

THE  
OCTAGON

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*A Journal of The American Institute of Architects*

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NOVEMBER

1932

Volume 4

Number 11

# THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

THE OCTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.

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# THE OCTAGON

A Journal of The American Institute of Architects

## The Confessions of an Architect

WHAT DO THEY THINK OF US?

WHENEVER in polite society I happen to hear people speaking of architecture my senses quicken with surprise. Why is this? Whenever I overhear a conversation, say, in a train or an ale-house, and the word "architect" is mentioned my heart sickens in alarm, for I feel certain that I shall hear no good of my kind. Again, why is this? Everywhere I meet the same ignorance as to what the architect really is.

It may be that the architect, like a many-headed hydra, is too manifold in his activities to be grasped as one complete idea. Perhaps it is quite impossible to resolve such an amorphous creature into something definite in the landscape of public life. For the mass mind likes definite pictures. It likes criminals to be out-and-out criminals (preferably gangsters), it likes clergymen to wear shovel hats and speak always with inaudible droning voices (and clergymen certainly play up to this); it likes artists to have long hair and flowing ties; and not for one moment would it tolerate a barrister with a beard, even if he had the virtues of Sir John Simon, Marshall Hall, and Norman Birkett, all rolled into one. Decidedly a barrister would starve in a beard. Yet (and this is our weakness) architects appear in all manner of guises: some have beards and some have not; some are clean shaven, some are half-shaven; some are dreamy and artistic, others are hard-boiled and business-like. How can people idolise the architect when the idol looks different each time they look at him?

Something ought to be done about this. It seems that the architect must take more interest in his appearance. He must come out into the open as a public figure. For the British and American public love personalities; they feast on them. In the mass mind, what is literature compared with Bernard Shaw? What is sculpture compared with Jacob Epstein? Who cares a tinker's cuss about the film so long as Greta Garbo is in it? It is the flesh and blood which thrills, not the wretched stuff of which the art is made.

But what is the architect to do about this? He cannot so easily appear upon the stage in one guise only. His very nature has all the inherent weak-

nesses of duality. He has to be both a philosophic artist and a calculating business man, and no person can possibly grasp this duality without a headache. And perhaps the public is right. For it is impossible to develop to the fullest extent these two sides of our nature in one person; and I often think that in view of our difficulty between the conflicting demands of imaginative design and calculating economic structure, it would be better not to pretend to be both at the same time, but to be the perfect artist on say, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and the perfect business man on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and in each department thoroughly to affect the appropriate dress, disguise, and properties. But perhaps the simplest solution lies in the specialization of our work into two types of men, *i.e.*, the architect-designer and the architect-constructor. Of course, in many architectural partnerships this already works, and no doubt in one or two large businesses even a triple arrangement might be held to exist, with a designer, a constructor, and a business manager. But they all call themselves, vaguely, "architects"; and what is most curious, there is no proper official recognition for such specialization, neither in the organization of the profession nor in the methods of training in the schools. Everyone learns a little bit about design, a little bit about steelwork calculation, a little or nothing about business. We have to pick the rest up as best we may in the rough and tumble of experience—that is, when we are lucky enough to get experience.

But my suggestion for organizing ourselves into the Siamese twins of "architect-designer" and "architect-constructor" would have the merit of extending or rather reabsorbing those territories which have seceded on the one hand to the interior decorator, and on the other, to the civil engineer. Yet there is no reason why these latter gentlemen should not join forces with us, and although this may sound a somewhat revolutionary idea, it has already taken place abroad where the architect-designer and civil engineer belong to the same professional body.

"ARCHI VOLTA."

(From "Architectural Design and Construction.")

## Comments on Institute Conventions

### A CLINIC FOR ARCHITECTURE

By HUBERT G. RIPLEY, F.A.I.A.

*(From a letter to the Secretary of the Institute in reply to the President's invitation for comments. That invitation appeared at the end of an article, in the September issue of THE OCTAGON, by Mr. Guth, Secretary of the Wisconsin Chapter.)*

George Moore says, "The mission of art has always been a popular controversy and will be to the end of time.—Talk about art and artists is for the populace."

