

HARVARD SQUARE BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORTS

APRIL, NINETEEN FOURTEEN

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President's Report

In accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the By-laws the President presents the following report for the year just ended.

The Committee on the Future Development of Harvard Square having presented its final report further progress now awaits the action of the Association. It seems fitting that the members of this organization, as well as the public generally, should be reminded of the great amount of time and labor which this Committee devoted to the consideration of the problems before it. The Committee is entitled to the thanks of all interested in the welfare of Harvard Square for its exceedingly valuable report, and however doubtful it may appear at present, their work is sure to produce results in the future. The year has been one of much disappointment to those who looked forward to an improvement in the lines and general appearance of the Square. The City Council allowed matters to drift until the expense of establishing the line of Brattle Street was considered beyond the means of the City, and an opportunity to double the capacity of the street at a comparatively small expense was lost. That this improvement, which must ultimately be carried out, can probably never be made at any less expense than it could have been made last year appeared to have no weight. Land upon which there is every reason to believe no building has ever been erected, and which has been used as a part of the sidewalk for more than 60 years has now been occupied without protest by the City. It was suggested that citizens interested in the improvement of the Square might present the question to the Courts for decision, but with the disposition shown by the City Council such a course did not commend itself to those interested. When so much might have been done and so little has been done no wonder people who have not become accustomed to the delays in the past should become discouraged. Those of us, however, who can recall the slow progress made in every improvement in the Square in past years, such as the widening between Dunster and Boylston Streets, the widening of Brattle Street, and of Boylston Street, can still look forward with confidence to a final realization of much of what has been proposed by this Committee.

The proposed improvement of the property occupied by College House has not met with the success hoped for, notwithstanding that one individual stands ready, so I am informed, to provide \$500,000, provided the remainder is pledged. Only last week, however, I was assured that, doubtful as it might appear, the matter was now being considered by men, one of whom has already erected large buildings in Cambridge, who are favorably inclined to undertake the work. The various suggestions by the Committee in regard to location of car lines, changes of street lines, restrictions in regard to the character of buildings to be erected, etc., are all of great value, and ought not to be allowed to pass without some result. If even a part of these recommendations are made effective it cannot fail to attract new comers to Cambridge and greatly benefit Harvard Square.

The matter of transportation remains in the same unsatisfactory state as it has been in past years, and seems likely to continue that way for several years to come. While transit to and from Boston has been improved by the construction and operation of the subway it has been more largely for the benefit of communities beyond Cambridge. The provisions for local travel remain in the same state to which we have grown accustomed. In spite of the claims of improvement the lines of travel are substantially today what they were in 1843 — about the only improvement being the result of the construction of the Charles River Street Railway. The sign on the subway station, "Trains for Boston, surface cars for suburban points," is as descriptive of the accommodations 70 years ago as it is of those of today. Every facility to get people out of Cambridge, very little to carry them around Cambridge. Our Association ought to keep before the public and before the Railway Company the desirability of increased provisions for strictly local travel, and for connections across our City from Somerville to Brookline. There can be no question that the establishment of such lines would influence the decision of many people considering Cambridge as a place for permanent residence. A line connecting Charlestown and Dedham, affording as it would many connections with the surrounding towns, would be of great assistance to the owners of apartment property and ultimately it would contribute a liberal amount to the income of the railway. Your directors have not been unmindful of the demand for improved means of exit from the Harvard Square station of the subway, nor of the difficulties in

securing it. A Special Committee, consisting of the Committee on Transportation together with six other members of the Association, has done most efficient work to secure better accommodations, and the large attendance of our members at the hearing before the Public Service Commission shows that our Association stands ready to support the Committee in its demands.

