Brief Report

CHICAGO, U. S. A.
MAY 18 to 22, 1944

35TH ANNUAL CONVENTION ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

A Streamlined Meeting

Rotary International's thirty-fifth annual Convention was conclusive evidence that the Rotary organization is able to meet any crisis. When it was found that—because of the tremendous increase in wartime transportation problems—it would be impracticable to hold the Convention either in Omaha, Nebraska, where it had been originally scheduled, or in Chicago, it was decided to limit the meeting to the present officers and incoming officers of RI, the Past Presidents of RI, the representatives on the Council on Legislation, and others designated as participants in the International Assembly.

These 230 officers and delegates came to Chicago from twenty-five countries to preserve the continuity of Rotary—to review the accomplishments of the organization during the past year—and to make plans for an outstanding year of Rotary service worldwide in 1944-45.

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Thursday Evening Session

Rotary's 1944 "Homecoming" Convention was convened Thursday evening by Convention Committee Chairman Stanley Long of Seattle, Washington. The first plenary session opened most impressively with the "Lord's Prayer" sung in the rich baritone voice of Gunner Charles Hovey of the Canadian Army. Greetings were then extended to the Convention by President Stan Clague of "Old No. 1," and Immediate Past President Fernando Carbajal of Lima, Peru, responded with praise for the hospitality of the Chicago Club.

In his message of greeting, Paul Harris spoke of the progress which Rotary is making in spite of the times, and emphasized the fact that the loss of Clubs due to the war has been far more than offset by the organization of new Clubs throughout those parts of the world where Rotary is still unhampered in its functioning.

Rotarian Andres Pastoriza, President of the Rotary Club of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, then came to the Convention platform and on behalf of the President of his country decorated Paul with the Heraldic Order of Cristobal Colon for his outstanding service to mankind. The great ovation which was accorded Paul was shared by his beloved Jean, who spoke briefly of her great pleasure at having another opportunity to meet friends from all parts of the world, and particularly to meet the splendid group from the Ibero-American countries, many of which she had visited on her travels with Paul.

The name of President Nominee Richard H. Wells was then presented to the Convention. Past President Carbajal's motion that the united ballot of the Convention be cast for Dick, which was seconded by Director John Ilott of Wellington, New Zealand, was unanimously carried. After Dick expressed his thanks to the Convention for the great honor bestowed upon him, the Convention followed its annual custom of electing Rufus F. Chapin of Chicago to serve another term—his 32nd—as Treasurer of RI.

One of the most impressive features of the evening's program was the memorial ceremony in honor of Rotarians who have made the supreme sacrifice for their country in military and civic service. With the lights of the Convention hall darkened, a squad of four United States Marines, to a fanfare of trumpets, marched down the center aisle to the stage, carrying a huge basket of flowers. Then Director Bart Peak of Lexington, Kentucky, in the warm glow of flickering candles, solemnly paid tribute to the departed Rotarians with a recitation of "Crossing the Bar" and "They Have Not Died." Gunner Hovey's singing of "There Is No Death" and the sounding of taps brought this most impressive memorial ceremony to a close.

President Charlie Wheeler then stepped to the rostrum and after presenting his Board of Directors and paying tribute to the loyal support which they had given him in coping with the many problems of a difficult year, told of the splendid progress which had been made in spite of those problems. Then in a dynamic address marked by his characteristic courage and optimism, he cited examples of how Rotary Clubs which have suffered from the ravages of war are carrying on in various parts of the Eastern Hemisphere and called upon all Rotarians to peer into the future and to prepare Rotary for opportunities that still lie ahead—opportunities such as are presented by the Work Pile plan, the Rotary Foundation, and the organization of a postwar world in which civilized men will fight as hard to combat crime, poverty, disease, famine, greed, and all the other peacetime enemies of civilization, as they are now fighting their more tangible wartime enemies.

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Friday Evening Session

Following the invocation pronounced by Past President Tom Davis of Butte, Montana, the second plenary session of the Convention opened Friday evening with an address by Past President Armando de Arruda Pereira of Sao Paulo, Brazil, in which he told of the splendid war effort which is being made by his country and emphasized the strong ties which bind Brazil to the other United Nations at present—strong ties which will become increasingly stronger in the future. He spoke, too, of the postwar problems facing Brazil and other Ibero-American countries, stating that the main problem will be to increase the national income in order to provide a higher standard of living for the people generally.

An "International Kaleidoscope"—a vivid and colorful picture of Rotary throughout the world—proved to be one of the outstanding thrills of the Convention. Tom Davis conducted the Kaleidoscope and first called upon Director John Ilott of Wellington, New Zealand, who sketched briefly and skillfully the contributions New Zealand is making to the war effort and gave a few highlights of the magnificent progress that Rotary has made in New Zealand during the past two years, with a tremendous increase in the number of Rotary Clubs and in the work being done by the Clubs. Particularly interesting was his story concerning "Heritage"—a movement promoted by the New Zealand Clubs to help the boys whose fathers have given their lives for the cause of freedom.

Rotarian Kish Naoroji of Jamshedpur, India, told of the rapid growth of Rotary in India and Ceylon and gave a brief description of India, its ancient culture, its enormous wealth, and the multiplicity of problems to be overcome in order to raise the general standard of living to a level commensurate with the natural resources.

The next turn of the Kaleidoscope carried the audience from the mystic Orient to the Far North when Rotarian Edy Velander of Stockholm, Sweden, told of the difficult conditions under which Rotary Clubs in Sweden are operating. The