

SHOWDOWN NEAR ON SHERIFF KUDOS

O'Donnell Ready to Fight "Associate" Setup

BY JOSEPH M. GAMBATESE

Sheriff Martin L. O'Donnell will go to the Buckeye State Sheriffs Association convention in Columbus Wednesday prepared to fight for the elimination of associate memberships unless the money derived from them is used for the betterment of the association, it was learned yesterday.

An associate member is that genus of citizen who pays \$10 or more and gets, "if he wants them," according to Opha Moore of Columbus, executive secretary, a metal tag for the radiator of his automobile and a courtesy card certifying his membership in the association, although he has no connection with any law enforcement body.

These contributors are the financial backbone of the organization and last year paid \$27,361 of the \$28,816 collected in dues, according to an audit made by certified public accountants in August. Dues received from Ohio sheriffs, deputy sheriffs and prosecuting attorneys amounted to only \$1,455.

Objections Brought Removal

Adding to these \$2,500 netted from the publication of the yearbook, the audit shows \$31,319 was taken in. Of this, \$28,816 was expended, mostly for salaries, emblems and organization and operating expenses.

O'Donnell's objections to the expenditure of so much of the income in that way caused him to be removed as a vice president last summer, but he later was reinstated.

The Cuyahoga County sheriff believes the association should be limited to sheriffs and their deputies unless a definite benefit to the group results from the dues, or contributions, of associate members.

The Cleveland Better Business Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce have, in recent years, received numerous complaints that persons solicited for associate membership were given implied promises of immunity from arrest for minor violations of the law. This was denied by Moore, who said he recently issued a bulletin warning against granting favors to members of the association.

"We don't want associate members who are not on the side of the law," he told the Plain Dealer.

W. Dan Bell, manager of the commercial division of the Better Business Bureau, said he was advising all citizens who inquire about the association not to join it.

A committee of the Chamber of Commerce on Oct. 5 disapproved of the solicitation conducted by the association because of "lack of financial reporting and because memberships and donations are found to be obtained by the promise of immunity from arrest or threat of reprisal, either expressed or implied."

A recent issue of the Better Business Bureau bulletin carried a statement by Police Chief George J. Matowitz in which he said such a scheme "virtually amounts to a racket," and added:

"No one has the right or authority to grant immunity from arrest."

Revision Interests Others

O'Donnell recently received in the mail from Springfield, O., a printed circular criticizing the handling of the association's funds and containing a copy of the audit for 1937, indicating that others, besides O'Donnell, were interested in revision of the handling of finances.

O'Donnell is chairman of the association's committee to seek the adoption of legislation in the Ohio Legislature designating an official uniform for sheriffs and their deputies and making it a misdemeanor for others to wear such uniforms.

Sheriff Philip J. Kloos of Dayton, one of the two candidates for president, said that if he were elected he would urge the Legislature to:

DESIGNATE an official sheriff's uniform, because as it is now one never knows whether the sheriff who stops him is a milkman, bus driver, street car conductor or messenger boy.

RAISE the salaries of lower paid sheriffs to attract higher types of men. There is one sheriff who gets only \$600 a year, he said.

ENACT state laws against loitering, vagrancy and the operation of disorderly houses, concerning which the sheriffs now have no jurisdiction.

Although "sustaining members" do the association a lot of good, Kloos said he was against allowing "just anybody" to join.

For Worthwhile Spending

"I also would like to see the money spent in worthwhile ways," he added. "That's been my battle ever since I've been on the board of trustees."

The other candidate for president is Sheriff John G. Kempthorne of Carrollton, who said he had no comment to make on his candidacy.

The presidency is the only contested post, according to Moore. Sheriff George W. Benham of Springfield, leaving the presidency after three terms, is an uncontested candidate for Kloos' post on the board of trustees.

The other incumbents, running without opposition, according to Moore, are O'Donnell and Sheriffs James M. O'Reilly of Toledo, vice presidents; Charles H. Radcliff of Circleville, treasurer, and Joseph Farbeann of Logan, William S. Souter of Sandusky and William McElroy of Newark, trustees.

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