Having given the subject much consideration and profiting by the experience of other parts of the City our Association has provided the money needed to carry out an improvement in the lighting of Harvard Square and of the streets adjacent to it. In connection with the installation of these new lights it is interesting to recall the days when the Mayor addressed the following statement to the City Council: "Hints have been given, sometimes gravely and sometimes in a playful way, in favor of lighting the streets at night. The object is a very desirable one and if some mode could be devised by which the City could give its aid in effecting it without incurring too great expense or causing disaffection in different localities it would commend itself to the consideration of the Council." Two years later the City Council voted, "that whenever suitable iron posts, lamps, and fixtures are erected at such points in any streets of the City, as the Mayor and Aldermen may designate, the Mayor is authorized to cause said lamps to be lighted at the expense of the City." This rule requiring a contribution by the citizens of a part of the expense forms a precedent for our own contribution toward the expense of the present lights and was substantially adhered to until the introduction of the electric lights. The first year 113 lamps were located, and the expense for lighting the same was \$651.62. The first electric lights, 70 in number, were located upon Main Street, Cambridge Street, and North Avenue, in 1887 — a number but little in excess of what have lately been installed around Harvard Square. The change in the lighting of the Square has greatly improved its appearance, and the attention of the members is called to the suggestion of the directors in regard to obtaining some results from the expenditure. Should the members be unwilling to make some change in the hours for closing, I would suggest the wisdom of at least keeping their store windows lighted until 9 o'clock as has been done elsewhere.

It is gratifying to hear from the Committee on Grievances that there have been no complaints brought to their attention, and con-

sequently that the Committee have had nothing to do. I trust the members will not forget that the Committee exists and is ready to offer its assistance in removing any cause of complaint by any member of the Association.

While no consideration has been asked for any steps looking toward consolidation with other organizations, our Association has coöperated with other bodies in the consideration of several problems affecting the public welfare of our City. It is to be regretted that the influence of these organizations has had so little effect upon our City Council. There is no question that our business men do not exercise that influence in our civic affairs which they should. It is unfortunate that in recent years there have been so many members of our City Council men of narrow views and exceedingly low standards. In the past our business men have exercised a considerable influence, not only in the action of our City Councils but also in the selection of those who were elected members of that body, and it is to be hoped that they will again exercise the influence which was formerly theirs. Dealing as they do with all classes, meeting the poor and the rich alike, the laboring classes and those engaged in business in other cities, they are of all men the best qualified to direct our local affairs. The great need today is some means by which the ordinary voter may obtain reliable information in regard to the candidates for office. Paid advertisements in the papers, biographical sketches sent through the mails do not meet this need. It is only by frank interchange of opinion that the best results can be secured, and no body of men can meet this need so effectually as our business men. With a total expenditure for the past year in excess of \$4300,000 and with demands upon our taxpayers of \$900,000 for the current year, on account of debt alone, it certainly seems high time that our City Council should contain men with higher standards and with more business capacity than at present.

In the corner of a quiet country Church-yard among the Northern Hills side by side lie two graves. Beneath the Stars and Stripes there rest two veterans of that Grand Army which sprang up as it were in a night for the defence of the Union and as quickly melted away when its task was done. The father at the age of 66, the son at the age of 30, both joined the army of the Union at the outbreak of the Rebellion and served to the close of the war. The simple story of these two veterans teaches, it seems to me, a

lesson for our members. From time to time I meet members of this Association who avail themselves of the opportunity to point out the fault and defects of fellow members. Such action, if generally followed, is likely to lessen the influence of this organization, and I hope our members will try instead to emphasize the good qualities of their fellow members and to cultivate feelings of friendship. No one would maintain that all of the nearly 3,000,000 men who fought on the side of the Union were perfect in all respects, but they all had some virtues—courage, perseverance, loyalty at least they had. As these two veterans, disregarding the faults or defects of their comrades, pressed on with them in support of the grand end in view, until success was gained, so our members ought with courage, perseverance and loyalty to join heartily together at all times, and in all places to advance the interest of Harvard Square. Let us all remember that the prosperity of each of us depends to a considerable degree upon the prosperity of all.

