

PHILADELPHIA MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

THE American Association of Museums held its twenty-fourth annual meeting at Philadelphia, from May 22 to 24. The problems under discussion were those of science, history and industry museums, as well as those of art museums—which last the association considered in joint session with the American Federation of Arts. The two organizations brought their concurrent conventions to a close with a joint banquet attended by more than four hundred delegates and Philadelphians. Headquarters were at the Bellevue-Stratford and most of the sessions were held there.

The association elected Fiske Kimball, director of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, as its president to succeed Chauncey J. Hamlin, president of the Buffalo Museum of Science. Mr. Hamlin retired after leading the organization through six years of development from an obscure professional association to one with well-established national headquarters—located in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

The meeting gave much attention to the plan of the new \$15,000,000 Philadelphia Museum of Art, which, under the directorship of the new president of the association, is developing its exhibits separately for the student and the public. This scheme—on the scale here adopted—is epoch-making for art museums; it savors of the best practice among science museums and, further, it has much to offer by way of example to these institutions as well as to art museums. A general session and one of the several group conferences were given over to this subject.

Another group conference—that of museum preparators—was responsible, during the meeting, for the organization of the new technical section of the association. Frank Tose, chief of exhibits of the California Academy of Science, was elected chairman.

More time than usual was devoted to problems of industrial museums. This circumstance was in response to the interests of two important new institutions—the Rosenwald Industrial Museum of Chicago and the Museums of Peaceful Arts of New York—and also in recognition of the growth of the National Museum in this field. One general session was the occasion of a symposium on the treatment of industry in exhibits of the four different kinds of museums.

The report rendered at the meeting by the treasurer, Mr. George D. Pratt, showed that the association had an income of approximately \$30,000 for operating in the year ending April 30 and that it had administered several special funds which—during the past six years—have shown receipts of more than a third of a

million dollars. For appropriations to the general and special funds, the report made acknowledgment to the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the Rockefeller Foundation, the General Education Board, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The director's report, also rendered at the meeting, reviewed the progress of the association during the past six years, which have constituted a period of exploratory work and financial growth under generous subsidy. In these years the number of museums holding membership has doubled and the number of individuals has trebled, so that at present most of the active museums of the country are institution members and about eight hundred museum professionals and trustees are enrolled as individual members. This and other progress, as reflected in finances, has given the association a substantial grounding for its work in the future.

In commenting upon his report, at the opening session, the director said:

The work of our staff—both in office and field—is varied. We have published six volumes of a fortnightly newspaper, *The Museum News*, and also a series of monographs on museum work. We have made technical studies of museum methods, compiled information and published the results as books. Four of such volumes have appeared, one is in press and two others are in preparation. We have carried on a large correspondence, much of it giving information and advice. We have filled positions. We have helped to organize and develop new museums, we have endeavored to stimulate certain public officials and to discourage others. We have represented museums before city councils, state legislatures and the National Congress.

Our director has visited more than four hundred museums throughout the United States and in fifteen countries of Europe and South America. These travels have yielded material for books, have acquainted us intimately with museums, and have brought us into touch with associations and official agencies in the museum field both here and abroad.

With some of our special grants, we have financed university research on museum problems, made possible an official study of the educational possibilities of government lands, organized an important international exhibition, paid for an international commission on industrial art, and also, at a cost of \$226,000, we have built demonstration out-door museums in a state park and in three national parks. This last activity has been chiefly the result of the brilliant and untiring voluntary work of Dr. Hermon Carey Bumpus.

By such activities as these, the association is endeavoring to fulfil more largely each year the purpose for which it was created.

LAURENCE VAIL COLEMAN

Director