such organizations in this state.

There is an organization known as the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. Through its efforts, information relative to the junior association has been given out freely with the resulting formation of many local chambers. Many of these have appeared recently and have not been in existence long enough to warrant a statement as to their worth and efficiency. The junior chamber has hardly passed through the experimental stage as yet and it would be difficult to attempt to forecast its future development.

Though the junior chamber may never become a prominent organization through its power to bring about immediate material benefits---and yet there are many conceivable things that it could do---it is commendable on the basis of its effect on the youth of the country. If the junior chamber can successfully train the young manhood of the country, rid the streets of some of its loafers by interesting them in something worth while, and thus can assure a higher type of citizenship for tomorrow, it will have no trouble in establishing itself in any community and those who have opposed it will have to withdraw their opposition.

If it is to be a true chamber of commerce, the junior organization must associate itself closely with the senior body. It should be organized through, and as a part of the senior chamber. The greatest danger is a division of
interest and a lack of unification of effort on the part of the two groups. Unless the closest harmony exists between senior and junior chambers the latter is doomed. It is a mistake for the United States Junior Chamber to instigate a movement in any community for a junior association without first taking the matter up through the senior body. Such a method is unethical and will never serve to promote the best interests of the junior chamber. The same principle applies here that has been set forth in regard to certain other types of organizations. The chamber of commerce must be the dominant leader in its field. Other organizations in the field should work under the direction of, and in close harmony with, the chamber of commerce.

C. A STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

There is at the present time no state chamber of commerce in Kansas but such an organization did exist at one time. There is an organization known as the Kansas Association of Chambers of Commerce\(^1\) which in a way is a substitute for the state chamber. The need for a state chamber is staunchly defended by many who have an interest in the commercial bodies of the state. Many others have wondered at the apparently natural and easy death of the

\(^1\) This organization is taken up in detail elsewhere in this thesis.
Kansas state chamber of commerce.

In November of 1919 a call was issued by the Wichita Board of Commerce to the chambers of commerce in the state to send representatives to a meeting for the purpose of perfecting plans for some form of state association. The delegates assembled at Wichita; a constitution and by-laws was passed, and a board of directors elected which in turn selected the officers. The organization was completed on November 14.

Article 2 of the constitution makes the following statement of purpose: "The chamber is organized for the purpose of encouraging trade and commercial intercourse within the state, fostering a spirit of co-operation between business and civic organizations of the state; to investigate and analyze such legislation as is being proposed for the state of Kansas; and to provide proper facilities for the consideration and concentration of opinions affecting commercial, civic, agricultural, and industrial interests. Furthermore it was planned to take a vote of the membership on questions of public policy, to gather information on special matters of moment to the many state interests, to organize a bureau to study all legislative matters, to arouse interest in governmental affairs, to furnish information to the administrative departments of the state on business matters, to develop and advertise Kansas resources, and finally, to
unite Kansas into one great commercial and agricultural body."

The officers of the state chamber consisted of a president, vice president, general secretary, and treasurer. To better facilitate the chamber’s operation, the state was divided into eight districts with 5 directors in district 1, 3 in district 2, 5 in district 3, 3 in district 4, 1 in district 5, 2 in district 6, 4 in district 7, and 5 in district 8. These territorial divisions corresponded to the congressional districts of the state.

There was no provision in the constitution for a central office and apparently the headquarters of the association was to have corresponded with the location of the chamber’s president although there is no statement to this effect. The board of directors was to assemble at regular intervals and at such places as the directors themselves should designate. There was a provision for special board meetings and for an annual convention of delegates from member associations.

Membership was of three kinds: active, sustaining, and association. Active members were assessed $10 per annum, sustaining members $25, and associations were assessed on the basis of size of membership at a rate of five cents per member.

The state chamber was short lived. It existed as a paper organization for three years, but as far as effective
work is concerned, it seems to have passed into history with the conclusion of the meeting at Wichita on November 14, 1919. There is record of two board meetings, one in January and one in February of 1920, but if anything tangible resulted from either meeting it is not evident. If the delegates of the various member associations ever assembled together no record was kept of the meeting.

What happened to the Kansas state chamber of commerce and why? Did the association fail or did it become apparent to those interested that such an organization was not needed in Kansas or that the time was not yet ripe for such an association? The latter is the more logical conclusion for the term fail can hardly be applied since no action was actually attempted. The chamber merely ceased to exist. A former director, now manager of a Wisconsin chamber of commerce, voices the opinion that the Kansas chamber was not properly organized, that the group of business men who formulated the plan were not representative of the state and that the secretary was kept so busy with finances that he had no time for constructive work.

Another director attributes the state chamber’s untimely death to a lack of financial support, while still another is of the opinion that lack of interest on the part of the members killed the state organization. He says, "It is just a little difficult to get men from active local chambers to do more than advertise, as jealousy creeps in
and each city seems to want to boost for the advantage of the industries within its own territory. It does not want another community to profit by the aid of state effort.¹

That there was a looseness in the organization of the state chamber is evidenced by the fact that some of the former directors were barely able to recall anything of its history and had never as much as attended a board meeting. For example, one former director says, "I do not recall very much about this organization....I have a faint remembrance, however, of such an organization."²

The advisability of re-organizing the state chamber is another point in question. There are at present 18 state chambers of commerce in the United States.³ Most of these are meeting with success in their operations. The Illinois and Pennsylvania chambers are probably the most efficiently managed and best financed. Kansas is not the only state that has been unable to maintain a state chamber. Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Colorado, and Texas have also discontinued their state organizations.

Mr. Colvin B. Brown, of the United States chamber, says, "There have been a number of state chambers of commerce which either have been abandoned or else became dormant, being continued perhaps without having any particular influence."³

¹Letter from H. E. Morris, dated Nov. 13, 1924.
²Letter from George B. Rose, dated Oct. 17, 1924.
Two of the former directors who responded to requests for information are favorable to the state chamber idea. One of these states that there are unlimited possibilities in Kansas for such an organization.\(^1\) Another former director, now a chamber of commerce secretary in a first class city of Kansas has a very different opinion. He says, "I am strongly inclined to the opinion that if Kansas maintains its present organization for the next few years it will be doing all that we can expect."\(^2\)

Four secretaries of state chambers of commerce replied to an inquiry with the statement that a state chamber is, in their opinion, a necessity in every state. An effort made to determine the attitude of the various local chambers relative to a state organization revealed several facts of importance. Of the 29 responses, 22 voiced the opinion that a state chamber would be beneficial. Seventeen secretaries stated that in their belief such an organization was needed at the present time. Six opposed the state chamber and five voiced the opinion that a state chamber is not needed at the present time. Seven secretaries voiced the opinion that the present state association was doing all that a state chamber could do, while ten others took the opposite view. The information seems to indicate

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\(^1\) Letter from R. W. Holcombe dated Oct. 25, 1924.
\(^2\) Letter from W. E. Holmes dated Nov. 15, 1924.
that the general trend of opinion among those who are giving
the matter considerable thought is favorable to the state
commercial chamber.

