

## GATHERING OF THE PLAYER MEN AT BUFFALO.

First Meeting of Player Manufacturers Ever Held in This Country—Discussions Anent the Number of Perforations to the Inch for a Standard Roll—Meeting Called to Order by L. L. Doud—Addresses by Various Representatives Who Argue That Their Position Is the Correct One—Motion to Lay the Matter Over to Convention in Detroit Is Lost—Finally Votey's Motion Agreeing Upon Nine Perforations to the Inch Is Adopted.

(Special to The Review.)

Buffalo, N. Y., Dec. 10, 1908.

Pursuant to a call issued by the A. B. Chase Co., Norwalk, O., the piano player manufacturers and their representatives gathered in this city to-day, with the object in view of settling the vexed question of the scale to be used for the 88-note players. The player trade was well represented at this first meeting, which may be said to almost reach the dignity of a convention.

There is unquestionably a decided difference of opinion as to the number of perforations required on the music roll to the inch. There are some who hold that the 88-note roll should be no longer than the present 65-note roll. Leading makers hold that nine-to-the-inch must necessarily be the standard adopted, and the advocates of the nine-to-the-inch won at this meeting.

The first meeting was held at the Hotel Iroquois, in this city, and opened shortly after ten. The score of delegates present constituted a truly representative gathering, the majority of the leading manufacturers having someone to look after their interests and express their opinions.

The following were present: Wm. J. Keeley, the Autopiano Co., New York; H. W. Metcalf, representing the Simplex Piano Co., Worcester, Mass.; the Wilcox & White Co., Meriden, Conn.; J. W. Macy, the Baldwin Co., Cincinnati, O.; E. S. Votey, the Aeolian Co., New York; R. A. Rodesch, the Rodesch Piano Co., Dixon, Ill.; T. M. Pletcher, the Melville Clark Piano Co., Chicago; Gustave Behning, the Behning Piano Co., New York; H. C. Frederici, the Clavola Co. and the American Perforated Music Co., New York; J. H. Dickinson, the Gulbrandsen-Dickinson Co., Chicago; Otto Higel, Otto Higel Co., Toronto, Ont.; D. W. Bayer, Chase & Baker Co., Buffalo, N. Y.; H. Keuchen, Shaw Piano Co., Baltimore, Md.; Chas. G. Gross, Chas. M. Stieff, Baltimore, Md.; Paul E. F. Gottschalk, Niagara Music Co., Buffalo, N. Y.; E. B. Bartlett, W. W. Kimball Co., Chicago; P. B. Klugh, Cable Company, Chicago; J. A. Stewart, Farrand Co., Detroit, Mich.; L. L. Doud, A. B. Chase Co., Norwalk, O.; J. H. Parnham, Hardman, Peck & Co., New York; and J. H. Chase and Jacob Heyl, of the Chase & Baker Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

The meeting was called to order by L. L. Doud, who briefly pointed out the necessity of reaching some definite understanding regarding the best form of music roll for 88-note players and the number of perforations to the inch that would give best results from the viewpoint of both manufacturer and public. Mr. Doud stated that as the 88-note player was but in its infancy, now is the time to adopt some standard music roll that will aid the purchaser in obtaining the best results from a maximum number of rolls to select from—in other words, that the purchaser be not confined to one particular make of music roll and the natural limitations of such a list. At present 6 and 9 perforations to the inch represent the two extremes, the Aeolian Co.'s 12-to-the-inch roll being more in the nature of an experiment.

The gentlemen present then selected Mr. Doud as chairman and Mr. Chase as secretary, and then the representatives were called upon to give their individual opinions and make suggestions, with the good of the various manufacturers and the satisfaction of the public, the real judge and jury, in mind.

T. M. Pletcher, representing the Melville Clark Piano Co., was the first to speak, and said that in the opinion of his company the six-to-the-inch perforations afforded greater possibilities from a musical standpoint, in view of the greater quantity of air controlled by the perforations. Mr. Pletcher added, however, that his company were willing to abide by the sense of the con-

vention, and had, in fact, already turned out a number of player-pianos using rolls with nine perforations to the inch.

R. A. Rodesch, who has adopted eight perforations to the inch, then spoke on the subject of a standard roll, and held that such a measurement as he used withstood climatic changes better than the nine-to-the-inch roll, and thereby insured proper tracking. Mr. Rodesch held, as did the majority of those present, that the double tracker board, one adapted to 65-note rolls, was a necessity for the present at least, affording protection to both dealer and customer.

In setting forth the Cable Company's stand, P. B. Klugh said that the nine-to-the-inch scale had been adopted by that company and they were not open to argument on the subject, as such a scale had given entire satisfaction. Mr. Klugh offered as a solution of the improper tracking question, the adoption of an adjustable end to the roll, which when pressed against a loosely-rolled music roll would force perforations into perfect alignment. He also gave it as his opinion that the habit of twisting the roll as tightly as possible before playing was a mistake, as when held tightly, proper adjustment of the roll was impossible. Mr. Klugh stated that when the purchaser understood the secret of this method of adjustment the nine-to-the-inch roll would give entire satisfaction in every instance.

