

"AMERICANISM" IS THE BASIS OF THE ELKS

PATRIOTISM IS FEATURED BY ANTLERD HERD

Convention At Atlantic City Sets New Attendance Record for Fraternal Orders.

This year's national convention of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in Atlantic City, with "Americanism" as its slogan, established a record as the greatest in the history of the order, and probably sets a new attendance figure for national fraternal gatherings in this country.

In spite of war work activities in which nearly all the citizens of the country were engaged, and the unprecedented number of deaths from the epidemic that swept the country during that time, the Elks had a net increase in membership during the last year of more than 50,000.

Various circumstances account for the prosperity of the Order of Elks during the war. It is purely an American institution. Its membership is limited to white citizens of the United States, and its subordinate lodges are to be found only on United States soil.

Elks Originate Flag Day.

Flag Day, which has become a national institution through Act of Congress, and which this year was observed and celebrated in practically every community in this country, was originated by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Even now, with the day nationalized as it is, perhaps the most notable celebrations of it are still held in Elks homes. Thus on June 14 last, among the most notable and important utterances given to the country in observance of Flag Day, was the speech made by Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, in the Lodge Room of New York Lodge No. 1, the "Mother Lodge" of Elks.

Flag Day has been informally observed by various subordinate Elks lodges for many years. Its official designation and celebration by the Order was first proposed by Grand Exalted Ruler Henry A. Melvin, now of the supreme court bench of California, at the grand lodge convention held in Philadelphia in 1907. This recommendation was immediately adopted and the incoming grand exalted ruler, John K. Tener of Pennsylvania, appointed a committee on work and ritual to prepare a suitable ritualistic service for such a celebration. This committee was made up of James L. King, state librarian of Kansas, chairman, Charles Fischer of Chicago and William M. Hargest of Harrisburg, Pa. The ritual for Flag Day was prepared by Mr. King and exemplified by him at the grand lodge session in Dallas, Texas, in 1908.

Patriotism and Charity Taught.

The ritual of the Elks teaches patriotism above everything else, unless it is charity, which is perhaps the foundation stone of the Order. At every meeting of an Elks Lodge, the altar is draped with the American flag, and newly initiated members are admonished to love, respect and defend it. This ritualistic teaching is not of recent origin, but is of nearly fifty years standing.

The leaders of the Elks are among the leaders of the country in commercial, political and patriotic work. They have placed the Order in the front rank among those institutions that stand for genuine Americanism, and especially those which stand, not upon the order of their doing, but upon the cardinal principle of doing immediately whatever is to be done either for the country or for the individual in distress.

General Pershing an Elk.

There is no red tape in the Elks creed. In other respects their creed is expansive enough to welcome all good American citizens to membership, be they Jews, Gentiles, Catholics or Protestants. The one proud boast of the Elks everywhere is that they possess the genuine fraternal spirit. And their desire is to infect other good Americans with it.

General John J. Pershing is proud of his life membership in El Paso, Texas, Lodge No. 187. A member of the military affairs committee of congress, who knew Pershing when he was a student at West Point, but who had not seen him for many years, tells a story worth repeating, about the general and the Elks. This congressman made an official visit to the battle front in France two years ago, and one of the first things General Pershing said to him was: "Jack, are you an Elk?"

It is needless to say that that congressman is today one of the proudest and most enthusiastic members of the Order.

Leaders in War Relief Work.

With this general understanding of the principles and leadership of the Elks, it is easy to understand why the Order took a leading part in war activities, and why it is today in actual, exclusive partnership with the United States government in one of the most important and far-reaching undertakings ever put into effect in the history of the world—that of vocational training or reeducation of disabled soldiers, sailors and marines of the great war.

The Elks are unique in one feature of their organization—though not exclusive among secret fraternal orders—in the fact that only one subordinate lodge is permitted in each city, which

permits the resources of each subordinate lodge to be centralized. The result is that practically every city in the country of over 5,000 inhabitants has an Elks home or club.

During the war hundreds of these homes were given over either wholly or in part for war work activities carried on in the community by such organizations as the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, the Jewish Welfare and others that had reason to appreciate the patriotic spirit of Elksdom as thus exemplified.

