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Executive officer for the American Association of Public Accountants; Bulletin, September 30th, 1910

American Association of Public Accountants

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FOR
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

BULLETIN

September 30th, 1910
To the Members of The American Association of Public Accountants:

Dear Sirs:—

At a meeting of the Special Committee on Guarantee Fund held September 30th, 1910, the secretary reported that up to date One hundred and thirty-nine (139) members have subscribed Twenty-five ($25) Dollars each, and Fifty-four (54) Ten ($10) Dollars each.

This makes a GUARANTEE FUND of more than Four Thousand Dollars ($4,000) per annum for the next three years, all or any part of which may be called for by the Board of Trustees of the Association. An alphabetical list of the names and addresses of the subscribers is appended.

In response to requests made of them, several members of the Association have contributed their views on the question of employing an executive secretary. A copy of these opinions is presented herewith.

Respectfully yours,

Geo. Wilkinson

Secretary of Committee.
OPINIONS EXPRESSED


"The American Association has as yet accomplished very little in advancing the profession of Accountancy before the public. The time has now come, however, when the Association should enter upon the broader object of its organization, namely, ‘spreading a knowledge and recognition of the utility and necessity of the Public Accountant in the industrial and financial development of the country.’

“To accomplish this great object requires a permanent, well paid Secretary with suitable headquarters, and unless some such step as this is taken, I greatly fear that our Association will slowly weaken in its influence.”


“I am in favor of such an arrangement, and believe that the profession would be benefitted greatly, first, in stimulating interest in public accountancy in the educational institutions where accountancy courses are a feature—it is to such institutions that we must look for the first training of those who are to do the work before the profession; second, in raising professional standards, and third, in stimulating the interest of those who might require the services of public accountants.”


“The governing body of The American Association of Public Accountants consists of busy men with little time to spare from their own important work. They freely give such time as they can to the advancement of the interests of their profession by directing its policy in the various matters of importance that arise continually. It seems essential, however, that there should be some official of the Association who can give his whole time to carrying out the policies upon which the governing body may decide; who can represent the profession officially upon all occasions when one of the honorary officials is unable to do so; and who can generally promote the interests of the profession on the lines laid down by the governing body, from morning to night and from year end to year end.”

“As a general proposition any National Organization of importance should have one permanent officer at least, to look after its interest, and it has been found expedient in many highly organized bodies to employ as salaried officer an ‘enthusiast.’”


“I heartily approve of the purpose for which this guaranty fund is being raised, and will do all in my power to speed the work, taking the form as it does now of a sort of propaganda. Of course, the scope of the authority of the Secretary should be carefully guarded, and I believe will be by the Executive Committee, as planned, in order that information furnished by the Secretary, upon request may not improperly commit the association without its having had an opportunity to pass upon the questions raised.”


“In order that accountants should become recognized by the public as a selected class doing intelligent, serious, beneficial work, it is essential that they should be brought in contact with other groups or classes as often as possible. It is my opinion that the best and most expeditious way to bring about such relations is through the employment of a Secretary for the American Association, who shall devote his time in large part to the development of such opportunities.”


“It is impossible to find a man young, energetic and loyal who will carry out all the various duties that should devolve upon him unless he is well paid. At the present time the funds of the Association do not permit of the payment of a suitable salary, and the present invitation to individual members to institute a fund for this purpose for a definite number of years, seems not only desirable but necessary in the best interests of the American Association and the whole profession.”


“The right man working in the direction contemplated and thus acting as a medium for educating the people to the importance of the profession of accountancy and the large and useful part it plays in the business world at the present time would at the same time confer a benefit upon every individual accountant in the country.”

"The object to be accomplished by this movement, as I understand it, is the increase of the usefulness of the Association to the profession at large, particularly by enabling it to have, as one of its officers, a secretary who will be able to devote his whole time to its interests. The success of the movement will depend, of course, upon the energy and capability of the officer appointed and the wisdom of the Executive Committee in guiding him, but the experiment at any rate seems worth while trying."


"On general principles I am opposed to making personal guaranties, although I believe the idea of the appointment is an excellent one and should be carried out, as it will operate for the benefit of every accountant in the country. This being the case, it does not seem to me that the burden of financial responsibility should be borne by a few people. I believe that the various state societies would be found willing to make by assessment on their members, if necessary, any reasonable contribution for the special purpose now contemplated."