J. H. Parnham also stated that Hardman, Peck & Co. had found no trouble with rolls cut nine-to-the-inch, either before or after selling.

Gustave Behning then informed the meeting that his company had found the nine-to-the-inch scale so satisfactory that they had begun to cut the 65-note music with smaller perforations and with excellent results.

The meeting then adjourned until the afternoon.

### THE AFTERNOON SESSION.

The afternoon session was called to order at 2 p.m., and some time was given over to a general discussion of the relative value of the rolls having eight and nine perforations to the inch, respectively. Mr. Rodesch offered for examination a number of rolls cut on the eight-to-the-inch scale, which were compared with one of nine shown by Mr. Votey.

The general discussion was here interrupted for the purpose of considering whether or not to finally adopt the 88-note roll in preference to the 85-note roll. Mr. Heyl, of the Chase & Baker Co., spoke at length on the subject, stating that in Europe pianos of seven-octave range, or 85 notes, cutting of the three treble notes, were manufactured in considerable quantities and had a ready sale. In support of the statement, however, that the 88-notes were needed, Mr. Heyl offered the following figures: Out of 3,838 compositions cut by the Chase & Baker Co., 1,130 needed only 65 notes; 2,425, 78 notes; 2,542 needed 80 notes; 2,660 required 83 notes, and 3,676 could be cut in an 85-note range.

A motion was made and carried that the music be cut to the full 88 notes. It was also moved and carried that the rolls be made with a standard width of 11¼ inches, leaving a margin in each side for future development, it being acknowledged that any advance in future would need the margin in its consummation.

Mr. Rodesch here proposed that the final settlement of the perforation question be postponed until the annual meeting of the National Manufacturers Association, to be held in Detroit next June, that the matter could be more thoroughly studied, and several of those present concurred with him in that opinion, but the general sense of the body was that such a postponement would only increase the feeling of uncertainty among both manufacturers and dealers and cause additional trouble for those manufacturers who were

turning out players and music rolls that would not conform with the standard agreed upon.

Mr. Votey then made a motion, which was unanimously carried, to the effect that the matter be decided at once. A standing vote was taken and twelve were found to favor the nine-to-the-inch scale, with only six backing the eight-to-the-inch standard. Upon motion the vote in favor of nine perforations as a standard scale was declared unanimous.

Thus, with a little over four hours discussion, a question was settled that has caused much worry to the trade for over a year past, and especially so within the last few months. With a standard roll all manufacturers have a chance to do business, for a purchaser can go anywhere and get any selection he desires to play, and is not confined to one list, often restricted.

Mr. Votey, following the settlement of the perforation standard, offered a suggestion, which was accepted, to the effect that the manufacturers adopt for the 88-note music rolls the spool about being used by the Aeolian Co. The new spool has clutches inserted in the ends instead of pins, and attachments are furnished for inserting in the holders on the player, the other end being arranged to fit the clutches placed within the ends of the spool. This new spool, Mr. Votey claims, makes proper tracking a simple proposition, as the roll can be held tightly and accurately, a difficult feat where the pin is used, especially if it is driven into a spool made of cross-grained wood. The spool is also fitted with an adjustable end which may be pressed against the music roll in such a way as to force the perforations into alignment. While this adjustable end is patented, the Aeolian Co. have not, nor will not, patent the clutch, offering it for the free use of other manufacturers. The individual manufacturers, too, may invent an adjustable end that will not conflict with the patented article, but give the same result.

The question of price also came up before the meeting, and while no action was taken, it was strongly suggested that while the field was a new one, manufacturers should insure both themselves and the dealer a fair and liberal profit while the opportunity offers. Mr. Votey here stated that the Aeolian Co. would sell their 88-note rolls at the same price as the 65-note, believing that in large quantities they can be made nearly as cheaply. This company are also considering the making of player-pianos with only one tracker, that for 88-note rolls.

J. H. Dickinson, of the Gulbrandsen-Dickinson Co., suggested that the player-piano and music roll manufacturers present effect a permanent organization for meeting at stated times and discussing such questions as interest the meetings. As most of the firms represented were members of the National Manufacturers Association, Mr. Dickinson's suggestion was not acted upon.

At the close of the convention of player-piano and music roll manufacturers, Paul E. V. Gottschalk, general manager of the Niagara Music Co., Buffalo, presented each one present with a music roll bearing "The Convention March," composed by Paul R. Godeska, and "Dedicated to the Convention of Player-Piano Manufacturers, held at the Iroquois Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., December 10, 1908." The roll was in a handsome box decorated with holly and made a pleasing souvenir.

The new pipe organ built by M. P. Moller, the eminent organ builder of Hagerstown, Md., for the Baptist church of Iowa City, Ia., was formally dedicated on December 4. The instrument is one of great architectural attractiveness, and contains all the special features which distinguish the Moller instruments.

The authorities of Kingston, Ont., are arranging to give a bonus to the Wormworth Piano Co. to rebuild their factory recently destroyed by fire.

The rate-payers of Listowel, Ont., have voted to assist the Morris Piano Co. to rebuild their plant in that city which was recently destroyed by fire. A loan of \$25,000 is authorized.