The last address was made by Mr. C. B. Bird, who took for his subject,

"Wausau of the Future."

( Mr. C. B. Bird's Address.)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The topic "Wausau of the Future" gives me great latitude, not possessed by the previous speakers. They spoke of what exists. I am to speak of what is not— as yet; therefore I may predict what I please. If it does not come to pass, you will long since have forgotten what I said. If it does come to pass, you may be sure I will then remind you of my predictions.

The future of a city cannot be foretold. It depends upon what the people of the city make it. A man, within reasonable limitation, may make of himself what he will, and a city made up of men certainly is in the same position. When Mr. Hennessey said to Mr. Dooley, "We are a great country," Mr. Dooley replied, "Yes Hennessey, we are a great country, and the greatest thing about is we know we are great." I have been afraid we are sometimes too much disposed to rest on our laurels, to sit back and point to our past progress, our great water powers and natural advantages, simply assume that we are going to grow anyway and let it go at that, without doing anything to make ourselves grow. But that will not do. A person who drifts with the tide never gets anywhere and, if I may mix the metaphor, the person or city simply drifting with the tide will sooner or later get caught on a snag and stick there. inertia enough to get off.

Still in some respects the future may be foreseen. The dedication of this library is indicative of one element helping to shape our future. I
do not think that persons, who have already reached middle life without acquiring the habit of getting their information by reading what others who know things have said, will change their habits at this late day. For them the library will mean but little.

However, the young people who are growing up will be materially influenced by it. I know there is a disposition in some quarters to say: "These libraries don't amount to anything for the children. They simply take a lot of trashy novels and read them and are worse off than before." That is a very serious mistake. It is not the fact. While some novels may not be especially useful, yet the novel always praises virtue and condemns vice, and the end is made to result accordingly; the villain is always killed off, while the hero is loaded with honor and glory and gets the most attractive girl of the lot.

But we are getting of late years an entirely different class of stories for young people, that are doing them a world of good. Let me give you just one illustration. I was taught in school that the cause of the war of 1812 was the British impressment of American seamen, but I did not really comprehend what that meant, although fully explained. Now it is different. Any boy who reads Cyrus T. Brady's "For the Freedom of the Sea" will have impressed upon his mind for all time to come just what were the causes of that war, and will also have gotten a pretty good knowledge of some parts of our history which will teach him how to exercise intelligently the right of suffrage upon certain questions. You remember the story? England made the claim "Once an Englishman, always an Englishman", and was insisting on that right by stopping American vessels on the high seas and taking from them persons born on English soil who had withdrawn their allegiance to King George and had sworn fealty to the new stars and stripes. Martin, of English birth, was one such, having been naturalized in this country, by which he and his son became American citizens. While upon an American vessel they were seized and forcibly impressed into the
English naval service on a charge of disloyalty, Martin was condemned by the Captain of the vessel to be flogged before the mast. The story of this scene is enough to bring tears to the eyes of any man. It is a hard tale, but it is well to tell it, because it does not exaggerate the facts of that time. After the punishment, when Martin's back was a mass of mangled blood and flesh, he was tossed to one side. Then, instead of being carried below, the captain ordered that he remain there to witness the same punishment inflicted upon his son. Martin then gathered together what little strength was left in his body, and by a sudden dash seized the captain, dragged him through an open port hole, and the two sank beneath the surface of the water, never to rise. Thereafter this vessel, with Martin's son upon it, was captured in a naval fight, and the story was told to the crew of the famous Constitution. Soon after that the Constitution and the Guerriere were clearing their decks for that memorable action, the fiercest and most hotly contested naval controversy of the entire war. Just as a few years ago, when our sailor boys were preparing for action, the cry ran back and forth from deck to deck, "Remember the Maine," so at that time while the Constitution was clearing for action the cry was sent back and forth from one end of the ship to the other, "Remember Martin," Remember Martin," Remember Martin," and a new courage inspired the heart of every American seaman aboard, sufficient to turn the tide of battle and lower the English flag to the Constitution's despised stars and stripes. The news of that victory inspired new hope and confidence and courage in the heart of every American and probably had as much to do as did any one single battle toward bringing about the final result of that war, with victory to the American nation.