A "clinic" has to do with the teaching of medicine or surgery at the hospital bedside. It suggests dissections, microscopy, germs, and all that sort of thing; methods to combat and cure the woes of suffering humanity. You can't apply these methods to art. On the other hand, they may be applied to the purely technical side, business end so to speak, of the architectural profession. That is exactly what institute conventions are for, that is the work, the most necessary work, that conventions have been doing for the past sixty years. In that sense, our conventions have been "clinics," as Mr. Guth desires them to be. Apparently no other way has as yet been designed to do this most necessary work than the method now in vogue. Some architects are so constituted that they love to do these needed tasks, and more power to them as far as I am concerned. All of us, or most all at least, are mildly interested in certain phases of these matters, for no one knows where their ramifications may touch, so in spite of their deadly, dull hours, we sit patiently listening to committee reports "that are filed away and forgotten."

Let us examine for a moment the parallel that Mr. Guth, in his interesting article in the September OCTAGON, draws between conventions held by the medical profession and our own. It seems to me the parallel would be more significant if drawn between conventions held by doctors and archaeologists. Both sciences concern themselves with ascer-

tained facts, and the endeavor to prove or disprove certain theories by research, experiment, and study. We like to think of architecture as a Fine Art, concerning itself largely with theory and speculation, and the use of the word "Clinic," is upsetting. "Symposium" would be better but there is really no objection to "Convention". Perhaps Mr. Guth will be kind enough to name some of those "thousand subjects that loom," outline a definite program for an Ideal Convention, in fact.

I must confess a weakness for conventions, deadly dull as they are in spots, for their real stimulus comes from two things: First, the consideration of the state of the Fine Arts throughout the nation and subjects of vital import to the well being of the profession; second, the opportunity afforded of meeting artists whose accomplishments have been outstanding.

I shall never forget a golden hour with Henry Bacon over a few Rye highballs in the "Powhatan," the night before the pageant which commemorated the award of the gold medal of the Institute for his design of the Lincoln Memorial. During that hour, it may have been two, for time stood still, Harry talked about life and art, and many things, and I seemed to grasp a fuller understanding of what architecture meant, though he did not put it in words, nor can I. The flask, old Sherwood, as I remember it, mellow with pleasant aroma of waving grain, was just enough to finish the discussion in which, for the most part, I was the listener. This was Harry Bacon's last convention, but the shining wings of the goddess he worshipped, still flutter where artists gather.

### A COMMENT, AND A REVIEW

By WALTER W. HOOK, A.I.A.

I read with interest Mr. Guth's article, and I feel that the idea has a basis of real merit, and that it should be very carefully considered by the program Committee, with a view towards devoting possibly one day of the Convention to "Clinical Study". I am sure that enough material could be assembled to make this feature one of the most interesting of a Convention, as I feel everybody, particularly architects, is interested in finding out how the "other half lives," and the problems of a clinical nature are

every architect's problems and each should be interested in finding out how the other fellow solves it.

*(In reviewing the last Convention, for the North Carolina Chapter, Mr. Hook writes as follows:)*

In general, the Convention was very interesting to me, as a novice at Institute Conventions. The attendance, though somewhat smaller than in previous years, was quite amazing in view of existing

conditions, and the seriousness with which the Delegates tackled the business of the Convention was still more amazing.

The opening Session on the morning of the 27th, was a routine opening of a convention. The Address of the President, and Reports of the Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of Directors was heard. The President's address was routine in so far as program was concerned but was far from routine as regards subject matter. I should like at this time to add another word of praise for Mr. Kohn's skillful handling of the business of the Convention. The work was nicely done, comments regarding a "well oiled convention" notwithstanding.

A most interesting feature of this Morning Session was the reading by Hobart Upjohn of the Minutes of the first meeting of the Institute. It is most interesting to note that the first act of the newly formed Institute, after deciding the basis of Membership, was to draw up a form of Notification of Election to Membership, and immediately thereafter to draw up a form of Notification to those who were delinquent in their dues. I wonder if the founders realized that their first action was to be so adequately serviceable to the Institute and Chapters seventy-five years later!