Elks War Relief Commission.

Early in the war the Elks became especially impressed with the unselfish spirit in which the Salvation Army was carrying on its work and particularly with the standing it had with the boys at the front. The result was that hundreds of Elks Lodges placed all their resources behind the Salvation Army efforts for funds, and the slogan "Elks Raise Dollars for Doughnuts" became countrywide.

At the Elks Grand Lodge session in Boston in July, 1917, provision was made for the appointment of a special committee to be known as the Elks War Relief Commission, which, together with the grand exalted ruler, would have charge of the expenditure of whatever moneys were raised by the Elks for war work or relief purposes. This commission was made up of ex-Governor John K. Tener of Pennsylvania, Joseph T. Fanning of Indianapolis, Jerome R. Fisher of Jamestown, N. Y., James R. Nicholson of Boston, Edward Rightor of New Orleans, Fred Harper of Virginia, all past grand exalted rulers, and Grand Exalted Ruler Bruce A. Campbell of East St. Louis, Ill.

This Commission at once tendered its services and resources to the United States government through the war department. At that time the University of Virginia and the University of Oregon were organizing base hospitals for service in France, but no provision had been made for outfitting and equipping them. This was undertaken by the Elks War Relief Commission, each hospital being equipped at a cost of \$50,000. They were operated during the remainder of the period of the war under the joint name of the Elks and the universities designated, and made wonderful records for efficiency.

Reclamation Hospital at Boston.

Later there was seen the need of a reclamation hospital in this country to rebuild the disabled heroes who were returning from the battle fronts. The Elks War Relief Commission took the matter in hand and built what is said to be the finest hospital of the kind in this country, on Parker Hill in Boston. It was turned over to the government to be operated, having cost the Commission considerably more than \$300,000 to construct. Its record has been of the best. The government medical staff has given it the highest praise, and it has been operated at full capacity ever since the day it was opened.

Camp Sherman Community House.

During the influenza epidemic a critical situation arose at Camp Sherman, Ohio, where over 40,000 boys were in training. There were not sufficient housing accommodations at Chillicothe, Ohio, near which the camp was located, to care for the parents of the boys who were ill in camp and it was therefore impossible for many of these parents to visit their sons. When this condition was disclosed to the Elks War Relief Commission an Elks community house was built at Chillicothe in record time at a cost of about \$10,000. This house made it possible for hundreds of the sick boys to be visited and looked after by their mothers, and the army officials in charge of the camp regarded it as one of the best things done at any of the training camps during the time of the epidemic. It was declared that the fraternal spirit among the Elks had as much to do with speeding up the laborers and contractors who were building this community house, as the money that was paid them for the work.

At the time of the signing of the armistice Governor Tener, chairman of the Elks War Relief Commission, was under instructions to proceed to France for the purpose of tendering to General Pershing such assistance within the war zone as the resources of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks could command.

Elks Help Salvation Army.

The signing of the armistice and the ending of active hostilities found the Elks War Relief Commission with a considerable sum of money on hand. This money had been raised exclusively among the membership of the Order, a total of \$2,000,000 in assessments having been authorized, although it was not all called. Investigation was at once begun, however, for the purpose of determining a suitable use to make of the balance on hand, all of which had been given for war relief work.

On January 1 last Chairman Tener, Secretary Fanning and Grand Exalted Ruler Campbell, on behalf of the Elks War Relief Commission, called on Evangeline C. Booth, commander of the Salvation Army in the United States and presented her with a certified check for \$50,000 as a fitting recognition and in appreciation of "the great work your organization has performed and is performing in the name of God and humanity." In accepting the gift Miss Booth said:

"This is not the first time the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has shown practical sympathy for and given substantial aid to the Salvation Army. But this gift, of such generous proportions, coming to us unsolicited at a moment when unprecedented opportunities exist for helping mankind, impresses us beyond words to express, and as the leader of the Salvation Army in the United States, I can but say with emphasis that we are profoundly grateful and by all means appreciative of the very wonderful thing you have done."

Vocational Training.