So much then for an organization that is now defunct.
If there is in Kansas some common ground upon which all
commercial organizations can unite for a common purpose and
if work can be found that will have a proportionate amount
of interest for these associations, then a state organi-
zation of some kind may be advisable.

If such a condition exists or can be made to exist,
the other difficulties can be overcome as they have been
in other states. The state chamber if properly organized
would furnish, first of all, facilities for research work
and for inter-change of information. It would link together
the business sentiment of the state and would tend to
break down the feeling of petty jealousy between local
organizations. The local chamber finds its activities,
greatly circumscribed and its efforts frequently thwarted
unless it can avail itself of the services of some central
bureau. The state chamber supplies this bureau.

One thing must be avoided if a state association of
any type is to function at all. It must never be allowed
to become a mere political machine that exists for the sole
purpose of controlling legislation that affects industry
and the commercial interests of the state. Also, it is
essential that there be certain lines of activity of suf-
efficient importance to enlist the services of all Kansas commercial bodies. Such projects as a state system of highways, or national advertisement of state resources are good examples of such lines of activity. These two particular projects are being carried on at the present time by other associations, but there are other projects that emphasize the need of, and seem to indicate the advisability of a Kansas State Chamber of Commerce.

D. THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

A brief discussion of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States will not be out of place here in view of the fact that there should be, and in many cases is, a close relation between the local chambers of the state and the national organization.

Several unsuccessful attempts were made to formulate a national commercial organization prior to 1912. In 1911, president Taft in his message to Congress emphasized the need for such an organization, and early in the year of 1912 commercial bodies throughout the country were requested to send representatives to a national conference. The conference convened at Washington, D.C. on April 22, lasted for two days and resulted in the formation of the national chamber.

Stated briefly, the purpose of the national chamber is to encourage commercial intercourse between states and with
foreign countries, to promote co-operation between commercial organizations and to advance the common purpose of its members.1

The structure of this national organization is somewhat complex. It is a federation of commercial organizations but a very loose confederation at the most. Membership in the body is limited to those commercial organizations that do not operate for private gain. Members are classified as follows: (1) local or state organizations concerned primarily with the interests of one particular locality or state as for example, a chamber of commerce; and (2) local, state, interstate or national bodies whose work is confined to one trade or group of trades, as for example, the National Retailers' Association.

Membership dues are based on the income of the member organization and are usually one half of one per cent. That is to say, an organization having an annual income of $5000 would be assessed at the rate of $25 per annum. Voting privileges are determined on the basis of the membership of the member organization. Organizations having at least 25 members are given one vote and allowed to send one delegate to all conventions. For each additional 200 members, over the original 25, one additional vote and one

1See bulletin, "The United States Chamber of Commerce."
delegate is allowed. No association is allowed more than 10 votes and organizations with less than 25 members can become members of the national body only with the consent of the board of directors. If admitted, such an organization is allowed one vote and one delegate.

Any member of a member organization is eligible to individual membership in the national body. These members are assessed $25 per annum and receive all information sent out by the national chamber but do not have the voting privilege. Organizations wishing to receive the information distributed by the national chamber but not wishing to take active part in its affairs are classified as associate members. They are charged an annual fee of $100 but do not have the right to vote. There is yet another type known as endowment members—persons who have given as much as $5000, aside from dues, to the national chamber. These members do not possess the voting right.

The national chamber is governed by a board of 46 directors, 34 of whom are elective. The remaining 12 compose the Senior Council which consists of the president, 4 vice presidents, a resident vice president, a treasurer, and the managers of the five separate departments. The 34 elective directors are nominated by a committee selected by the Senior Council and are voted on at the annual conventions. Working in connection with the board of directors, there is an executive committee which carries on the
work of the board between sessions. There are also a number
of special standing committees. Executive and investigat-
ing committees are appointed when needed to supplement the
work of the standing committees. Meetings of the delegates
are held annually at such places as are designated by the
directors. Special meetings may be called by the board at
any time. One hundred or more delegates representing twenty
per cent of the members constitute a quorum at these con-
ventions and have power to act.

The highest action of the national chamber is that of
ascertaining business opinion in the United States on
commercial questions. These opinions are secured through
an extended use of the referendum idea. When a question
is brought before the chamber and is decided sufficiently
important by the directors, information relative to it is
collected, published in pamphlet form and together with a
statement of the question and a blank for voting is mailed
to each member. All votes must be cast within 45 days
after receipt of the blank and if the vote is favorable by
a two-thirds majority, the question is framed as a bill and
recommended to Congress for action.

Also, the national chamber aims to assist its members
in all possible ways. To this end certain divisions have

1Twenty-three at the present time.
been organized. The Research and Information bureaus serve to keep members supplied with much needed information on business and commercial affairs. The Organization Service Division serves as a clearing house for information in which the problems and experiences of one member are made the common property of all. The Field Division promotes beneficial relations between members and supplies speakers and organization workers. Incidentally, this division has charge of the finances of the national chamber. The Press Division issues various bulletins and publishes the "Nations Business," a magazine devoted to commercial affairs which is sent free of charge to all members.

In 1924 the national chamber moved into its new building in Washington, D.C. It has come to be an organization of considerable power and influence in commercial affairs. A fear has been expressed by some that the organization will become so closely allied with the federal government and with big business that it will lose its own initiative and become a tool in the hands of these interests. It is feared that this tendency will reach the point at which only such matters as the government is interested in will be subjected to the so-called business vote. Such a condition would without question destroy the effectiveness of the national body in so far as benefitting commercial enterprise is concerned. If there is a ground for this
fear it is not apparent at present although it may reveal itself in the future.

There is one other objection. The most important work of the national chamber is carried on at the annual conventions by the delegates of the member organizations. And while the system of representation and voting is a very fair one, it is true nevertheless that many of the smaller member organizations are unable to send delegates while larger and financially stronger bodies always have their full quota of delegates on hand. This may easily result in minority control and is plainly an objectionable feature.

Information as to what the national chamber is actually doing for Kansas commercial organizations is somewhat limited. Data taken from the questionnaires show that of the 27 chambers reporting 17 were receiving some help from the national chamber. The secretaries report that for the most part the aid received is in the form of pamphlets and bulletins with suggestions for carrying on commercial work.

2. THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

At an early stage in the development of Kansas commercial organizations there came into existence a Kansas Secretaries' Association. The membership of the association is made up of the secretaries of various commercial bodies and particularly of chambers of commerce. The secretaries gather together at designated places each year and discuss
problems common to their organizations. At the present time the secretaries meet on an average of four times each year. The officers are a president, a vice president, and a secretary. The members are assessed according to the financial needs that may arise and not on a flat-rate basis. No definite program of work is carried on and all official business is handled at the meetings of the members.