"There is no doubt that the American Association can be made ten times more effective in promoting the best interests of the profession if adequate provision is made by its members for taking advantage of all its opportunities promptly and energetically.

"While remarkable progress has been made under the present organization, it will never be possible for officers and committees consisting of men in the active practice of their profession to always give timely attention, and to advance the detail work incident to, matters vital to the well being of the whole profession. An efficient well paid permanent Secretary devoting his whole time to the Association has become an absolute necessity."


"I am in hearty accord with the suggestion, believing that the Association should have an efficient and responsible man in the position, one thoroughly competent to perform the duties as outlined by your Committee, and should be very glad to contribute my proportion to the proposed guaranty fund."

"The association needs an executive officer—a man of character, initiative and energy; big enough to realize the possibilities of the profession and carry out the ideas of the Association as expressed through its Board of Trustees.

"The right man can increase the demand for our services, enlarge the scope of the profession and advance the standard of work."


"If this executive officer could educate the general public in the fact that public accountants serve the general public rather than the particular firm or corporation who pays their bills, that, in other words, the general public is the real client whose interests have to be protected, he will be doing a benefit to the entire Association of Public Accountants, which, of itself, will be well worth all he costs."


"While I am willing to contribute my proportion of the expense, I personally believe that the wrong method is being pursued by taxing a few, who are willing to pay, and allowing others to enjoy the undoubted advantages without bearing their proportion of the burden. In my mind, it would be better that the By-Laws be revised and a higher amount for fiscal dues be charged to each member to offset the additional expense."


"I am glad to see that the matter has at last been started in a definite form, and most sincerely hope that when the guaranty has reached sufficient proportions, that some one may be obtained to fill the position of Executive Secretary who will prove to be the right one."

Lester Herrick, C. P. A., California.

"I am in full accord with the proposition to provide the American Association of Public Accountants with an income from which it shall be able to pay an executive officer who will devote all his time to the interests of the Association, and through it to the profession at large, and hope in time that we, on the Pacific Coast, may reap some of the benefit."

"I am heartily in accord with the movement for which the proceeds of this fund may be utilized, and am confident that it will accomplish the purposes anticipated."


"We must use our energies, our means and our intelligence to promote the interests of the profession until it is placed upon the same substantial basis in the United States that it occupies abroad. "Not only should we work to place ourselves in a more favorable light with the business interests and investing public but, in my opinion, we must give more attention also to obtaining proper recognition through legislative channels—particularly through the various state legislatures."

Norman McLaren, C. P. A., California.

"The movement to supplement the American Association's income by private contributions and thereby enable it to secure the services of an executive officer has our warm approval. It may be some little time before we on the Pacific Coast derive much benefit from this movement, but we are glad to see the matter taken up at this time by accountants in the East."


"An Executive Officer, being a practical Accountant not in active practice, can educate the business public to the advantages gained by securing the services of a Certified Public Accountant, who, coming in contact with business bodies and increasing their interest in the value of our services, would become an agitator, while guarding against any semblance of Professional Touting."

Herbert M. Temple, C. P. A., Minnesota.

"Past experience demonstrates that work or service of this character should not be undertaken with private subscriptions. As the work is for the benefit of the entire Association, the expense should be an Association burden, and not a personal tax. If the revenues of the Association are insufficient to meet its demands, there can be no reasonable objection to the slight increase necessary to meet the proposed undertaking. By all means, let us direct our efforts toward developing the efficiency and usefulness of the Association along consistent and practical lines."

"I have long been in favor of more aggressive methods to bring the Certified Public Accountant and the character of his work to the notice of the general business public. The best way to do this is by means of papers read before conventions, and my experience indicates that the officers of commercial and professional associations will always welcome the accountant to a prominent place in their programs. The trouble has been to find the proper persons to write and present the papers without stirring up jealousy on the part of those who are not qualified to do this peculiar work, and yet who think they are. If a competent man can be obtained to do it officially, it is my firm opinion that great progress will be made in establishing accountancy as one of the learned professions, which it most assuredly is."


"The production and education of good accountants is just as necessary to-day as is the education of the public to the benefits to be derived from their employment. Another useful purpose to be added to those already suggested might be the outlining and promulgating of some general scheme to be adopted by the State Societies for the education and development of 'future accountants.'"

