

COL. RICE URGES CARILLON PLAN AS WAR TRIBUTE

Wants Set of Well Attuned
Bells Placed in City
Hall Tower.

EXPENSE PLACED AT \$7,000

Offers \$1,000 Subscription to
Further Project, in Letter
Sent to Mayor Watt.

Albany's permanent memorial to its soldiers and sailors of the great war should be a carillon of well attuned bells, placed in the city hall tower, in the opinion of Colonel William Gorham Rice, as expressed in a letter he sent yesterday to Mayor James R. Watt. The cost of such a memorial would be from \$7,000 to \$10,000, Mr. Rice believes, and to meet the expense if public subscriptions are asked, he and Mrs. Rice will contribute \$1,000. Mr. Rice believes the city should appropriate half the cost of the memorial, and the public should subscribe the other half.

"Would not a carillon of well attuned bells, say two octaves, chromatic, or more—about 25 bells—arranged to hang in the noble tower of our city hall, be the most appropriate, the most distinctive, and the most lasting memorial Albany could choose to celebrate the victorious end of the great war?" asks Colonel Rice in his letter to Mayor Watt.

The mayor last night said he did not care to comment on the suggestion.

Carillonneur to Play Them.

Under Colonel Rice's plan, the bells would be played by a city carillonneur, just as are the carillons of Belgium, the Albany carillonneur to be appointed by the mayor. The bells could not be made in this country, as we have no expert carillon makers, but would be made in Belgium, according to Colonel Rice. He suggests that they be made of cannon captured from Germany, and that, when they are placed in the noble tower of our city hall Josef Denyn, the great carillonneur of Belgium, be invited to inaugurate carillon playing in Albany by a concert. Colonel Rice's letter to Mayor Watt follows:

"Dear Mr. Mayor:

"Would not a carillon of well attuned bells, say two octaves, chromatic, or more, about 25 bells, arranged to hang in the noble tower of our City hall, be the most appropriate, the most distinctive and the most lasting memorial Albany could choose to celebrate the victorious end of the great war? This would be a memorial which would honor those who have given their lives abroad or at home, would pay constant tribute to those who served anywhere and have returned to us, and would inspire young and old through years to come with renewed devotion to the principle of world-wide liberty.

"Such a carillon should be played by a city carillonneur, just as in liberty loving Belgium for centuries past. The carillonneur could be appointed by the mayor upon nomination by the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art society and the organization of choirmasters of three or more of the principal churches of the city.

Skill in playing a carillon is not difficult to acquire. And the committee might also determine the national holidays, saints' days and the other times when the carillon should be played.

To Makes Bells Abroad.

"Unfortunately, we on this side of the ocean have not yet learned to make the smaller musical bells of accurate pitch which form the upper range of carillons, and our most experienced bell founders are not ready to attempt these unusual instruments.

"Therefore we should need to send to Europe for the set of large and small specially attuned bells required. But this foreign origin in itself would be significant of the bond that exists between us and our Allies. Perhaps Albany's carillon would become a model for tower music throughout our country, and would aid in establishing here a new art.

"The great bell already in our city hall tower possibly could be made the bass bell of the carillon. I should hope, too, that all the other bells might be cast from captured cannon; these to be given by military authority to some experienced bell founder abroad for this purpose. It is estimated that a carillon would cost from \$7,000 to \$10,000, depending upon the size, the price of metal, and whether the bells could be imported, in consideration of their public ownership and use, duty free. To make such a set of bells would require over a year, I imagine.

City to Pay Half Cost.

"Half of the cost, I think, should be borne by the city at large, so that the memorial would be felt to be representative of the community as a whole. Toward the other half, I would offer from Mrs. Rice and myself, \$1,000 or such lesser sum as may be appropriate, should there be a general subscription in response to the suggestion here made.

"Expenditure of the city funds for this purpose would, I believe, be justified not only as a thanksgiving memorial, but also from the fact that, as a great musical instrument, the carillon would have an educational value. It might ring, for instance, automatically upon the light bells, every morning at the hour when work in factories begins; it might sound as the school children gather; on national holidays it should play national airs and patriotic hymns; it should celebrate Easter day and Christmas day, and church feasts and civic anniversaries generally. Weekly summer evening

concerts might be given, the carillonneur himself playing the instrument, as is done in Belgium and Holland.

Would Make Albany Famous.

"A memorial of the kind suggested would make Albany uniquely distinguished among American cities. Already we have a splendid municipal tower, suitable for this purpose, and it is to be remembered that cities like Antwerp, Ghent, Mechlin, and many others have not hesitated to devote large sums of money to this great civic music, a music which gives joy to thousands.

"Finally, if this project meets with favor, I should hope that Josef Denyn, the great carillonneur of Belgium, might be invited by Albany to inaugurate carillon player here by a concert, which could not fail to be a national event.

"I forbear to go into further detail, and will only add that if the project as a whole meets with the approval of yourself, your associates in the city government, and our citizens generally, I shall be glad to cooperate in every way to obtain for Albany the best carillon adapted to our needs that can be made."

Mayor Watt acknowledged the letter. The mayor's views on the question of a memorial are well known. He does not believe that Albany should erect a temporary one by any means, but says that when the memorial is erected it should be for all time.