In 1922 the members of this association invited all members of boards of directors of chambers of commerce to a meeting of chamber of commerce executives in Omaha. A similar meeting was held at Wichita in 1923. This meeting was attended by 150 executives. In February 1924, at a meeting of these executives in Hutchinson, a permanent organization was formed. It is known as the Kansas Association of Chambers of Commerce.

At the meeting of the association at Omaha in May, 1924, a program of work was outlined, a budget to carry out the program arranged and a means of financing the budget determined upon. The association holds an annual meeting and such special meetings as the president may call. The next recent meeting was held at Wichita on January 25, 1925. Besides the president and a secretary-treasurer who is a salaried official, there are eight vice presidents, one for each congressional district. Any member of a chamber of commerce may attend the annual meetings of the association.

Since the formation of a permanent organization in 1924
the association has limited its work, for the most part, to the state highway program. Aside from promoting interest in the program by giving it wide publicity, the association has secured the passage of legislation which will make possible the carrying out of the program in a few years.

In a way, this association of commercial chambers takes the place of a state chamber of commerce and yet its work to date has been in a much more limited field than that of the average state chamber which is active in all matters of interest to the state, whether from the standpoint of the business, civic, or social welfare. There is a question as to the extent to which such an association can fill present needs in Kansas or whether it should give way to a state chamber of commerce. In the questionnaire a question regarding this matter was included. Of the 27 replies, 10 were of the opinion that the present association was not doing all that a state chamber could do. Seven secretaries stated that the association was all that was needed in Kansas at the present time, while 10 reported insufficient familiarity with the association to express an opinion.

It is quite evident that this association is not doing all that a state chamber might do, but whether this body could do the work is another question. The advisability of a state chamber has been considered elsewhere. No
matter what conclusions are reached, the fact remains that the state chamber failed to function and was discontinued while the present association has made very favorable progress in its chosen field. Its progress seems to indicate that it is better to concentrate on one thing at a time in the matter of commercial organization work.

In answering a question relative to the amount of aid received through the state association, the replies of 23 secretaries were divided as follows: Sixteen receiving help; 11 receiving no help; and 1 receiving but little help.

Twenty-five of these secretaries attend the meetings of the K.A.C. of C. regularly while 5 do not. Only 23 of the chambers represented are members of the association.

It should be borne in mind, in connection with these replies, that the state association is not primarily concerned with assisting local chambers directly but rather indirectly through a program of work for the entire state. Nevertheless, it is well for such an association to concern itself somewhat with the problems of local chambers and if it is to do the most good it should devote some time to a solution of such problems. The interest and support of every local chamber should be enlisted in any program for state improvement for only in this way can the most desired results be accomplished.

F. THE K.A.C.O.S.

The National Association of Commercial Organization
Secretaries has been in existence since 1914. The predecessors of the N.A.C.O.S. had their beginning about 1905 but only during the past ten years has the organization operated under its present name.

In the sense that we are considering the word, the N.A.C.O.S. is not truly a commercial organization but its relationship with such organizations is very close and hence it deserves brief mention here. The purpose of the association is to develop a more efficient type of commercial organization secretary throughout the country.

The organization is not maintained by any particular directing body and is nothing more or less than an association of secretaries for mutual benefit. The purpose of the association is accomplished by annual meetings of the entire membership. Any commercial organization secretary, manager or similar official is eligible for membership and has voting rights at the annual meetings as long as his dues are not in arrears.

The annual meetings are usually held in the fall of the year and for three-day periods. Election of officers, appointments of committees, and all similar matters are attended to at these meetings. Programs for the meetings are outlined far in advance in order to enable the speakers to make preparation. The programs deal with every phase of commercial organization work. Aside from the addresses, time is also given for discussion of each topic.
Group meetings are held for more detailed discussions of certain matters of particular interest to only certain types of secretaries.

The benefits derived from the meetings of the N.A.C.O.S. are attested by the increasingly large number of secretaries attending the sessions each year. The most recent meeting was held at Washington, D.C. in October 1924, and was attended by some three hundred secretaries. Fifty percent of the Kansas secretaries reporting attends the annual meetings of the association. It is very probable that many more secretaries would be attending regularly if their organizations were in a position to finance the trips. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that the secretary makes such trips to equip himself for rendering a more efficient service to his chamber and to his community and he should not be expected to advance the money for these trips out of his own salary.

There are a few other and more limited organizations of secretaries. There is, for example, the Southern Commercial Secretaries' Association which draws its members from Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, Louisiana, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

These organizations do not differ materially from the N.A.C.O.S. in purpose and their work is carried out in much
the same way. They give special attention to commercial organization secretaries in particular sections.
Chapter V.

OTHER COMMERICAL ORGANIZATIONS.

We will pass now to a study of certain other commercial organizations whose work is much more limited than that of the chamber of commerce but is nevertheless in the same general field or, to speak more correctly, in a particular branch of the general field, namely, business development. Of these organizations, the Retailers' Association by virtue of its earlier development and more rapid growth will first be considered.

A. RETAILERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

As the name implies, a Retailers' Association is an organization of persons in a particular locality engaged in the business of retailing. Such associations are therefore concerned primarily with promoting the best interests of retail merchants.

In the early stages of the development of retailing, each merchant conducted his business as he saw fit; he paid little attention to what other merchants in the vicinity were doing; and, he was inclined to look with disapproval upon any proposal to co-operate with a fellow retailer. This is no longer true. Industrial development of the country has brought about an increasingly complex system of merchandising and the retailer has changed his views. He knows that he cannot conduct his business to the best
advantage alone and without the aid of a co-operative body and has learned that co-operation among retailers is not only beneficial but a practical necessity.

According to figures published in a bulletin by the United States Department of Labor, there are more than twenty-five retailers' associations in Kansas and twenty other similar organizations operating as Merchants or Business Men's Associations. The estimate includes not only city but county organizations as well. Some of these associations originated as parts of Chambers of commerce and have been in existence for some time but not as separate organizations. This practice is still in existence in some places. Under such a plan the chamber of commerce has a special division which looks after the interests of the various retail establishments and carries on its work in much the same manner as does the separate retailers' association.

There is considerable difference in the way in which the work of these associations is carried out and some vary from the general policies but most of the work is done along fairly well established and uniform lines of procedure. Generally speaking, there is a close agreement as to aims and purposes.

The objects of the average retailers' association are few. One Kansas secretary states that the objects of his
organization are to improve business conditions and to eliminate delinquent debtors, no-fund check artists, and
graft advertisers.\(^1\) Another secretary writes that his
association has for its purpose co-operation in credits,
sales days, and similar matters, while others lend their
efforts toward eliminating unfair methods of competition,
protecting their members against "fly-by-night" advertis-
ing schemes and against solicitations for donations to
questionable funds.\(^2\)

As a general rule, any person engaged in retail
merchandising is eligible to membership in the retailers'
association and the membership is made up of individuals
who represent their respective firms rather than the firms
themselves. A small membership fee is charged. A presi-
dent and vice president are selected from the members of
the association and in certain instances, boards of direct-
ors are chosen. The members assemble at regular times
usually weekly or semi-monthly, and discuss matters per-
taining to their activity in the field of business. In the
larger associations it is sometimes necessary to appoint
committees for investigation purposes but generally all
business of the association is transacted at the regular
meetings.