While the treaty of peace thereafter declared made no mention of the cause of the conflict, yet it was tacitly understood that thenceforth there should be no further impressment of American citizens into the English or
any other service. And the "Freedoem of the Sea", the result of that war, has established the doctrine recognized by all the nations of the world, that any individual, no matter where born, has the inherent right to choose for himself in what country he shall live and to what flag he shall give his allegiance. The result has been taken advantage of by millions and millions of individuals, who since then have renounced the allegiance to the European King or potentate which they owed by birth and, coming to this country, have sworn allegiance to our flag and to our laws and have helped to build up our commonwealth. As a result anyone of these may with impunity go back to the land of his birth to visit the scenes of his childhood, and if any indignity be offered him, he has but to wrap about him the stars and stripes of his adopted country and all the powers of Continental Europe will not dare to touch one hair of his head.

The boy by being simply told the facts of history will not appreciate this situation, but if he reads this story (and if he starts it, you cannot stop him from going through to the end) he will know the fact and never forget it. When he becomes of age he will have a firm basis on which to help determine the policy of this country. If the sentimental cry "Hands across the sea" is set forth, to cause us to enter into alliance with the English speaking people simply because of a similarity in language and because of the sentiment of mother country, this boy will know that the assistance which has been rendered us of late years has hardly as yet evened up the score and if we are to enter into any such alliance it must be, not because of any sentimental claim or past favors, but because, and only because, of plain, definite, positive humanitarian advantage which will result to ourselves or the world at large.

But let me speak of a few other advantages which we have here. There is no use of mentioning our water powers. We continually pat ourselves on the back with reference to those; probably too much. Unless we develop them they are nothing. But nevertheless, I must say that one very prominent
citizen of Wisconsin, and one who has always had large foresight, said not long ago that in his judgment in twenty-five years from now the Wisconsin River valley would be more thickly populated than is the Fox River valley today. As to that, the future only can tell.

Then we have the advantage of not having some things possessed by cities. We have had no grand juries in this community, and don't need any. While other cities have been busy investigating graft charges by grand juries, we have none of that because we have no graft among our public officials. They may make some mistakes, but they are honest mistakes. They are not dishonest grafters and never have been. That is a big factor toward assisting in the building up of a city.

Then have you ever thought of our geographical situation? Has it ever occurred to you how far one must travel before reaching other cities of this size? Go towards the east and you will go pretty near to the eastern boundary of this state. You will go to Marinette, Green Bay, Appleton, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac before finding cities of the same size. On the south it is the same. No city of this size is reached until we get to Madison, situated in the tier of counties next to the southern tier in the state. On the west it is the same. We go to the Mississippi river, to La Crosse and to Eau Claire, before any such city is reached, and on the north we travel clear to the northern boundary of the state, to Lake Superior. This city is planted right down into the middle of this vast territory. And what is this territory? It is that country which, according to the last census reports, has grown in proportion more rapidly than any other portion of the state. Right in the middle of this growing territory this city of Wausau is placed. The city that is in the center always has the advantage over those upon the borders.

So much for natural advantages. But unless we take advantage of them and improve our opportunities, they will be of no use to us. If we want to
grow and build up, we have got to do something to help it along. If we sit still and grow like Topsey, there is danger that we will be just as onery as Topsey, and when the time comes that we have to be trimmed up and civilized, it will take a tremendous effort and lots of expense.

One thing especially that we need is more breathing room. The American people have not yet learned the advantage of parks and recreation grounds and breathing places for the people. We are just beginning to learn it. Many of our cities are learning it too late and they spend millions of dollars to acquire thickly inhabited and populated sections from which they tear down large and expensive buildings, so as to make parks. A few years ago those same places might have been bought for a very small expenditure of money, but it was not then seen and now the additional debt must be paid.

What a city wants is beauty. The idea that the cultivation of beauty is of no practical value to a city is all wrong. There is something about beautiful and pleasant surroundings that makes for good citizenship. What is the trouble with Chicago today? Every time we go there why do we want to get away just as quick as we can? Because of that down-town rattle-de-bang, clang-clang, sort of a thing. It goes into our ears and gets onto our brains and pretty near drives us crazy, and we flee in distraction. It is the same thing with impressions on the eye. If the surroundings are pleasant and agreeable, if there are nice parks, well kept up and preserved, if the lawns of a city are kept clean and tidy and the houses in shape, the person who sees them and lives in that city is happy and contented, he is satisfied with himself and the world, he loves his fellow men and likes to associate with them, and it makes a happy and contented community. On the other hand, if everything which strikes the eye is topsy-turvey, is disheveled and torn up, those same rattle-de-bang impressions go through the eye onto the brain and the brain becomes jangled and weary and it makes a discontented people. Those who have studied brain disease say that it helps toward insanity. So what Wausau needs is more beauty, and more places
where it can be cultivated. But we also need more breathing places for the people. Whatever we do now should be done with reference to what the effect will be twenty-five years from now. We want to look at any matter with reference to the present advantage and also with reference to how it will seem after a number of years have passed by. Cities all over the country are realizing their mistakes. Even now in Madison, which is not a large city, the project is proposed of buying several blocks at a cost of several million dollars, so as to add more space to the capitol park of the state, so that our new capitol building may have surroundings fitting to the dignity of a growing state. I am not expressing an opinion one way or the other on that proposal. I am simply calling attention to the fact of wasted opportunities years ago when all of this territory might have been had practically for a song.