The Session on Wednesday Afternoon was given over to the Committee on the Economics of Site Planning and Housing. The report was interesting from the standpoint of the amount of effort expended in arranging the report, and was probably personally interesting to those architects who have large scale housing operations as a portion of their practice. The amount of the information was voluminous, and the import such that it was not difficult to spot, by observation of facial expression, those who were particularly interested in the report. The Session was evidently successful as the Convention voted to continue the work of the Committee.

The Evening Session on Wednesday was generally titled "The Practice of Architecture During a Depression". In view of the fact that your Secretary felt that he was fairly well informed on this subject, he attended a different session, which however was most adequate in its solution of the problem under discussion. This Session began with two or three or maybe four Dry Martinis at about 6:30 on H Street, and ended somewhere around midnight at the far end of the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The President will report on the Convention Session as the Secretary was absent.

The Session Thursday morning was high lighted by a report by Louis LaBeaume, Chairman of the Committee on Public Works, and covered the work of the Institute in furthering the cause for "the employment of Private Architects for Government Work". Full reports of the activities of this Committee have been published in THE OCTAGON.

The two main items before the Convention were those of the Unification of the Profession, and the Institute's endorsement of the Architects Small House Service Bureau. The problem of Unification was tackled first and furnished real fireworks, in that considerable objection was raised in some quarters to the plan of Unification as presented by the Institute Committee. After much discussion a caucus was called composed of the representatives of the various groups, and after considerable work, a compromise plan of Unification was drawn and adopted.

The problem of the Bureau was not settled, although the discussions were carefully studied and showed remarkable strategy in their presentation. But the subject seemed to hit a snag somewhere, and the question of policy was not put to the Convention. A special investigating Committee was appointed and will report at the next Convention.

The election of Officers was so smooth that it caused not even a ripple on the face of the Convention. Wherever there was any possibility of a contest, the Candidates withdrew in favor of each other with such suavity and grace that things seemed to be more like a ballet than an election.

The Convention closed on schedule with an excellent banquet, eloquent speeches and illuminated ice cream, and a good time was had by all.

I have not touched on the reading of the Reports of various Committees, nor any action thereon. These reports were scattered throughout the business of the Convention, and the action on the Resolutions as presented is fully reported in THE OCTAGON.

By way of final remarks, I should say that which most impressed itself on my mind in regard to the entire Convention was the fact, and the lamentable fact, that so few Southern Architects have any place in the business of the Institute. I attribute this to the fact that Southern Architects have been content to sit still, "let George do it", and thus allow the business of the Institute to walk away from them. Practically all of the work of the Institute is carried on by and for Northern and Northwestern Architects. This is no indictment of the Institute nor of our Northern Architectural Brethren, but it is stated nevertheless with a sense of shame for Southern Architects.

A copy of the last Annual will show this to be true. Observe the residences of the Officers, Directors, Committee Chairmen, and still more amazing is the list of past Presidents and Secretaries. The number which lie outside the triangle which extends from Washington to Chicago to New York is exceedingly small.

It is perfectly reasonable to expect a larger representation from the North and East, due to the larger numbers of Members located in this section,

but it is still a sad fact that so few Southerners are working in the Institute. This fact was most clearly shown in the Delegations from the various states. With the exception of North Carolina, only three other Southern States had its full quota of Delegates on the Convention floor. How can we expect recognition from the Institute unless we make ourselves so prevalent and so interested that recognition is necessary.

I should like to suggest that before the next election of Officers, the Southern States get together and send nominations for various offices, and see that these nominations receive proper publicity, so that even if our candidates are defeated, the ground work will have been laid for Southern recognition. I am certain that if this procedure is followed, there

will eventually be more southern representation in the business of the Institute.

There is Architecture in the South and good. There are Architects in the South and able ones. Are we willing to work for recognition as well as a living or are we willing to sit still and be forgotten.

If the Institute means no more to Southern Architects than the Southern Architects, as a result of their prodigious lassitude, mean to the Institute, then I think it is high time that the Southern Chapters be disbanded, and that the moneys now in the treasuries of the various Chapters be turned into one huge fund to purchase upholstered chairs and palm leaf, or maybe electric fans (you have to work a palm leaf fan) for those Architects who now, perchance, may be still sitting on stools.

## Colonial Interiors as Museum Trophies

By LEICESTER B. HOLLAND, F.A.I.A.