\(^1\) Letter from the association secretary at Parsons, Kansas,
Dec. 15, 1924.
\(^2\) Letter from the association secretary at Winfield, Kansas,
Dec. 14, 1924.
Aside from the city associations of retailers, there are some county organizations in Kansas. They operate for the same purpose and on a similar basis but on a somewhat larger scale than does the city association. In many counties there are a number of towns too small to maintain their own associations and in order to receive the benefits of co-operation with their fellow merchants, the retailers of such a town join in the forming of a county association.

It is not for me to say that, under present conditions, there should be an increase or a decrease in the number of commercial organizations. It may be said, however, that the results of the work of retailers' associations seem to justify their existence. They have filled the need of the modern merchant for some kind of protection against fraudulent dealings and unethical business practices. There is nothing idealistic nor is there anything especially altruistic in the spirit behind the typical organization of retailers. It is essentially a business men's organization operated on a business-like basis. It is an outspoken organization in its work, has certain definite things to do, and aims at immediate results.

The retailers' association operates in a limited field and with a somewhat selfish motive. Nevertheless, much that it does results beneficially for the community in which it operates. Business standards are raised, unfair competition
lessened, and the buying public protected against dishonest business practices. The business of buying and selling has been ridded of a number of unscrupulous dealers, and many fraudulent schemes have been thwarted.

Retailers' associations have been charged with having monopolistic tendencies. It is not possible, however, without a more extended investigation to determine to what extent, if any, retailers in Kansas have made use of their combined efforts through associations to monopolize trade and regulate prices. It is known, however, that some associations never discuss prices at their meetings and never make attempts at price regulation, while other associations may not have such a good record in this respect. The retailers' association is not a perfect organization, yet it is certainly doing a good work and appears to have established itself permanently.

B. MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

In some Kansas cities and towns, the merchants have banded together in organizations known as Merchants or Business Men's Associations or in some cases just the name "business men's association" is used. Letters received from such associations show that they correspond almost identically to retailers' associations in so far as purposes and objects are concerned. The chief difference is in the name used, and the writer is unable to find any
Kansas town in which there are two distinct organizations, one of retailers and one of other business men.

All such associations in this state operate on much the same plan, there being occasional differences in such matters as election of officers and selection and use of various committees. In 1923 there were 26 Kansas commercial organizations operating under the name of Merchants or Business Men's Association.¹ Their close resemblance to retailers' associations makes a more careful consideration of their operation unnecessary.

C. CREDIT ASSOCIATIONS.

The merchant in the larger towns and cities deals with so many customers that a large percentage of them are necessarily strangers to him. It is impossible for him to keep posted, financially speaking, on every member of the group from which he draws his business. And yet he cannot safely extend credit unless he has such information, for experience has shown that losses are too great. He hesitates to discontinue his credit business because he knows that if properly handled, it is profitable. Therefore he makes an effort to secure the needed information.

His efforts in this direction have resulted in the

¹"Commercial and Industrial Organizations in the U.S."---pp 133-139.
establishment of Credit associations. Such organizations are nothing more than combinations of those business men of a community who transact business on a credit basis. The operation of the organization is comparatively simple. As before explained, retailers' associations often perform the duties of a credit association which makes unnecessary a separate organization. This plan is very satisfactory as the retailer is the one most interested in credit ratings and also is in a good position to aid the establishment of such ratings. Only in the larger towns will the retailers' associations be too busy with other matters to give time to credit ratings. In the small community there is no good reason for having two distinct organizations, but such a situation exists in several Kansas communities. In either case the operation is very much the same.

The chief business of the credit association is to secure credit ratings of as many as possible of the customers buying in one particular locality. These ratings are obtained from lists turned in by members showing their ledger experience on each charge account. These are compiled on cards and there is a separate card for each individual. Information taken from these cards is published regularly—usually weekly—and distributed among the members. The information needed is sometimes collected at meetings of the entire membership at which time special problems are taken up and each member adds his bit to the
common fund of knowledge.

A paid secretary is often the only officer of the association although some organizations elect a president and vice president. Such officers do little more than preside at meetings. The secretary handles the mechanical process of classifying and disseminating the credit ratings. Some credit associations issue weekly confidential bulletins containing items of information regarding new-comers to the territory, business changes, and warnings of grafters and frauds.

A recent article in "Credit World" states six chief services rendered by a credit association. First, it advises how credit buyers pay their bills; second, it prevents irresponsible persons from opening accounts; third, it tries to educate, encourage, and influence people in the prompt payment of their obligations; fourth, it stops the biggest leak in any credit business—bad accounts; fifth, it protects members from impostors and frauds; and sixth, it locates skip-debtors through the co-operation of over one thousand cities in the United States.¹

Many Kansas credit associations go farther than merely supplying credit information. They assist members in the collection of accounts. The association feels no hesitancy

¹Letter from T. H. Barrett, dated Dec. 23, 1924.
in taking drastic measures and can bring considerable force
to bear in making collections. It points out clearly to
the consumer that if he fails to pay his bills, records in
the office will show it, other members will be given the
information and he will thus be handicapped in making
purchases in the community. When it is absolutely impossible
to make collections the debtor's name is published in the
bulletin for the benefit of other members.

In less densely populated parts of the state where
there are numerous small towns there is a decided tendency
toward organization of credit associations with the county
rather than the town as the unit. In such sections,
rural customers buy at various towns and do not restrict
their trade to any one group of merchants. The farmer may
live equi-distant from four towns and possibly will do some
trading in each. With a separate credit organization in
each town needless duplication of work results. To avoid
this duplication a county association is formed. It renders
the same service to the county that the local association
does to its local members.

The Harper County association which is typical of
such organizations in this state draws its members from
twelve different towns and has its headquarters at Anthony.

\[1\]According to the most recent census there were fifty credit
associations in Kansas. Fifty per cent of these operate
on a county basis. This estimate does not include organi-
izations doing the work of credit bodies but operating under
other names.
The merchants of each town send all information that they have relative to their customers to the central office and receive in return similar information relative to customers in other towns.\(^1\)

Kansas credit associations are not only local and county-wide in their scope but extend over the entire state and into other states. For example, the credit association maintained in connection with the Salina Retailers' Association exchanges credit information with 140 members in Salina and with all cities in Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, and Missouri.\(^2\) This extension service is a valuable asset in keeping informed on new-comers from other states or parts of the state. There is no state credit association but the Kansas Retailers' Association includes credit ratings in its work and serves as a central organization for local Kansas credit bodies. The state retailers' association goes so far as to send out men to organize local credit associations.