The attention of the Elks War Relief Commission was next directed to an

opportunity to aid disabled soldiers, sailors and marines by co-operating as a private agency with the Federal Board for Vocational Education, in the vocational training and reeducation of the wounded war heroes.

This work was entirely a new venture. Nothing of the kind had ever before been undertaken following any war. Heretofore disabled soldiers had been granted a pittance of a pension in which they could barely live, and in their old age were put in a soldiers home to ponder over the ingratitude of the country for which they had fought.

Quite by accident it was discovered by a Belgian gentleman who was caring for some wounded soldiers that the men became interested in working with some tools he had in his house, and that this work stimulated their interest in life and hastened their recovery, in addition to making them adepts in the use of various tools according to their fancy or in conformity with their particular physical defects.

This was the start of vocational training for disabled war veterans. It has been carried on in France, England, Canada and Italy—as well as in Germany—for nearly four years. It is asserted by those who have been identified with it, that no wounded man has yet been found and put in training, no matter what his physical disability, but who has been vocationally trained or reeducated so that he has as great or greater earning capacity than before he was disabled. This pointed the way to making every disabled man independent, self-supporting and consequently more self-respecting than if he were left to shift for himself on a small pension.

By unanimous vote in both houses of congress a bill was passed and signed by the president on June 27, 1918, putting this vocational training in the hands of the Federal Board for Vocational Education. This law was intended to provide free vocational training for disabled war veterans and also to find employment for them at the end of their period of training or reeducation, without in any way affecting the compensation paid them by the government for whatever degree of disability they had suffered by reason of their wounds.

Elks Assist the Government.

In the administration of the law, however, it was found that there would be thousands of worthy cases of disabled men who were entirely outside the purview of the law passed by congress. These included American boys wounded while in the service of the Allies, those wounded before the provisions of the law took effect, and those wounded or disabled while in the army but not while in the line of duty. The law also provided that no one could be placed in vocational training until his compensation had been fixed by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance. The sudden termination of the war overloaded the insurance Bureau with claims for compensation so that it fell far behind in its work.

This resulted in the anomaly of disabled men being "broke" and unable to take advantage of the free vocational training which is so long and so desirable an offer of the government, while at the same time that government was owing them money!

Fortunately, the law provided that the Federal Board for Vocational Education could accept the cooperation and assistance of private agencies in carrying out its provisions. The Elks War Relief Commission had its attention called to this avenue for the useful expenditure of money, and a very brief investigation convinced the members of the commission that there was probably no more worthy cause to which its funds could be devoted. A fund of \$150,000 was therefore tendered by the Commission to Dr. A. C. Prosser, director of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, to be used at his discretion for necessary publicity work among the disabled men and with the general public, and for carrying out the cases of disabled men who were within the purview of the law. The offer was promptly accepted by Dr. Prosser, and the Elks Fund increased to \$250,000, and the proceeds from a feature motion picture produced by the Commission and donated to the Federal Board, which is soon to be distributed for exhibition, is expected to add another \$100,000.

Federal Board Thanks Elks.

In referring to the assistance granted the Federal Board for Vocational Education by the Elks War Relief Commission, Dr. Prosser, Director of the board, has said:

"No one action taken by any public or private agency will do so much to bring about a prompt and effective care of the wounded soldiers, sailors and marines resulting from the war as the action taken by the Elks War Relief Commission. As the result, instead of the usual delay in the granting of compensation and the consequent privation and humiliation such as no soldier of the republic should undergo, because of official delays, many of which are inexcusable, the men who find themselves properly taken care of at once and placed in the line of reeducation which will enable them to make their future safe for themselves and their dependents."

Soldiers Friend Committees.

By direction of Grand Exalted Ruler Campbell, every subordinate lodge of Elks has appointed a Soldiers Friend Committee which is charged with the duty of assisting in this vocational training work, and at the present time there are about 2,000 disabled soldiers, sailors and marines in vocational training on the Elks War Relief Commission Fund. In many cities the Elks have organized a bill now before congress extending vocational training into civil life and industrial life seems assured of passage.

Speaking on the floor of congress on the subject of the cooperative arrangements between the Federal Board for Vocational Education and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Congressman John F. Miller of the State of Washington said:

"The Elks fund thus provided is the first instance of the kind in the history of the country where a great patriotic, fraternal organization has come to the aid of the government in so timely, helpful and substantial a manner."