GEORGE G. WRIGHT,
President

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Secretary's Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1914

The Association started the year with a membership of 81. During the year the Directors elected three new members, and accepted six resignations, and three were dropped for non-payment of dues, making the present membership of the Association 75.

There have been three regular meetings held during the year at the Colonial Club, each of which was preceded by a dinner, with an average attendance of 45 members.

The Directors held fourteen meetings during the year for the purpose of electing applicants for membership and to map out future meetings of the Association and the management of its affairs.

The following Special Committees were appointed during the year:

Committee on Public Boat Landing at foot of Boylston Street.

Committee on Improved Street Lighting.

Committee on Street Cleaning.

Committee on New Hospital Site (in conjunction with Board of Trade and other business organizations).

Committee on Central Post Office (in conjunction with Board of Trade and other business organizations).

Committee on Escalator for Harvard Square Subway Station.

Committee on Permanent Quarters for the Association.

Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE H. CARRICK,

Secretary

Report of the Advertising Committee

FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL 19, 1914

The Advertising Committee of this year were simply the old Committee of last year left over.

The experience of the Committee last year was that generally speaking, in pushing any scheme through for the general advertising good of Harvard Square, the different members when appealed to for support and funds, somehow felt that someone else was getting more good from the advertising than they were. Explanations were unpleasant and took time, which the Committee this year were unable to give.

A small amount of the Cambridge paper advertising was done in the fall, and also just before Christmas. Mr. Robinson has kept a notice in the Cambridge Tribune calling attention to the glass signs of the Harvard Square Business Men's Association. This and a number of reading notices from time to time Mr. Robinson has kindly made no charge of to the Association.

No appropriation of funds was made for the use of the Committee, and as there have been very few meetings no plans were submitted to them for consideration.

The Committee has always had the good of Harvard Square in mind, but without some encouragement from the members the accomplishment of very much is impossible.

GEORGE H. KENT,

Chairman of Advertising Committee

Report of Transportation Committee

To the Officers and Members of the Harvard Square Business Men's Association, the Transportation Committee submits the following report :

As stated a year ago, your Committee thought that the greatest need for improved transportation facilities of Harvard Square was an escalator in the Harvard terminal; and about that time, the Railroad Commissioners recommended several changes in the Cambridge service, with the statement that these experiments should be given an opportunity to work out before any other changes were made. On account of their attitude, we did not think it wise to make any definite move for this improvement until such time had elapsed that it might easily be proved that an escalator was necessary.

About two months ago, your Committee, through Mr. Stoughton Bell, petitioned for a hearing, and on April 15 a hearing was granted. Over one hundred people attended the hearing, and a petition, bearing about twelve hundred names of people from Cambridge, and all of the adjoining cities and towns was filed with the Commission, and the matter was taken under advisement by them. At the hearing, the Commissioners instructed a representative of the Railroad Company to prepare plans and estimates for both an elevator and escalator in the station, and we hope to receive favorable decision in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS HADLEY,
Chairman

Report of the Treasurer

APRIL 17, 1914

Receipts

Dues paid	\$745.00
Received for Dinner guests.....	9.00
Interest on Deposits	5.49
Rebate from July Outing	4.65
	<u>\$764.14</u>
Balance on hand last report.....	211.84
	<u>\$975.98</u>

Disbursements

Dinners	\$192.25
Advertising	47.92
Plans, etc., for Improvement of Harvard Square.....	196.30
Transportation Committee	20.70
Printing	13.50
Postage	21.56
Flowers	15.00
Typewriting, etc.	14.30
	<u>\$521.53</u>
Balance in bank.....	454.45
	<u>\$975.98</u>

A special committee, consisting of Mr. Cox, Mr. Lake, Mr. John Amee, Mr. Hadley, and Mr. Kent, was appointed for the lighting of Harvard Square, and the sum of \$1,858.00 was collected for that purpose. This has not been turned over to the city yet, but is on deposit at the Charles River National Bank.

GEORGE H. KENT,
Treasurer

Examined and found correct:

Attest: GEORGE H. HOLMES,
Auditor