A FEW days ago there came to me an interesting letter from Albert Simons of Charleston, South Carolina, inflexible defender of our early American Architecture. It ran, in part, as follows:

"Last week I received a phone call from a gentleman who stated that he was visiting this city for the purpose of purchasing a paneled room for his museum. He stated that it had been suggested that he call upon me to assist in finding something that would be suitable for his purpose.

"I replied as politely as I could that while I had a high regard for the gentleman who had sent him, and would be glad to be of service to any of his friends, I was opposed in principle to any antiquities being sold out of the city and would have to be excused from aiding him.

"The poor man was quite taken by surprise by such an unexpected point of view and hung up the phone in some confusion.

"Do you think it would accomplish anything if the museums of the country could be advised of the action of the Institute at its last convention? I refer to

*'Resolved, That the American Institute of Architects urges that museums abstain from the devastating practice of purchasing or installing interiors or other portions of early buildings except those whose demolition is inevitable.'*

I do not know whether it would accomplish anything, but I have hopes that it might, for after all museums are not hard-boiled commercial enter-

prises, their function is to foster the love of art and develop the aesthetic responsiveness of the community. In general they are public spirited and intelligent public servants, and would not wittingly sacrifice the fine things in American culture to pride of possession. The trouble is that "period rooms" are popular, and they are cheap, and human nature often takes the easiest way, at the expense of prostitution of its ideals.

The situation has been admirably expressed by Professor Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August 1930. He says:

"Galleries by honored use and wont, contain objects of the fine arts for the purpose of delectation and contemplation. Period rooms contain such objects of the minor arts and such minor examples of the fine arts as can be combined into an atmosphere which may be respired and enjoyed without concentration, contemplation, or taking thought of any kind. Here we capture the simple secret of the period room both with the public and with a certain type of museum official; it can be enjoyed—nay, it can be created—by persons relatively without taste and too busy for reflection of any sort. For the tired business man it is indeed the ideal art museum, and so it is for the bewildered museum director at his wit's end." . . .

"A city becomes ambitious. It helps a board of museum trustees to build an immense structure. . . . Tardily the trustees, with an enormous building on their hands, wake up to the fact that they haven't a director or collections. A director comes fairly easy—they hire him. Collections come hard. What is the director to do? His position depends on his making a prompt public impression. The empty

NOTE: Mr. Holland is Chairman of the Institute's Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings.

Mr. Simons is President of the South Carolina Chapter of the Institute.

halls haunt his dreams. Instead of thinking in terms of fine objects one after another, as a real director of Fine Arts must, he thinks in terms of galleries. There are many empty galleries, there are many periods of decoration—period rooms are the quick and easy solution. They are in the market, as compared with great works of art, they are both abundant and cheap. So, ho for period rooms, and the long-eared public behind you! In this fashion one might readily make a great art museum which would not contain a single great work of art."

"Now the fact that this is a natural way of extricating one's self from certain awkward situations does not excuse it. If the aim of a museum is to extend culture through the understanding of great art, we have to do with a complete negation of its main purpose. At best we are dealing with a thoughtless sentimentality, at worst with a cynical disloyalty."

Unfortunately American interiors are both particularly popular and particularly cheap. There are great numbers in this country who have heard of George Washington and the American Revolution and who get an emotional thrill out of any thing Early American, while there are few to whom Henry II or William and Mary mean anything whatever. The result is that almost any authentic colonial interior is considered suitable material for a museum,

though the majority of them have little claim to be considered works of art. When they were built they were simply parts of houses, humble or pretentious, for folks to live in. As such they had and have still, the natural dignity of human life. No one could regret the preservation of even the humblest as an integral historic picture. And the museums have done much for the preservation of historic houses. To spread the knowledge of the country's architectural history by photographs also, or by models, or even replicas, if a museum has to fill up empty space, is admirable. But the practice of dissecting living houses to make popular curios of the *dissecta membra*, makes one wonder if our adventures among the more primitive inhabitants of the Pacific is not reacting on our cultural sensibilities. It is well to remember that even the humblest head has a certain dignity and interest upon its proper pair of shoulders, whereas it may be questioned if even a hundred chieftain's heads have much aesthetic uplift, removed for exhibition purposes.