The experience of Kansas credit bureaus maintained as parts of chambers of commerce has in many instances not been satisfactory and the plan is not extensively used. Letters from representative associations over the state indicate that there is little friction between credit associations and other commercial organizations.

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\(^1\)Letter from T. H. Barrett, Anthony, Kansas, dated Dec. 23, 1924.

\(^2\)Letter from Charles H. Bren, Salina, Kansas, dated Dec. 15, 1924.
The credit association exists to render a very definite service. The advantages accruing to credit merchants from its existence are very evident and it is not without its advantages to the buying public. As a live-wire commercial organization, it ranks among the best in Kansas.

D. ADVERTISING CLUBS.

Advertising Clubs have been developed to meet the needs of the advertiser who is besieged by innumerable requests to purchase space. The advertiser has a certain sum to invest in placing his wares before the public and must use that type of advertising which will best serve his purpose. He cannot afford to buy space from every salesman that comes along, and yet he must have some way of placing his advertising.

For the individual advertiser to make all the necessary investigations to determine the validity and the comparative worth of mediums that may number several hundred and range in kind from stickers for car windows to space in college annuals, is an obvious impracticability if not an impossibility. Through the services of an advertising club the advertiser can secure this information at a relatively small cost and much more accurately than he could probably secure it for himself.

The organization of the club is not complicated. The advertisers in a city meet together, elect officers, and
delegate a certain person or persons to carry on the work
of investigating advertising mediums. The work may be
done by the secretary or other salaried official. If by a
salaried official, the amount of the salary will depend on
the amount of work done. The members pay a fee for the
service sufficient to defray the expenses of the organi-
ization.

Briefly, the work of the advertising club is this.
The members, who usually comprise as much as 90 per cent
of the advertisers of the city, agree not to place adver-
tising in mediums that have not been investigated by the
advertising club. Thus, those persons who desire to make
contracts for advertising space must first go to the off-
cicial in charge of the advertising club and make explana-
tions regarding the mediums which they represent. After a
careful investigation, a report is made by the officials of
the advertising club. If the medium is sanctioned, the
salesman will be given an "approval" statement to present
to member advertisers.

However, the advertising club does not merely say
that the medium is satisfactory or refuse entirely to
sanction it. On the other hand, the statement from the
club will contain specific recommendations as to the class
of advertisers that will be most benefited and as to the
actual extent of the medium's worth. The writer had
occasion at one time to appear before the advertising club
of Wichita in regard to advertising in a college annual. The statement received from the club was to the effect that the members could best use their own judgment in the matter and that there was some value to the advertising as a matter of good will. As a result, those advertisers who catered to the trade of college students and were desirous of retaining the good will of such students purchased space while others did not. The work of the advertising club also includes campaigns for the elimination of untruthful and other forms of fraudulent advertising.

The extent of advertising clubs in Kansas is not readily determinable but it is probable that there are less than ten such active organizations in the state at the present time. This is possibly due to the fact that there are so few Kansas cities of sufficient size to need the services of such an organization. In smaller cities the work of the advertising club is done in connection with other associations of business men.

The fact that advertising has reached great proportions in the last decade and that it is vitally affecting business in general gives greater significance to the advertising club as a commercial organization. The club renders a very necessary service to the advertiser and with the growth of our business centers gives promise of becoming a leader in the field.
E. MISCELLANEOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

The Business Women's Club.

Among the commercial organizations of lesser importance in this state, the Business Women's Club deserves brief mention. In recent years, women in Kansas have entered freely into business activity with the result that they have found it profitable to organize clubs in an effort to advance their interests in the field of business.

In 1923 there was record of eleven such organizations in this state. Only meager information is available concerning them. The actual number of women engaged in business enterprises and professions is still relatively small, though constantly on the increase, and in only the larger cities of the state are there a sufficient number of this type to make advisable a commercial organization. As we have seen before, many chambers of commerce are allowing women to hold memberships, which fact has a tendency to decrease the number of business women's organizations.

The business women's club exists for much the same general purpose as the association of business men. However, the organization of women does not usually have an active program of work in the sense that the members plan any drastic changes in business relations. On the other hand, it offers an opportunity for women engaged in business to discuss problems common to their kind and derive such
benefit as may come from mutual exchange of ideas. The work is passive rather than active although such clubs often join with commercial chambers in matters of general community interest and are often a prominent factor in the success of such enterprises.

The officers of the business women's club usually include a president, a vice president, and a secretary. Committees are appointed as the need arises and seldom are there any standing committees. Membership is limited to those women actually engaged in business or in certain other professions. The membership fee is a very nominal one. No particular effort is made to keep the membership total at any specific point for the business women's club takes the stand that if business and professional women feel that the club will be beneficial they will join of their own accord.

Business women's clubs can be said to be in the first stages of development in Kansas. This results partly from the fact that women have been slow to organize and partly from the limited number of women actually engaged in business in the state at the present time. If women continue to take an active part in business and professional life, these clubs or similar organizations will no doubt increase in number as well as in size.
Manufacturing has not reached a highly developed state in Kansas and as a result organizations among manufacturers are not common. There are perhaps but three cities in the state with factories of sufficient size and number to give the industry a rank of any importance. A brief sketch of the Wichita Manufacturers' club will suffice to give an idea, at least, of the purposes of such organizations in this state as they are all very much alike.

The Wichita club was organized in 1917 but accomplished little of importance except the putting on of window displays of Wichita-made products, until it came into the chamber of commerce as a bureau in 1922. A series of monthly meetings was inaugurated, the meetings being held in the plants of the various members. At each meeting the proprietor of the plant is asked to tell all that he desires regarding his business. Such statements bring out many and varied questions and a general exchange of ideas ensues. The club considers and acts upon matters of legislation, state and national, affecting the interests of manufacturers generally. Speakers are often invited to address the meetings on matters of general interest.

The manufacturers' club is in the infant stage in Kansas. Its future as a commercial organization depends largely on the future of the manufacturing industry which

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1Letter from W. E. Holmes, Wichita, Kansas, dated Dec. 5, 1924
gives promise of making rapid strides to the front in the next few years. Such associations are at present, little more than co-operative clubs, but should develop rapidly as the needs arise. There is the same need for organization among manufacturers as among retailers and the need becomes increasingly great with the growth of the industry.

**Associations in the Insurance Business.**

Associations of insurance agents have not been common in Kansas, but recent years have seen a considerable increase in their number. There is at present a state association of insurance agents which assists in the organization of local associations. The work is carried on in districts which are identical to the congressional districts. There is a head office in each district.

Some of the organizations have functioned regularly while others have survived but a short while. These associations aim to promote a better understanding among members, to encourage co-operation along right lines and to place the insurance business on a higher plane by educating agents throughout the state in the matter of ethics and self respect.

