

How Much Purpose?

By Thomas Tapper

I

A BANKER, invited by a merchants' club to speak upon Business Development, said so much that should be addressed to music teachers individually and in association that we venture to bring the gist of his talk before the readers of this magazine. The club is of merchants, in a small way, in a city of a few thousand inhabitants. The broker was talking to the average run of small storekeepers.

How much purpose, he began, is there in what you do? Do you store men of this town wait for business to come in at the front door or are you forever planning and working to make it come in at the front door? There is a vast difference between these two conditions. Then, going on to develop this idea of purpose, the broker said this (Note how every word applies to the music teacher).

A year's business is largely accidental unless it is planned a year ahead. Have you ever thought of figuring out how much gross you might do with effort in a year? The average merchant takes business as it comes. Aside from a little advertising, he thinks the very presence of his store building, with its trim windows, will attract customers. It does attract them. But not the one hundred per cent. of customers he should have. Beyond a certain amount of business which he secures more or less automatically there is a large margin he could have if he went out for it.

If you did four thousand dollars gross in your little store last year you must do five or six thousand this next year. Study your town. Learn the number of families in it that should trade with you. Compare this number with that who actually do trade with you. Improve your service to the highest point. Be sure you are an actual service benefit to your town. Then keep on creating ways to secure new business.

II

Does not all this apply to the music-teaching profession?

Inasmuch as business and teaching are synonymous and both aim for service benefit, would it not be worth while to determine in what ways we may increase teaching service?

But in our application of our professional means are we not more or less like the old-fashioned storekeeper who did what business there came in at the front door, but took no active part in stimulating it?

Again, are not the merchant and the music teacher alike in this—that stock, whether of goods or ideas, must be always up to date, always a little better and more attractive than ever before?

Now, if business (including teaching) is service, may we not drop the foolish old idea that it is unprofessional to regard art in the light of business, and so set about doing more teaching (or business) in order to be of more and better service to the community where we labor, as in a vineyard?

There are a few artists and musicians who combat the joining of the word business with any of their professional activities. But most of them are keenly alive to the best interests of themselves. As a matter of fact, it is not until the music teacher appreciates the practical basic business principle in the teaching profession that much more than accidental service can be rendered. Music is a human necessity. If you can teach it well you fulfill a decided want. If you are sufficiently organized to enlarge your teaching field, doing your work well and efficiently, you are certainly a public benefactor.

The banker said another thing to the Merchants' Club which seems worth while quoting:

"Don't fail to read the special journal that comes nearest to your line of activity. In fact you cannot be a real up-to-date merchant and omit that reading.

It is so in the music-teaching profession. The professional journal is an essential part of your actual tool equipment. It is as indispensable as reference or text-books, for it contains the best current thought. The music journal is the advanced sheets of all new music books of another decade.

Hence this order of thought cannot be found in books. The pages of this magazine, for example, are a university training in the best that men and women are thinking and saying about music as a professional activity. Here we meet distinguished artists and writers *who foregather nowhere else*. They do not speak casually, but in the most careful and studied manner, so that we may receive from them the very best they have to offer.