Surely, if we try, we can persuade the museums that it is a rather shoddy and uncultural act to destroy the native heirlooms of any community to titillate the sentimentalities of casual wanderers weary of looking at great works of art.

## A Cordial Invitation

**A**RCHITECTS everywhere, and particularly members of the Institute, are cordially invited by the Construction League of the United States to attend the Highway and Building Congress to be held in Detroit, January 16-20, 1933.

Friday, January 20—Building Congress Day—will be devoted particularly to the building industry and general construction. Speakers of national prominence will present recommendations for the solution of present-day building problems.

This Congress is a supreme effort on the part of those individuals and organizations of the Construction Industry who believe that a better understanding, more willing and effective cooperation and mutual benefit, can be obtained by meeting together and discussing as a single group, problems affecting the welfare of the Construction Industry as a whole as well as the general public.

The bringing together of the numerous groups for joint consideration of mutual problems at one time and place is an innovation. It marks the beginning of what should prove to be mutually advantageous, coordinated activities, and a more valuable service on the part of construction industry to the country.

### *The Program.*

On the first three days of the Congress, separate

meetings of the individual associations taking part in the Congress will be held. Thursday, the fourth day, will be devoted to Highways, and Friday, the final day of the Congress, to Building and General Construction. By such an arrangement of programs each participating association will retain its individual identity, conducting its usual convention program in its separate meetings on the first three days. All will merge individual aims in staging the programs of the Highway Sessions on Thursday, and the Building and General Construction Sessions on Friday. On these two days addresses relating to general highway and building problems will be presented by outstanding leaders.

### *Congress Objectives.*

The principal objective of the Congress will be to focus public attention upon the economic advantages of highway and building activities.

The several associations will contribute to the normal and essential progress in highway and building technique through their separate meetings. No less importance will be attached to the exchange of ideas as to improvements in design and methods through experience and research as usually carried on by the individual organizations jointly and severally.

External conditions, however, impose an immediate obligation upon every component part of the construction industry to rise above individual aims and to take its part in an intensive educational effort to assure a continuation of public building, and highway construction programs, upon a reasonable and rational basis. The Congress plans are the outcome of a keen appreciation of these circumstances by association leaders.

The importance of highway and building operations for the welfare of every community must be interpreted, not only in direct construction benefits, but in the increased purchasing power of construction workers resident in cities, towns and villages throughout the land. The thousands of dollars spent for construction projects, and the millions of dollars of wealth that they produce must be more fully recognized. Additional emphasis must be given to the dominant part that highway and building construction play in the life of the citizens of the nation.

#### *Equipment and Material Exhibits.*

Two exhibits of equipment and materials will feature the Congress. One embracing highway and building construction and maintenance will be staged in the Municipal Airport Building, and the other presenting equipment and materials of special interest to material producing groups, will occupy space in the Book Cadillac Hotel.

#### *The Congress City.*

Detroit was chosen as the Congress City because of its many advantages—ample modern hotels; spacious, well equipped exhibit hall; adequate transportation facilities; unsurpassed active interest in the Congress objectives on the part of citizens throughout Detroit, Wayne County and the State of Michigan; and the world-wide reputation of Detroit for progress in building and highway construction.

In addition to the excellent Convention facilities, a visit to Detroit will afford delegates an opportunity to inspect the results of many years of work to the accomplishment of a well-designed Regional Plan

for Detroit and its environs, the development of state and county arterial highways, city street widenings on a mammoth scale, new and reconstructed office and manufacturing buildings, and numerous outstanding structures for grade separations overcoming difficult physical conditions.

#### *Congress Advantages.*

The entire Congress will be impressive in the number of national associations taking part, delegates in attendance, and the size and character of the exhibits. It will be a significant event in that it will bring together for the first time in joint effort and meeting the varied allied interests of building and highway construction. It will make possible an interchange of ideas between architects, engineers, contractors, manufacturers, producers, officials and others interested in public and private building and highway construction at a critical time in the economic affairs of the entire construction industry. The accompanying exhibitions which will feature equipment, materials, and methods, will have an enlarged scope in comparison with previous similar exhibitions.

