

WHAT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CAN DO

It should be recognized at the outset that the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce—great and invaluable as it will be—cannot do certain things.

It cannot "make Philadelphia known as the world's greatest workshop."

It cannot get orders to keep our mills busy.

It cannot bring here a rush of new factories.

It cannot be a salesman or any sort of active auxiliary to any man's own business.

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But it can do things far more important—things which will make it easier to live and make money here, and which will gradually bring about a bigger, better known city.

Some of the things it can do may be judged by the experience of other cities.

In Boston, for example, the Chamber of Commerce, with its 5000 members and its fund of \$125,000 a year, has accomplished such things as these:—

(1) Caused the creation of a special board for developing the port, with an initial appropriation of \$9,000,000 for building docks and other facilities.

(2) Obtained several new steamship lines to Europe, through the Panama Canal, etc.

(3) Helped to revise rules for steamboat inspection, to obtain more aids to navigation, to get an enlarged immigration station, a new custom house.

(4) Secured lower freight rates from the West on grain, and represented New England effectively in all matters of transportation, express rates, etc.

(5) Averted through mediation two serious strikes—one of telephone employees and one of street railway employees.

(6) Obtained legislation that was fair both to the public and to business men for abating the smoke

nuisance, for the compensation of injured workmen for preventing fire by better building laws.

(7) Influenced, after expert study, the extension of streets and other matters of city planning.

(8) Brought about better terms for city contracts—street lighting, garbage disposal, etc.

(9) Conducted important tours of business men looking to better trade relations—one through Europe, one of 16,000 miles through South America.

(10) Held an exposition of industries.

(11) Brought to Boston the International Congress of Chambers of Commerce and many other important conventions.

(12) Improved retail trade conditions by driving out itinerant vendors, reducing shop-lifting, encouraging early Christmas shopping, etc.

(13) Installed clinics for employees in stores and factories, fought the loan sharks, extended the system of savings bank insurance for wage earners.

(14) Investigated charities and solicitors for members—finding 75 per cent of the cases in which business men were asked to contribute to be unworthy or fraudulent.

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This is the sort of broad, constructive effort that the enlarged Chamber of Commerce can apply to the problems of Philadelphia.

Few of these activities directly affect the individual business man, or directly advertise the city.

But all of them mean much to the business man in improving the internal and external conditions which affect the growth of his own business.

The actual development of his own business is up to him.