The association at Salina, organized over twenty years ago, is perhaps the oldest one of its kind in this state. It is concerned chiefly with holding agents together, improving the ethics of the business, and render-
ing more efficient service to the public.¹ In this city all business is written and distributed through the association. The various locals are expected to co-operate with the state association with the same objects in view.

It might appear that a close union of all insurance agents might become something in the nature of a trust directed at a control of rates. Of this feature, the president of the fifth district of Kansas and a former president of the Salina association says, "These associations have nothing to do with insurance rates and are not in violation of any law or the spirit of any law, not being the nature of a trust."¹

Conclusion.

To this list of commercial organizations, several others of less importance might be added but little information is available concerning them. For example, there are associations of Automobile Dealers, associations of Retail Grocers, Farm Bureaus and the like. For the most part, such organizations have functioned very irregularly. Some have operated for a few months and passed out of existence while others have existed as paper organizations only, and still others have been swallowed up by organizations of a different nature. A few have existed separately for a time

¹Letter from R. P. Cravens, Salina, Kansas, dated Dec. 11, 1924.
and later have become branches of other organizations.

One of the most recent of Kansas commercial organizations is the Kansas Daily Newspaper Association. The association has not only advertised within the state but has spent considerable money in placing facts about Kansas before people in eastern United States as well and is planning a more elaborate campaign in the future. All of the larger daily papers of the state are members. It is too soon to make any statements as to the results of the work of this organization. Future development will probably prove its worth.

These numerous associations of more or less importance arise to meet special needs and will continue to come and go as the occasion arises. Their field of work is limited and they operate in somewhat the same way as do the organizations which have been described more fully. Wherever and whenever it becomes evident that concerted action means mutual benefit for those acting, such commercial organizations will spring up and their life depends largely on the continuance of the needs that they can satisfy.

F. STATE ORGANIZATIONS.

To better carry on the work of their respective associations, many Kansas commercial organizations operate on a state-wide basis. The state body usually serves as a
center around which the many local associations move. It holds the local organizations together and makes for concerted action on problems common to all. Local associations, while formulated on the same general basis, often vary widely as to the ways of carrying on their work. This difference may reach the point at which the operations of one association are actually detrimental to those of other similar bodies and the common purpose of all may even be defeated. The state body serves as a clearing house for the many local associations and affords a means whereby they can work co-operatively for the common benefit of all.

Kansas Bankers Association.

Associations of bankers are infrequent in Kansas. In fact, the most recent issue of the United States department of commerce bulletin of commercial organizations lists, for Kansas, no local organizations of bankers, and but two such state bodies. Some may explain this fact by declaring that Kansas bankers have just been slow in organizing, but this is hardly the case. In the first place, the business of banking is not one that requires as high a degree of organization as the average retail establishment. Banks are far less numerous than these other retail establishments, competition plays a lesser part and the prevailing

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1By organization, we do not mean, of course, organization within the bank but among banks as a group.
systems of banking differ to no great extent throughout the entire country.

The bank is, by the nature of its transactions, a rather independent institution and has a fair understanding of what other banks are doing. In the smaller towns, with from one to ten banks, there is little need for a bankers' association. In the larger towns, clearing house associations serve the purpose to a certain extent. I do not wish to convey the idea that no benefits would accrue from organizations of bankers for this is not the case. However, it does seem rather impracticable on other than a large scale, as in the case of state associations.

There are two such organizations in this state. The first, the Kansas Bankers' Association, was organized February 22, 1887, in Topeka. At this time there were sixty members, representing something over fifty banks. There are at present 1310 members in the association and every bank in the state, except five, is represented.

Membership in the association is voluntary and there are no iron-cold rules of eligibility. Membership is made up of institutions, not individuals, and includes banks, trust companies, and similar financial institutions of high standing. The association aims at the development of good feeling among banking institutions, with the view of

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Letter from W. W. Bowman, Topeka, Kansas, dated Dec. 16, 1924
accomplishing certain tangible results through concerted action. In an educational way, much is accomplished by the exchange of ideas, the circulation of printed matter and through group meetings and conventions.

The more definite objects of the association involve such matters as the promotion of laws to strengthen the banking business and the establishment of armed forces in every community as protection against burglaries. Considerable correspondence is carried on by the association, the members availing themselves of the opportunity to secure valuable information, especially relative to banking law. The association has nothing to do with the supervision of the immediate bank's management and does not attempt to control any of its member banks.

The official organ of the association is the "Kansas Banker." It is not a financial organ but simply a medium of communication between the central office and its members. It is published monthly. There is a similar association of bankers in every state in the Union and also there is an American Bankers' Association which operates on a national basis.

The State Bankers' Association.

This organization is one of state banks and should not be confused with the organization discussed above, which embraces many kinds of banks as well as other financial institutions.
It became apparent during the year 1909 that the state banks of Kansas have needs and problems peculiar to themselves, and that proper organization would foster mutual benefit not to be secured otherwise. As a result, some of the leading state bankers assembled together, drafted a constitution, adopted rules, elected officers, and set in motion the organization known as the State Bankers' Association.\(^1\) The association is conducted by elective officers, with the annual convention as the supreme authority. The executive council, made up of a president, two vice presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, sixteen district vice presidents and all past presidents, exercises the functions of administration.

The association is aimed to conserve and advance the interests of state banks in Kansas and to perfect and assist in the enforcement of state banking laws. It has grown rapidly and the various departments of its work have multiplied with the years. The association headquarters are located at Topeka. The total membership (banks, not individuals) is slightly less than a thousand.

The official publication of the association is the "Bulletin." Special attention is given in its columns to all topics of interest to state banks and it provides

\(^1\)Letter from E. D. Partridge, Topeka, Kansas, dated Dec. 9, 1924.
practical information on many phases of banking. The "Bulletin" makes public the performances of forgers, bank robbers, swindlers, and so forth, and is used to assist the association's placement bureau in placing competent persons in Kansas banks. Conventions are held annually and are intended to provide a clearing house for state bank ideas and a forum for the exchange of opinions and views.

**The Kansas Retailers' Association.**

The Kansas Retailers' Association was organized in 1899. It exists today for two chief purposes: First, the formation of local credit associations; and second, the protection of merchants from bad legislation. The association sends out men to organize credit bureaus throughout the state and has sponsored many such organizations. At present it serves sixty-five cities and towns of Kansas with credit information.

In its earlier days, the association placed on the statute books of the state several laws affecting business. One of these was the garnishment law which has proved very beneficial to merchants in collecting debts. Also, through the activities of this association, the anti-trading-stamp law was made permanent. The organization has for many years been a leader in the fight against ill-advised legislation.

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1Letter from Dale Resing, Wichita, Kansas, dated Jan. 15, 1925.
The Kansas association operates very much as do other such state bodies. There are a few individual members but membership is made up largely of affiliated locals. That is, all the members of a local association are affiliated at a per capita fee.¹

Miscellaneous State Organizations.