Finally, the combined attendance will emphasize the strength of the united construction forces and focus attention upon the far-reaching influences of construction activity. Results will be the development of a coordinated program for sound progress by the individual associations, and additional impetus to educational measures which will sustain public interest and justify expenditures for building and highway improvement throughout the world.

Further information concerning the program, the dinner on Thursday evening, January 19, hotel reservations, and related matters will appear in the December number of THE OCTAGON.

It should be noted that the railroads will give a special reduction on a round trip ticket—the price to be one and one-ninth of a one-way fare.

For other information write to Charles Upham, Chairman, Committee on Arrangements, 938 National Press Building, Washington, D. C.

## LeBrun Travelling Scholarship Competition—1933

A nationwide competition for the LeBrun Travelling Scholarship of \$1,400 is announced by the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The scholarship, established by Pierre L. LeBrun, is awarded annually to promote the artistic, scientific and practical efficiency of the architectural profession, and entitles the winner to a European trip of not less than six months for further architectural study and practice.

All contestants must be practicing architects or architectural draftsmen, citizens of the United States, between the ages of twenty-three and thirty,

who have been actively engaged in their profession for at least three years, and have not previously been beneficiaries of any travelling scholarships. They must be specially nominated by a member of the American Institute of Architects who will certify that they meet these requirements and are deserving of the scholarship.

Nomination blanks may be obtained from the secretary of any Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, or from the LeBrun Scholarship Committee, 522 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Nominations must be received before January 15, 1933.



## Public Works and the Private Architect—in Ohio

**T**HE procedure of the Cleveland Chapter, in order to obtain a change in the state law in regard to the operation of the Office of State Architect and Engineer, is not without interest to other chapters.

Following is printed a letter, with its enclosure, which was sent by the President of the Cleveland Chapter, Abram Garfield, to each member of the Legislature of the State of Ohio.

### (LETTER)

The executive committee of the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects respectfully asks for your reactions on an amendment to be proposed to the law governing the operation of the office of the State Architect and Engineer—a division of the Department of Public Works—covering the following:

1. Change the office from its present plan and specification producing policy so that it will operate only as a fact finding, survey, research, advisory, directory and administration bureau to the departments and institutions of Ohio in the preparation and execution of budget, maintenance and building construction programs.
2. Employ qualified private architects and engineers to render complete service for all of the State's building construction work, except maintenance and minor repairs.

As representatives of the building industry we are seeking, and receiving, the cooperation of the Ohio State Association of Architects and its constituent Chapters of the American Institute of Architects and the construction interests of the State in support of the amendment.

We enclose a list of some of the arguments for the passage of the proposed amendment which is in the interests of economy, efficiency and progress in the State's building construction work.

May we have you cooperation and support in this legislation?

### (ENCLOSURE)

Arguments in support of an amendment to the law governing the operation of the office of the Ohio State Architect and Engineer to make it a fact finding and advisory bureau and to provide for the employment of private architects and engineers on State building construction work:

Generally speaking the State Architect and Engineer's office has served acceptably the interests of the State. It should be continued under a revised operating policy, through which it can render, in coopera-

tion with State officials and private architects, a greater, and a much needed research and advisory service.

Ohio has no complete, authentic and properly assembled records of its institutional lands, buildings, etc., from which to determine its expansion, operation and maintenance policies. Such records should be assembled. Its building construction and expansion budget system is not business-like and dependable. The budget system should be changed in the interests of economy and progress.

The State Architect and Engineer's office can and should: (1) Secure the data concerning and compile complete records of all State institutional lands, buildings and improvements; (2) assist in preparing comprehensive, forward-looking building rehabilitation and expansion programs; (3) render architectural and engineering service for scientific budget making; (4) supervise maintenance and repair operations; and (5) serve as technical advisor to and representative of the State, cooperating with private architects and engineers, in the proper, efficient and economical planning and execution of building construction work.

The office should comprise a small, technically qualified, efficient, honest, properly compensated and continuing personnel.

Governmental operation of architectural bureaus tend toward: Impractical standardization; hurried solutions of building problems during periods of great activity and mass production; maintenance of top-heavy personnel and high operating cost during periods of lesser activity; difficulties, in normal times, in securing qualified personnel because of low salary schedules; political favoritism and consequent incompetency, perpetuation of mistakes in plans and layouts; and the usual deadening influence of bureaucratic operation.