Commander Booth's Appreciation.

Recently, when the Salvation Army was entering upon a drive for \$1,000,000, Grand Exalted Ruler Campbell officially directed that all Elks subordinate lodges lend their support to this undertaking. In many cities the Elks took entire charge of the drive. In all of the cities in which Elks Lodges are located—nearly 1,300 in number—they have entered upon a drive for \$1,000,000 effort to put the fund across. Commander Evangeline C. Booth has personally thanked the Elks through the Grand Lodge for what they have done for the Salvation Army during the period of the war. "Without the help of the Elks," she says, "the Salvation Army could not have succeeded in this drive for the battle front."

It is a matter of record that through the subordinate Elks Lodges members of the Order have subscribed five million dollars of Liberty and Victory

bonds; they have given over three hundred thousand dollars to the Red Cross, more than a hundred thousand to the Y. M. C. A. and more than a million dollars to various other war charities.

Humble Beginning of the Elks.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, with a membership today of approximately 550,000, whose subordinate lodges span the country from coast to coast and reach from Skagway, Alaska, to Honolulu and Manila, had a very humble beginning in an attic of a cheap boarding house in New York City about the close of the year 1867. The moving spirit of the gathering of a half dozen actors who got together on a few Sunday afternoons for purely social purposes, was a young English music hall singer named Vivian—Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian, as he was christened. He landed in this country on Friday, November 15, 1867, coming on an English trading vessel from Southampton.

Being of convivial habits, Vivian soon was the center of a group of seven or eight fellow spirits with musical and theatrical connections who sought relief from the rather strict excise laws of the day in New York. At these attic gatherings an outsider was occasionally invited in, with the request that he bring with him a cork, each one present being similarly provided. A simple cork trick would be proposed, the loser to provide the refreshments. The newcomer was invariably the loser and his payment for the refreshments constituted his initiation fee into the club, which became known as the "Jolly Corks."

Selection of the Name "Elks."

Before leaving England Vivian was identified with the "Royal and Antiquarian Order of Buffaloes," with a long and illustrious history and the names of kings and queens on its roster. In 1866 he had listened to Charles Dickens deliver a lecture on the subject of a "Benevolent and Provident Charity Fund," which he afterwards confessed had left its impress on him. This may have had something to do with the practice of the "Jolly Corks" of raising \$5 or \$10 by assessment, to be sent to some ill or needy associate. About this time a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution for a "benevolent order," and Vivian was its first signer.

Early in 1868 it was decided to give the organization a new name. A committee was appointed for this purpose, consisting of George M. McDonald, chairman, William Sheppard, Charles A. S. Vivian, Edgar N. Platts and Thos. G. Riegs. This committee followed up its investigations in books on natural history by a visit to Barnum's Museum near Broadway and in the streets. It is of record that Vivian stood for the name "Buffalo" but voted to make unanimous the selection of the name "Elks" when it was shown that the Elk is distinguished for feistiness and for timidity at wrong-doing, and that the animal avoids all combat save in the defense of its weak and young and helpless, and the same is true of man. It was the aptness of this simile with the ideals of the development of the order that put the final confirmation and approval on the word "Elks."

Vivian Recognized Founder of Order.

Vivian was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England and was born in Exeter, Devonshire, October 22, 1842. He died in Leadville, Colorado, March 20, 1880, aged 37 years. He was a man of many talents, a writer, a lecturer, a musician, a pianist, and a composer, ranging from touring with his own company to being stranded in Denver, penniless. His grave, unmarked for a message scratched with some hard instrument in a pine board at its head, rested undisturbed until on April 23, 1893, the order exhumed the remains and placed them in Elks Rest, Mt. Hope cemetery, Boston. There, on a massive, irregular boulder in whose face there is a large bronze plate, is raised in its relief the following inscription:

"Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian, Founder of the Order of Elks. Died March 20, 1880, aged 37 years. A lover of his kind who founded a great order and in doing so wrought much good."

