American Association Meeting

American Association of Public Accountants

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The American Association Meeting.

The Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the American Association of Public Accountants, at Atlantic City, October 20 to 22, 1908, proved to be the largest, and, in many respects, the most successful meeting yet held. Two hundred and thirty-five delegates, members, and guests of the association were in attendance, including over forty representatives of British and Canadian associations of accountants. The number and high standing of the foreign accountants present was perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the convention. It gave an opportunity for an informal exchange of views and for broadening and unifying the interests of English-speaking accountants that was highly appreciated. No doubt one result of this intercourse was to strengthen the important movement toward raising and making uniform the standards of examinations for accountants' degrees.

A new movement, which will work in the same direction, was the formation of a National organization of members of the State boards of C. P. A. examiners. The first meeting was held on Monday, October 19, and other meetings during the progress of the convention. It was thought desirable in order to promote an entirely frank discussion of the questions to be considered to hold the sessions behind closed doors. The principal result made public was the election of a standing Committee on Information and Advice, to receive suggestions, confer with examiners, and in general take action with a view to elevating and broadening the standards of C. P. A. examinations. The officers of the National organization are: president, H. A. Dunn, New York; vice-president, William A. Chase, Illinois; secretary and treasurer, Harry Treat Beers, Connecticut.

Inasmuch as a detailed, official record of the proceedings of the convention will appear in a subsequent issue of The Journal of Accountancy, a full report of all the business transacted is unnecessary at this time. Three of the State societies, Ohio, Louisiana and Georgia, reported the enactment of C. P. A. laws by their respective State legislatures during the past year. Commenting on these laws the Committee on Legislation stated:

"They are all three alike in providing for the establishing of a Board of Examiners who shall conduct the examinations of applicants for the certificate, the Governor in each instance to appoint the Board. In Louisiana and Ohio the Board is to consist of persons 'skilled in the practice of accounting and actively engaged therein in the State;' while in Georgia one member of the Board shall be a 'practicing attorney in good standing.' The Georgia Act requires that the 'examiners shall be public accountants who have been in practice for at least five years.'

"All three of the Acts vary from the Model C. P. A. Bill in defining the general educational qualifications expressed in the latter, Ohio being somewhat more explicit than the Model Act in its requirement that the applicant shall be 'a graduate of a high school, or one who has received an equivalent education,' while Louisiana left the whole determination of
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the educational qualifications to the Board of Examiners under the general clause, empowering them to require of the applicant not only a knowledge of the four technical subjects, but 'such other branches of knowledge as the Board may deem necessary to maintain the highest standard of proficiency in the profession of Public Accounting.' In Georgia, unfortunately; no general educational qualifications whatsoever seem to be required.

"All three acts provide for the waiver, Georgia permitting the waiver to be extended to any person within or without the State who shall have been practicing for three years immediately preceding the passage of the Act, and who shall apply in writing within three months of such date; Ohio providing for a waiver term of six months for those who have 'practiced the profession of public accounting at least three years.' Louisiana requires five years' previous active experience 'as an accountant or bookkeeper,' with a time limit of ninety (90) days after the passage of the Act.

"All three Acts provide for the reciprocity clause, extending to holders of certificates in other States the privilege of receiving a certificate from either of these three States, if the Board of Examiners shall so decide, Ohio, however, requiring that 'the Board shall be satisfied that their standards and requirements for a certificate are substantially equivalent to those established by this Act.'

"All three Acts have a penalty clause declaring the wrongful use of the initials C. P. A. to be a misdemeanor subject to a fine, or, in the case of Louisiana, to a jail sentence.

"Since the passage of the Act in Ohio the Board of Examiners have been endeavoring to obtain a judicial definition of the term 'Public Accountant' and it is to be hoped that the Board may succeed in its purpose, and that the term may be defined in such a manner as to conserve the best interests of the profession.'

New university schools for the training of accountants were reported by four of the State societies, namely, Illinois, Colorado, Missouri and Minnesota. In all four States members of the association are actively engaged as instructors in accounting. The various standing and special committees submitted reports, which were accepted by the convention with slight modifications, and will be printed in a subsequent issue.

Papers of exceptional merit and interest were presented to the meeting as follows:

"Railway Accounting in Its Relation to the Twentieth Section of the Act to Regulate Commerce," by Professor Henry C. Adams and by Mr. Arthur W. Teele, C. P. A.

"Accounting Practice and Procedure," by Mr. A. Lowes Dickinson, C. P. A.

"The Accounting of Industrial Enterprises," by Mr. William M. Lybrand, C. P. A.

All of the papers were discussed as thoroughly as the time limits permitted. In view of the large number of the members who evinced a readiness to take part in the discussions, it would seem desirable in future meetings to arrange the program so as to allow for more time to be devoted to this purpose.

The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows:

President, Mr. J. E. Sterrett, Pennsylvania; secretary, Mr. T. Cullen Roberts, New Jersey; treasurer, Mr. H. T. Westermann, Missouri;
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trustees, Mr. E W. Sells, New York; Mr. Robert H. Montgomery, Pennsylvania; Mr. Franklin Allen, New York; Mr. Harvey S. Chase, Massachusetts.

The social features of the annual meeting included a complimentary luncheon, tendered by the Pennsylvania Institute, on Tuesday afternoon; a reception, tendered by the New York State Society, on Tuesday evening; a reception, given by the New Jersey State Society, on Wednesday afternoon; a special session for the purpose of meeting the representatives from foreign societies, on Wednesday evening; and the annual banquet, on Thursday evening. It goes without saying that all these occasions proved thoroughly enjoyable.

State News.

Kentucky.

Expert public accountants of Louisville met in the rooms of the Commercial Club yesterday afternoon and perfected a State organization.

After discussing ways and means, the accountants assembled decided to organize, which they did, by electing the following officers: Ben C. Waver, President; W. S. Parker, Sr., Vice-President; Charles Harris, Secretary; T. E. Turner, Treasurer; and T. E. Turner, L. Comingor and O. S. Meldrum, Board of Trustees.

Application for a charter of incorporation will be made under the title of the Kentucky Association of Public Accountants, the name taken by the new organization.

Besides the elected officers, all of the accountants present became members of the association.—Louisville Herald, October 11, 1908.

Georgia.

The first examination held under the new "Certified Public Accountants' Act," passed at the last session of the legislature, will be conducted in Atlanta, on November 25. Joel Hunter, of Atlanta, is the chairman of the board of examiners; Hudson Moore, of Atlanta, the attorney; and S. C. Cooper, of Atlanta, the secretary and treasurer.