Comparative surveys of buildings planned by government bureaus and by qualified private architects usually show that the bureau buildings do not serve their purpose as efficiently as do those of the private architect. The thought and study, free from bureau influence, the private architect must and does give to each problem is reflected in better planned buildings and the utilization of newly proven structural elements, effecting economies to the taxpayer, greater usefulness to the State and the simplification of administration.

Bureaucracy in the field of private endeavor is an infringement of the republican ideal of encouraging private initiative, and government bureaus of architecture are an encroachment on the acknowledged right of the private tax paying architect to practice his profession.

## The Structural Service Department

F. LEO SMITH, TECHNICAL SECRETARY

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Devoted to the advancement of knowledge of materials, methods of construction, and equipment for buildings, and to a better understanding of the art and science of architecture.

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### Architects Participate in Producers' Council Meeting

A growing appreciation of the value of cooperative effort and of the necessity for coordinated action in the building industry has served to stimulate the interest of architects in the activities of The Producers' Council. The interdependence of the various agencies engaged in the construction field was stressed at the ninth semi-annual meeting of the Council which was held at the Architectural League in New York City, November 1st and 2nd.

Architects took an active part in the program and joined with the producers in the discussion of subjects of mutual concern. The unusual opportunities for definite accomplishment in the realization of common aims and objectives was clearly demonstrated, and the need for unity of action in the coming period of economic reconstruction is apparent.

F. W. Morse, President of the Council, in his opening address reviewed past accomplishments and outlined future possibilities for rendering a necessary and valuable service to the building industry. This address was followed by reports of the Treasurer and of the Executive Secretary of the Council. F. P. Byington submitted a brief report on the Construction League of the United States; J. C. Bebb presented the report of the Committee on Trade Practices, and F. Leo Smith, Technical Secretary of the Structural Service Department of the Institute, gave an informal talk on the value of technical and trade literature to the architect.

Stephen F. Voorhees read a message from N. Max Dunning, Chairman of the Structural Service Committee of the Institute, conveying to the Council an expression of confidence in this cooperative effort between the professional man and the man in business. This paper should inspire renewed enthusiasm in the affiliation between the Institute and the Council and serve to strengthen the friendly relationship between the architects who specify quality products and the manufacturers who produce them.

Robert D. Kohn, Chairman of the Construction League of the United States, spoke informally on "What the Producers' Council has done for the Construction League." The Council, a founder member of the League, has taken an active interest in this affiliation to unify the construction industry. The potential power of organized effort has been demonstrated by the influence exercised upon Con-

gress in the enactment of legislation relating to construction. Mr. Kohn commented on the objectives and accomplishments of the National Committee for Trade Recovery, stating that the public works program of this Committee is the biggest peace-time engineering job that this nation has ever tackled. Its benefits will undoubtedly be reflected in a substantial construction program throughout the nation, with a corresponding stimulation of business in all lines of industry.

H. R. Dowswell, of the office of Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, spoke on the "or equal" clause in architects' specifications. He pointed out the difficulty of determining equality in materials and methods. Specifications must be definite to afford an equitable basis for competitive bidding and the "or equal" clause prevents a direct comparison of bids on identical products and processes. Specific materials and methods should be required by the specifications and contracts awarded without reference to proposed substitutions. The contractor should be afforded an opportunity to submit with his original bid proposals for substitutions, with additions or deductions, the relative merits of each to be determined by the architect after the award of the contract.

The New York Producers' Council Club presented a resolution advocating the single price system to aid in the elimination of the evils of bid peddling and shopping for bids. Architects, producers, contractors, subcontractors and material dealers are jointly responsible for this objectionable practice which has been a contributing factor to the present demoralization of the construction industry. The Council adopted this resolution, thereby approving the principle of the one-price system.

Raymond M. Hood spoke on "The Significance of New and Improved Products to Modern Architecture" at the semi-annual dinner meeting of the Council, which was held at the Architectural League. The development of new materials and methods is largely responsible for present trends in modern architecture, according to Mr. Hood. The architect has been forced to abandon many of the traditional forms of architectural expression through the necessity for adapting his buildings to progressive improvements in materials and methods of construction. Modern architecture is not the result of a spontaneous effort on the part of the architect to create something original and different but has evolved

through the invention and production of materials, equipment and methods to make buildings more convenient and better adapted to their intended purpose.

