

South Central Business Ass'n October 30, 1934

Office of Mayor

Kansas City, Mo.

BRYCE B. SMITH, MAYOR N. CARY MEHL, SECRETARY

BUILDING KANSAS CITY FOR THE FUTURE

I am happy to appear again before your live and progressive organization, and I want to thank all of you for your invitation. Your association is doing splendid work in developing this particular area of our city, and through your efforts this district really has come into its own.

If my memory serves me right, it was just a little less than a year ago that I appeared before you to discuss the accomplishments of my first administration. Today I wish to claim a few moments of your time to outline what further steps are being taken to improve and develop Kansas City.

If I were asked to give this talk a name, I would call it "Rebuilding Kansas City for the Future," for that is what we actually are doing. Few persons realize the magnitude of the mighty task underway, for the projects are scattered throughout the city, but we are in the midst of the greatest improvement program ever undertaken here,

A hundred years ago Kansas City was a fur trading post on the bank of the Missouri river, A century was required to develop it into the present great metropolis. Now, with the aid of the 10-year program, we are endeavoring, for the sake of the even greater city thst the future promises, to rebuild our city in the brief span of a decade, and I believe that we are succeeding.

Your present city administration recognized at an early date the fact that Kansas City is destined to grow, and to hold an even more important position among the cities of our country, if given the proper encouragement. Our constant aim has been to set the stage so that our community will be ready, when business and industry again return to normalcy, for the fight for supremacy that is bound to come. We are determined that Kansas City shall not lag at the start, but shall hold a commanding position in the race.

I do not wish to bore you with what may be ancient history, but to paint an accurate picture of the situation, I must review for you some of the steps that already have been taken to carry out our program.

Several years ago your administration decided that probably the most important preliminary step that could be taken in the rebuilding of our city for the future was the removal of every impediment to traffic by highway, rail, water and air.

Carrying out that program, we lifted tolls from the A-S-B and Hannibal bridges, undertook comprehensive projects for developing adequate highway entrances into the city, constructed two modern wharves and developed a river-rail terminal at the State line, built what is probably the nation's most convenient and modern airport, and gave every encouragement to the railroads in the development of lines into and through the city.

That program has been costly, but we firmly believe that it is paying for itself in added Kansas City values, in increased revenues to merchants and workingmen from new business contacts with our trade territory, and in the assurance that Kansas City, through its easy accessibility from all parts of that vast and wealthy territory, is assured of holding its position as the business and industrial capital of the great Southwest,

Our program of developing highway entrances capable of caring for present and future traffic needs has been carried out in conjunction with the state highway department. Already new entrances have been provided for No. 50 from the east and the west, and for No. 71 from the south.

Winner road, which will carry U. S. highway 24 into the city, now is under construction, and the U. S. 40 cutoff, which will be of such great benefit to this section of the city, awaits its formal opening on November 9.

Other highway improvements which are being considered for the immediate future, are the construction of viaducts across the Blue river at Twenty-third, Thirty-ninth and Sixty-third streets. Surveys now are being made on those projects, which will forever remove the Blue river barrier to the city's eastward growth and will provide new highway links with eastern Jackson county.

Inside the city physical improvements of great value also are being made at the present time.

The new courthouse, built by the county under the 10-year plan, is nearing completion.

The new auditorium, which will be the most modern and complete in the world, with

ample facilities to handle every type of meeting from a great convention to a small committee meeting, is well underway. When completed it will be of inestimable value, attracting visitors here throughout the year and providing suitable settings for the presentation of all cultural and entertainment enterprises.

A site has been acquired for the new city hall, and the work of excavating will be started this winter. Soon our municipal offices will be housed in a building worthy of the city.

Additional wards have been added at the general hospital, a new heating plant is under construction, and an addition is being built at the tuberculosis hospital in Leeds. With these improvements, our city will be amply prepared to care for its destitute, ill and injured for many years to come.