In addition to the Kansas Retailers' Association, there are several state associations of merchants. They are: Kansas Retail Clothiers, Kansas Butchers' Association, Kansas Retail Druggists, and Kansas Book Dealers. Each of these associations functions for the particular interests of its members as a class. They have no relation with local, city or county associations, but serve their members as individuals.

Each association confines its efforts to certain problems which the officers of the organization believe do not concern or interest merchants in other lines. Herein lies a weakness of Kansas state retail commercial associations. True, there are numerous problems which concern but one type of retail trade and in which other merchants have no particular interests, but there are also a considerable number of such problems that vitally concern more than one type of retail merchants. There are, in fact, ¹

¹Nebraska has a state association of affiliated class associations---butchers, furniture men, dry goods dealers, etc.,---but the plan is not in common use.
many matters which may involve the entire field of retailing. To allow one small group of merchants to regulate such matters is not only an unjust but a very detrimental practice.

A striking example of the possible results of such a practice comes to light in the recent attempt of the retail druggists of Kansas to have enacted a law that would legislate back into the drug store many items now sold by department stores and grocers. The unfairness of such a procedure is quite evident and yet it was only through concerted action on the part of other retailers' associations that this program was defeated. Just what can be done to remedy this condition is a question requiring considerable study. Certainly, the present condition is not conducive to the realization of the fundamental aims upon which all of these commercial bodies are supposedly organized.

Why not one retailers' association for the entire state, organized to serve the whole of Kansas retail trade? Under a central organization there could be divisions or bureaus as needed to care for the interests of each separate group. There could be a division for the clothiers, the butchers, the druggists, etc. Each group would receive practically the same benefits that it does under the present

1Letter from Dale Resing, Wichita, Kansas, dated Jan. 15, 1924.
plan and yet much duplication of effort would be eliminated as well as certain harmful practices mentioned above.

Organization under such a plan would also tend to reduce the actual costs of operation as it would be necessary to maintain but one central office for the entire organization. The chief obstacle to such a plan is the fact that many groups of retail merchants are convinced of the fact that they can accomplish more by working separately and are adverse to contributing to any organization that assists other types of retailers as well as themselves. Their interests are decidedly selfish and plans for the so-called "common good of all" carry little weight with them.

A plan for the centralization of such associations has many commendable features and sooner or later must be adopted if Kansas retail merchants are to receive the greatest good that can come from close co-operation and centralization of power. But first, retail merchants will have to be made to see these advantages before any such plan can hope to succeed.

There is in Kansas a state association of fire insurance agents which falls under the head of commercial organizations. It serves chiefly as a pivot around which the activities of the various district insurance agencies operate. The work of these local agencies has already been explained. The state body exercises no control over the smaller associations and has as its chief motive the
promotion of interest in organizations of insurance agents over the state. Membership in the organization is small, members pay no dues and there is no aggressive policy of work. The state body might well be said to serve as a buffer organization for district associations.

G. INTERSTATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Organizations of this type, with headquarters in Kansas, are very few in number. Of the interstate organizations, The Western Retail Implement and Hardware Dealers Association with headquarters at Abilene is worthy of note. This organization, a branch of the National Federation of Implement Dealers Associations, was organized in 1889 with a membership of eighteen dealers. The paid membership for 1924 was 2109. The purpose of the association is to safeguard the interests of dealers in hardware and implements and to furnish them with the many services which they require and the information they need in the conduct of their business.¹ A separate department of information is maintained and, according to the present secretary of the association, it has grown to great proportions. Hundreds of questions are answered annually, some of which pertain to the identification of machines for which repairs are wanted, others to legal matters and others to

¹Letter from H. J. Hodges, Abilene, Kansas, dated Dec. 9, 1924
miscellaneous matters relative to the trade. A secretary, an assistant, and four stenographers are employed by the information department and the volume of business is constantly on the increase.

A field man sent out from the central office maintains a personal contact between the association and the dealer. The official organ of the association is "The Bulletin." It is sent to all members regularly and contains the important news of the trade. Occasionally, a vote of all member dealers is taken on matters of special significance. Only recently a vote was taken in an effort to determine the opinion of dealers on the "list" and "discount" method of billing implements. Conventions are held annually at which times various phases of the trade are discussed at length and resolutions adopted.

The association's departments of service are seven in number. The insurance division, by special arrangement, furnishes members insurance at rates which mean a saving of fifty per cent. Freight bills of member dealers are checked and claims filed by the freight audit department. The information department is prepared to answer most any question that may come up in the hardware business. Members are assisted in moving stocks and securing employees through the sale, exchange, and want department. They may secure answers to legal questions by sending their inquiries to the legal department. The division of note
and mortgage blanks furnishes to members at a minimum cost condensed forms of title note, mortgage note, and chattel mortgage blanks. Credit ratings of new-comers are furnished dealers through the credit department.

Among other such organizations, listed in the 1923 report of the department of commerce of the United States, are the Wood Preservers Association, the Association of Broom Corn Dealers of America, with headquarters at Wichita, and the Victory Highway Association. The last two mentioned are branches of national organizations and carry on the work in this state as a unit of the larger body. The Victory highway, when completed, will be a cross-continental highway and in each of the states through which it is to pass, there is an association to further the cause of the road and to aid its completion at an early date.

There are a few other such organizations in this state that may be classed as commercial bodies but their work is not of sufficient importance to warrant any mention of them here.
Chapter VI.

CONCLUSION.

In the preceding chapters we have seen how the commercial organization had its beginning in the early stages of commercial and industrial development and how it has gradually expanded, paralleling, almost, this same development. We have seen how it was devised to fit a need that is essentially the outgrowth of an industrial movement, a movement so rapid that it has allowed neither careful study nor constructive planning.

During the past two decades, Americans, as a race, have been concerned chiefly with their vast industrial enterprises and they have not paused to give more than passing attention to the problems that have resulted from their activities. Perhaps if our industrial development had been slower and the rush to industrial centers a trifle less pronounced, we would have less need for certain of our commercial organizations today. If some divinely endowed prophet could have pictured the present condition twenty years ago, much more thought would, no doubt, have been given to such matters as city planning, recreational centers, and the like, and perhaps there would have been a less acute need for a chamber of commerce in the modern city.

Man, apparently, has always been governed by his desire for financial gain. As one writer has well said,
there is an organization for everything. Where formerly there was an organization of retail merchants, there is now an organization of hardware dealers, of clothiers, of druggists, ad infinitum. Each class has its separate organization and there is every indication that this process of division will continue and that organizations will spring up within organizations.

In the actual number of her commercial organizations, Kansas does not stand out as a leader. In fact, as compared to such states as New York and Pennsylvania, the number approximates insignificance. But she is not far behind in proportion to her industrial development. Though the state is essentially agricultural in nature, the number of commercial organizations is constantly on the increase and the question can well be asked: Are there too many commercial organizations in Kansas? Would there be greater efficiency in operation if they were fewer in number?