The natal day of Elksdom is February 16, 1868. This is the date of the first charter meeting, as well as the date of the original old first banne of New York Lodge No. 1, still preserved.

As constituted today, however, the order Elks dates from 1871, and January 1 of which year a resolution was reported founding the grand lodge. This was ratified in New York on January 29 and on March 10 the legislature of New York granted the newly formed grand lodge, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, power to grant charters to subordinate lodges in any part of the country. That year the grand lodge held three regular communications, or conventions, and New York Lodge, No. 1, was rejoining in its revived prosperity, with \$538.81 in its treasury.

Charity a Cardinal Principle.

As illustrating a spirit that has always actuated the Elks, on October 28, 1871, a great benefit was staged by New York Lodge No. 1, to aid the sufferers from the great Chicago fire. And in 1908 at the time of the San Francisco disaster Grand Exalted Ruler "Bob" Brown rushed out to the Pacific Coast metropolis where the banks were closed and money was needed, and planned down five thousand dollars in cash as a starter on what the Elks proposed to do. Afterwards Brown had so much Elks money at San Francisco that he could not spend it all and the Elks in addition sent out 400 car loads of food to the stricken city.

The foregoing are incidents of a public character, but the favorite method of the Elks in disbursing thousands of dollars annually in charity is not to invite any publicity whatever to their work. It is known, however, that no poor children are allowed to miss a proper Christmas celebration where there is an Elks lodge located, and thousands of poor families are cared for every year by the practical charity of the Elks.

It was back in 1868 that the Eleven o'clock Toast of the Elks was started by George F. McDonald, who launched the "To Our Absent Brothers" that has since ripened into tender significance with all members of the order.

Elks Home in Virginia.

The order of Elks has established a beautiful home for aged and indigent members at the base of the famous Outer Peaks at Bedford City, Va. On this site of 100 acres has been erected a home costing \$100,000, all operating expenses of which are borne by the grand lodge. An Elk in good standing, upon proper certification of his lodge that he is infirm, or indigent, and consequently unable to care for himself, is entitled to the home, is admitted to it with the minimum of red tape, and is made heartily and humanely comfortable for his remaining years.

Strengthened by Vicissitudes.

At the end of 1870 the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks had a membership of 149, and it has gone through many vicissitudes in reaching its present pinnacle of prosperity and popularity. But it has emerged from every internal dissension apparent, stronger in purpose and determination because of them. In 1890, when the grand lodge was in session in Cleveland, Ohio, the New York lodge disputed the right of the grand lodge to hold its sessions outside of the state of New York. The New York lodge was suspended and not restored until

the lodge returned to the fold in 1893. In 1894 a split resulted over a question of authority as between the grand exalted ruler and the grand trustees, but the breach was completely healed at the grand lodge session of 1895 in Atlantic City. At the Cincinnati session in 1896 the flag, Bible and antlers were formally designated as the altar drapery. In 1909 the official emblem of the order, comprising an Elk head across the face of a clock marking the hour of 11, was adopted and patented.

Elks for "Americanism."

The present rallying cry of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is "Americanism." Its responsible officers have made it plain that it will occupy no neutral or doubtful position on this issue. No man with Bolshevist sentiments or beliefs will be eligible to membership in it, and its influence and resources will be everywhere available to the constituted authorities in backing up and building up real American sentiment. Everywhere, also, the Elks as an organization are taking more and more interest in civic affairs in their respective communities. And while the discussion of some real or alleged or fancied crisis is at nearly all times rife in this country, the progressive order of Elks may be depended upon to discuss and help solve such problems in the interest of law, of order, of right and decency—of true Americanism.

BOLSHEVISTS BARRED.

The constituted authorities of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, at their annual convention in Atlantic City, have officially decided that any man who is a sincere Bolshevist, or who supports the principles of Bolshevism, is not eligible to membership in the Order; the same authorities hold that a member of the order who declares himself a believer in Bolshevism violates his obligation as an Elk and is subject to expulsion from the order.

This pronouncement was made by the grand lodge committee on judiciary through its chairman, William M. Abbott of San Francisco, in a discussion of the subject of Bolshevism that gives a clear understanding of what the doctrine really is, and how utterly contrary to our principles and form of government.



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