Now, there is one thing in particular which is pressing itself upon us just now. That library building of ours needs more room. Any one who looks at the surroundings will agree to that at once. The additional lot under consideration should be bought. It is going to be bought some day, that is just as sure as anything can be. The whole trend of municipal improvements shows that. It is needed and if we do not see it now, future generations will see it when it will cost a good many times the present cost. We may be shortsighted again, but, if so, it will be at the cost of our children.

One instance of our shortsightedness is seen right now that we have reached the street car stage. We wish our streets were wider, and the worst part of it is when the city was platted the streets running north and south were made only sixty feet wide, while the side streets were given sixty-six feet. We have just awakened to the fact that the city before accepting a plat had the right to determine whether the arrangement of the their size, etc., streets, is such as will adequately take care of the traffic in a large and growing city, and the city can refuse to accept a plat which does not make
such provisions for the future. If this had been realized at the time when
our original plat was laid out and provision made on the assumption that we
might some day need a street car here (which idea, however, would have been
laughed to scorn at that time), provision for this future contingency might
have been made and we would have had wider streets, but, that chance is now
past. Let us not make the same mistake with reference to other things. Let
us look at what we do with an eye to the future, not simply to the present.

Let us each in his own way, do something to help in the building up of
our city, knowing that it will not build itself. Let us be intelligent and
farsighted so that when the time comes for us to move into the silent city
of the great majority, and our children and our children's children occupy
our places and walk in the paths we now tread, they will be thankful to us
for our farsightedness and the heritage which we have left to them. This,
in short, is all I can say with reference to the future of Wausau. It is
to be what we make it. Let us each do our share to make it right.

Immediately after the close of Mr. Bird's address, Mr. S. M. Quaw
arose from the audience, saying:

Mr. Chairman:
I understand the program, splendid as it was, is now finished, and if so,
I desire to make a motion if it is in order; and being assured that he was
in order, and any motion could be laid before the meeting, Mr. Quaw made
the following motion, to wit:

"I move it is the sense of this meeting, that the city
council of the city of Wausau, be, and the same is hereby
requested to purchase the Lemke property so called, as an
addition to the McIndoe Park, provided the same can be had
at a reasonable price."
The motion having been put by the Chairman, it was carried with enthusiasm and unanimity.

Thus closed the Dedication of the Wausau Library Building.
After April 1904—

The building was now complete and occupied, its costs, were slightly in excess of the estimate, the furniture ordered and purchased in the high tide of high prices, was much higher than expected, the Board having acted throughout on the principle, that the best, the most durable was the cheapest in the end.

When it came to settle up and pay for all that was contracted, there remained a debt little less than Three Thousand Dollars, and the inadequacy of our library for a city such as Wausau, was equally apparent.

If the library was to be of some benefit, of some value to our people it was apparent that more books must be put upon the empty shelves, causing another expenditure of money, and there was no prospect if immediate assistance from private sources.

This was the situation, when the Board began anew a correspondence with Mr. Andrew Carnegie, asking a grant of $4,000.00 under similar conditions as was the first grant.

His response was a prompt assent to the request, and it was unanimously voted, that the Library Board should make a request to the City Council for an annual tax levy by which this grant should become available.

The Library Board therefore, on the 6th. day of August 1907, appeared before the City Council and through its president made a statement of the financial condition of the library, the need of further endowment to meet the growing demands of the growing population, and also, that if this grant would be made available through the action of the Council, it would not only strengthen the library by getting it out of debt, but leave the sum of $1,000.00 for needed improvements upon the ground and park, and the Board pledged itself to expend such sum in those needed betterments.