In answering a question similar to the one above, 20 chamber of commerce secretaries replied in the negative while only 6 advocated a fewer number. As to the matter of centralization of commercial organizations, all of these same secretaries favored the plan, eleven opposed it, one took the stand that a benefit is probable and one took the stand that a benefit is doubtful.

These statements furnish evidence that is neither decidedly for nor against centralization of organizations
in the state, and it must be remembered that these opinions come from representatives of a particular type of organization and thus it may well be assumed that they are in some cases prejudiced. Opinions from the representatives of the many other commercial organizations or from disinterested persons might easily be very different. In fact, it is very unlikely that they would be similar. We must look at the question in the light of all interests involved and not alone of those of the chamber of commerce.

In considering the question of limiting the number of commercial organizations, or at least centralizing their efforts, the matter of resulting good to the community should be paramount. It is of no great concern whether the present situation is best for the individual organizations involved. We are interested in seeing whether the community would or would not be benefitted by such a move and if so to what extent. Presumably, those organizations, or many of them at least, have community betterment as their chief aim. If the present system is not conducive to such betterment, they should certainly be willing to adopt a new plan when once it has proved its superiority.

On the other hand, certain arguments have been advanced to substantiate the belief that centralization is not best. It is said that the various groups have interests that are clearly separate and apart from those of other
groups and that it is unreasonable to expect them to work hand in hand. For example, why should a club of manufacturers be linked up in the same association with retail druggists or why, in turn, should the association of retail merchants bother itself with what the chamber of commerce is doing? Many illuminating examples can be cited to show the merits of such a belief, nor is it difficult to find such examples under the conditions that have existed in the past.

The case for centralization, though it probably has fewer advocates, is based on more sound reasoning. In this day and age of the inter-dependence of one group of people on all other groups, it cannot truthfully be said that the interests of one are not in the final analysis the interests of the others. The interests of the retailer or the manufacturer or of anyone else are the interests of the community. The community prospers when they prosper and they, in turn, can advance no faster than does the community. These groups, though at first glance they may seem entirely different, are closely linked together and an injury to one is reflected in the activities of the other.

Let us grant for the sake of argument that the retailer has certain interests that can be best protected and furthered through an association of the members of his trade. Does the work of organization stop here? It does
not. Soon there is to be found a merchants' credit bureau, an advertising club, an association of automobile dealers, and so on. It cannot be said that none of these have interests in common. Certainly each is faced by special problems but so is every individual, as far as that is concerned. Does it seem plausible for merchants to organize associations to cope with the problems arising from the use of credit in business and to belong also to an entirely distinct club in order that their interests in the field of advertising will be properly cared for?

There is certain to be some overlapping of functions and considerable wasted effort when commercial organizations are as numerous as they are at present in many Kansas cities, and elsewhere. It seems hardly logical to advocate concentration when the prevailing tendency seems so clearly to be pointing to a greater division of interests and an increasing number of organizations. But sooner or later this tendency must check itself. It cannot go on indefinitely. In the past, our rapid industrial growth has made possible the many organizations which now operate in the field; which has been so broad that there has been no noticeable conflict of interests. But with a constantly narrowing field and a constantly increasing number of organizations, a clash is inevitable. Gradually these many organizations will draw closer together and soon will be treading on each others toes. The efforts of one to
secure certain desired ends will conflict with the rights of another working in the same field.

Such a condition would not be conducive to the welfare of any community and certainly we should not await the inevitable clash before doing something to alleviate the condition. It perhaps is not wise to place all existing organizations in the field together under one head, for there are some that can best exist separately, and there are a few that can well be eliminated. But nevertheless a certain amount of centralization is possible and, furthermore, it would not be difficult to bring about this centralization. The fact of the matter is that in many Kansas cities and towns most of the commercial bodies are in the hands of the same group of individuals. For example, a merchant is a member of the chamber of commerce, a presiding officer in the credit bureau, and also a member of the advertising club. Now, if he participates in three such organizations, he should certainly be able to do much more effective work through a central organization.

Furthermore, it is apparent that in many Kansas communities, there are some commercial organizations existing more or less in name only, simply because there is no room or possibility for financial support of more than one or two such organizations. But what will be the basis of a plan for centralization? Clearly, any such plan will necessitate the establishment of some central organization.
with which the others will be associated as bureaus. The chamber of commerce seems to offer the best possibilities as a center or pivot organization.

At first glance, this statement may call forth some disapproval. It must be remembered, however, that under any such plan the chamber of commerce would have to be a somewhat different organization than it is today. We have seen that the average chamber in Kansas, at the present time, is by no means in a position to handle all the work in its chosen field or even to direct that work. Other organizations have been necessary to supplement it and without these other bodies much of the work would probably have been neglected. The average chamber has been only too glad to shift some of its many duties to the shoulders of the merchants' association, the manufacturers' club, and to others. It has not been dominant in the field.

This does not mean that the chamber of commerce cannot be made the central organization in the field of commercial relations and community betterment. Chambers of commerce can and are assuming the full responsibilities and, by a system of bureaus, are taking care of the interests of each particular group. There can be a bureau of retailers, one of manufacturers or one of credit men and even the advertising club can advantageously come under the general direction of the chamber. The business man, by joining the
chamber, could associate himself with those bureaus which were of interest to him.

Such a plan would not necessarily mean that dues paid to the chamber would be distributed among the many bureaus so that the man who wished to contribute to one would be forced to contribute to all. The finances need not all be in one general fund out of which the chamber officials make distributions as they see fit. The finances of the various bureaus can easily be kept separate. For example, a man joins the chamber of commerce and pays the customary fees. If he wishes to associate with the retailers’ bureau he will pay an additional fee which will be used only by that bureau. In fact, the matter of finances should cause no trouble though it is often advanced as an argument against a central organization. The chief objective is to insure harmonious action between the various interests and to eliminate needless effort. This can only be done when the various groups are under the direction of a common leader.

Any plan for centralization of commercial organizations may appear, at first sight, far-fetched and unnecessary. There is reason for this as such a plan involves a step into the future which to many who have not considered the matter thoroughly is a step in the dark. At the present time, there is no noticeable conflict between commercial.
organizations. They appear to be progressing nicely and without interference with each other. But it seems inevitable that, as the number of such organizations increase, this harmony will decrease and the clash become more apparent.

There will always be opposition to any plan for centralization. There are always some individuals with desires so selfish that they are unable to see wherein they can possibly be as greatly benefitted by associating with an organization that does not operate solely for their interests as they can by an organization of their own small group. It is to be hoped that this class of individuals is in the minority.

It is quite possible that centralization can take place under some plan other than the one outlined above, though the tendency seems to be in that direction. Sooner or later these many commercial organizations must get together on a common ground and the sooner the leaders in the field come to a realization of this fact and begin to give consideration to the matter of centralization, the better it will be for all concerned.
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