

A DANGER AND AN OPPORTUNITY

The enlarged Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce will face a great opportunity. And it will face a serious danger.

The opportunity is one which is almost unequaled—that of getting behind one of the great metropolises of the world, a city which has been falling back, and lifting it up to its rightful place.

The danger is one which every trade organization faces. Those which fail to overcome it lose most of their effectiveness.

This danger is the ambition of separate trades and separate industries to make the central organization do for them the work that they ought to do for themselves.

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When a new organization settles down to formulate its program, its executive board usually finds laid out before it about four times as many things to be done as it can do efficiently.

The problem is to select those tasks that are biggest and will do the greatest good for the city as a whole.

Naturally, each business, each group of business men, is likely to think its own special difficulties those which should be attacked first. Not in a selfish spirit, but because of lack of perspective.

There will be bills before Congress and the Legislature which would harm an important industry.

There will be street improvements which would benefit a certain district.

The industrial reputation of a city is only the sum of the individual reputations of its individual manufacturers.

There will be places where publicity (paid for by the Chamber of Commerce) would develop much business for certain trades.

There will be institutions in which members are active which deserve endorsement, abuses of a special character which should be remedied, great national movements in which the Chamber should join.

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Probably most of these causes will be worthy.

Probably not half of them are important to the membership as a whole.

The chief task of the Chamber of Commerce in every city is to refrain from dissipating its energies on worthy causes of a limited scope.

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The duty of Philadelphians is to look at things in a big, broad way.

Do not foist your own hobbies on the Chamber of Commerce.

Do not get impatient or resign if it fails to do just what you want.

Do not demand results too quickly.

And, above all, do not expect the Chamber of Commerce to make Philadelphia goods famous or to sell your goods for you.

That is your job.

No city can make its industries great. But the industries can make their city great.

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