Francis A. Wright, C. P. A., Missouri.

"Such an officer can do much for the common good of the entire profession. I feel sure the two societies of which I am President (the Missouri Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the Kansas City Society of Public Accountants) will be glad to assist such an officer in any way in their power, and we shall hope to have the opportunity of hearing from him and of his work at some of our meetings, in person as well as by letter."


"The American Association is much in need of the services of an executive officer, who will fulfill secretarial and administrative duties and devote his whole time to the cause. It will require careful direction by the Executive Committee for the first two or three years to lead this officer's duties into the most effective channels."
Waldron H. Rand, C. P. A., Massachusetts.

"The proposed Executive Officer for the American Association will secure an advertisement of the profession of the Certified Public Accountant not to be excelled. The great need of Public Accountancy is the instruction of the business public to a realizing appreciation of its importance, its necessity as an interpreter, a safeguarder, an insurer of the right interests of all business relations."

William Dillon, C. P. A., Massachusetts.

"An officer as proposed should be a man of mature years, unblemished character, well educated and possessed of a dignified and impressive personality, so as to command respect and attention from the business world and reflect credit on our profession.

"He must be a man of large experience and receive a generous compensation so that he would feel perfectly satisfied to put forth his best efforts in everything undertaken."


"The American Association of Public Accountants was created by the Local State Societies, and has, in my opinion, no right to receive money direct from individual members for any purpose, for it receives its income from the several State Societies, based on the State Society's membership. It is my opinion that a permanent and Executive Secretary and office should be maintained out of the funds of the Society; and if the same are not sufficient the dues from the State Societies should be correspondingly raised."

Overton S. Meldrum, Kentucky.

"I most heartily commend this movement and feel that every member of the Association should feel it, not a duty, but a privilege to aid in the betterment and uplift of the work that is dear to and means so much to the profession."

Chas. R. Shannon, Tennessee.

"I have talked with several of the members here in connection with this movement and they are all of the same opinion as to the merits of the proposition, but like myself, they seem to think the method of raising the funds is not in keeping with such an organization as The American Association of Public Accountants. Would it not have been better to increase the dues? I am satisfied a great many will never reply to this communication, but who would willingly pay more yearly dues."

"When the late President McKinley first appointed the Interstate Commerce Commission an effort was made by the Illinois Association to get in touch with the Congressional Committee with a view of gaining for the Accountants of the country recognition by such commission. The effort was unsuccessful at that time, as there was no one whose business it was to pursue the quest. Thus a golden opportunity to secure full government recognition was lost. By all means let us have an Executive Officer whose duty it will be to look after just such openings as this."


"Little objection will probably be made to the object of the proposed arrangement, namely, the appointment of an executive officer who will be properly compensated so that he may devote his whole time to the work of representing the Association. The funds also will doubtless be forthcoming—the serious problem is the selection of the man.

"As the responsibility for the success of the movement will rest on the Board of Trustees, it is obvious that this official should be appointed by them, rather than be elected by the members of the Association."


"The engagement of an Executive Secretary for the American Association of Public Accountants cannot help but meet with the unqualified approval of its individual members. I believe it to be indispensable that the salary of this official should be large enough to secure the services of a man of high ability; one who is thoroughly familiar with the problems and difficulties connected with our profession, but who, at the same time, is not actually in practice.

"Among his many other qualifications, the proposed position must be filled by a man who neither represents the East, as against the West; nor the North, as against the South. He must be equally the representative of the small practitioner as well as of the large. The accountant in California, or in Minnesota, must feel that he is receiving the same representation and benefits as the accountant in Pennsylvania."

"I heartily endorse the plan to secure a capable man who would devote his entire time to the objects of the American Association of Public Accountants. I believe the interest of the profession can be greatly advanced through the adoption of this policy."


"I am heartily in accord with the idea of having a secretary for the association, one who can and will devote his entire time to the faithful performance of his duties and acquaint himself with all matters surrounding the accounting profession, one who will be able to initiate movements tending towards uplifting the profession of accountancy to the highest standard of efficiency and prominence and keep it there.

"I understand there is some discussion as to changing the By-Laws and making this secretaryship by appointment rather than by election by convention. I think this a good idea and I would certainly vote to have the secretary appointed by the Board of Trustees."
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