One of the most important of the projects now under way is the grading and beautification of Liberty Memorial hill. The landscaping, which follows the plans of an internationally known firm of architects, will present the memorial in its proper setting and will provide a fitting gateway to the city in front of the Union station.

To protect the health of our citizens, numerous new and important sewer connections are being constructed, to guarantee adequate drainage of storm and sanitary sewage. Two of those projects in this section of the city are the Shuttle Creek sewer, which runs along No. 40 highway and empties into the Blue river, and the Town Fork sewer, which drains a large area in the southeast part of the city,

New water mains also have been constructed, and this area, which formerly suffered because of low pressure during the summer months, now is freed of that threat, and an adequate water supply is assured in every part of the city.

A little known but highly important project recently completed was the rebuilding of No. 1 golf course in Swope park. The new course will be of championship caliber, and I really believe that it will be the finest in America, and one of the most beautiful. It is probable that in order to protect the new grass the course will not be opened until spring, but when ready it will add greatly to our recreational facilities.

The park department also has devoted much attention to the development of our parks for recreational purposes, providing new tennis courts, picnic areas, shelter buildings, playgrounds, wading pools and resthouses. It is our belief that the parks

primarily were intended for the enjoyment of our citizens, and it is along those lines that we are seeking to develop, them, without the destruction of their beauty.

Another important improvement is the placing of new street signs at every intersection in the city. This work is being started today, and the first signs are being erected in the district bounded by Thirty-first and Forty-fifth streets, Troost to Indiana avenues.

A system of adequate trafficways linking all parts of the city also is to be developed.

So much for the physical improvements recently completed, now under way or soon to be started. All of them have cost money, but if past experience is accurate, they will not mean a great increase in taxes, for the wealth of Kansas City should be doubled by the time the major share of the 10-year plan bonds come due, and our present debt total will be largely diminished.

If we are to build here a truly great and metropolitan center, we also must pay attention to the cultural aspects of life, and Kansas City fortunately is doing that very thing.

The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, opened last year, has made Kansas City one of the art centers of the United States. The University of Kansas City began its second year this fall with an increased enrollment and a promise of future greatness. The Kansas City Philharmonic opens its second season tonight with virtually every seat sold. The community theater movement rapidly is gaining impetus here.

Those facts indicate that Kansas City already has acquired a cosmopolitan interest in the arts, and that interest must be encouraged and developed.

If we are to build for the future, we must do so with courage and boldness. In the past eight years, for example, nearly \$50,000,000 of private capital has been expended in the construction of new business and industrial buildings which have remade our skyline.

Do you believe for one moment that that capital, most of it from outside sources, would have been poured into our community if we had not demonstrated our own faith and courage in Kansas City by the expenditure of large sums ourselves for a program of public improvements destined to prepare our city for the years to come?

And now a word as to that future, of which I have spoken. Physically our city is prepared, but because we already have done so much does not mean that we now must

let our footsteps falter.

Our future development must be planned toward two definite objectives. One is to facilitate business and industry, the other to develop Kansas City culturally. We must not be content until we have every facility for the business and industrial development of our city, and until we have offered every aid and encouragement to the development of the arts and educational facilities here.

We want Kansas City not only to be active in business life but to have an atmosphere of its own, in keeping with the finer things of life. It is only by this means that we can make the city attractive to all classes of people, and prepare it for the anticipated growth in population, wealth, business and industry.

So far we have been courageous in our determination that Kansas City' a progress must be continued. We have done much, but much remains to be done.

We must continue our forward movement on a united front. The next years are no time for petty bickerings or sectional squabbles. The welfare and progress of the city must be uppermost in our minds at all times.

As I said before, the time is approaching when business will be back into full swing, and American cities will be engaged in a mighty struggle for supremacy. Kansas City now holds a commanding position, and it must not be lost. We must be prepared for the fight.

And if we continue our program of building for the future, during the next few years, as we have for the past few, I believe that Kansas City will emerge victorious — a great, wealthy and influential center of business, industry and culture which will surpass our greatest hopes.

I thank you.