Rolland J. Hamilton, President of the American Radiator Company, addressed the dinner meeting. He predicted an upward trend of building in 1933 and a future greater and more prosperous than the industry has ever before known. He stated that the demand for housing has not been extinguished by the depression, but has been pent up, and that its release would be facilitated by the new system of Federal Home Loan Banks. The building industry can expect this system to provide funds and credit to create approximately five billion dollars' worth of home building and repair work during the next three years. The far reaching effect of this is best appreciated when it is realized that in the peak year, 1925, we spent only one-fourth of this amount for single family houses.

At the joint luncheon of the Producers' Council and the Council Clubs, charters were presented to the New York Club, the Boston Club, and the Philadelphia Club. Charters for the seven clubs not officially represented at the meeting are being engrossed and will be forwarded at an early date.

The business sessions were brought to a close with a golf match and dinner at the Hempstead Golf Club, Hempstead, Long Island. This social session was well attended by both architects and producers.

#### **Inadequate Wiring an Expensive Economy**

Not so many years ago the tallow candle was recognized as an adequate means of illumination and we still use the term "candle-power" to measure light intensity. Standards of adequacy were advanced rapidly with the development of new and improved methods of illumination and today the candle is considered a relic of the past.

The use of electricity has increased tremendously since the invention of the first crude electric light. We have become so accustomed to this modern marvel that many things are taken for granted without careful thought regarding the details which are so essential to safe and efficient operation of electrical equipment.

The architect, in designing and specifying the wiring system for a building, must anticipate the possible needs and desires of his client. Materials and methods which were more than adequate at the time of installation may prove to be totally inadequate for the increased loads required by new and improved appliances and the constantly increasing demands for better illumination. Re-wiring is always more costly than the original installation and the architect has a definite obligation to his client to provide for all reasonable future demands on the wiring system.

The Structural Service Department of the Institute has recently received from the National Electric Light Association, a comprehensive report on a series of investigations of electric wiring installations with examples of inadequately wired structures which indicate quite clearly that original costs are a minor consideration as compared with the actual economies effected by adequate wiring. Several typical examples follow:

*Case No. 1.* About five years ago, the service mains in a ten-story office building were increased 100% over the original capacity at a cost of \$500.00. This change was necessary because of the tenants demand for improved illumination. Two years ago, subfeeders to all floors were increased 100% because of additional demands on the part of the tenants. The cost of the second alteration was \$600.00.

*Case No. 2.* Seven-room residence. At the time of construction the owner was urged to make provision for an electric range and the original cost quoted by the contractor was \$38.00. One month after occupancy the owner decided to install an electric range and was required to pay \$175.00 for this service.

*Case No. 3.* A sixteen-suite apartment building was originally wired at a cost of \$970.00. The tenants are now demanding additional outlets and the owner has obtained a quotation of \$785.00 to do the work. These additional outlets could have been installed with the original wiring for not to exceed \$350.00.

*Case No. 4.* An architects layout for the wiring of a three-story mercantile building was found to be inadequate but a contract was let before realization of this fact by the owner. The cost of the change from the original plans was \$4,000.00. Had the final plan been used as a basis for the original bid, the additional cost would have been only \$2,500.00.

One excellent example of the value of adequate wiring was mentioned in this report. This building won for its architects the first award in an electric lighting contest. Each lighting outlet in the store was put on a separate circuit so that a capacity of 1,500 watts per outlet was available to meet any unusual requirements of the tenants. The architects made no attempt to lay out the window lighting. Outlet boxes were provided for each twelve feet of glass area, located at the transom bar of the windows with lead wires for one circuit to each outlet. This arrangement has proven sufficiently flexible and adequate to meet the requirements of differing types of tenancy and no occupant has been put to any expense other than the cost of the equipment installed.

Inadequate wiring is an expensive economy. The wiring in the majority of present day buildings does not conform with modern standards of adequacy as to the requisite number of outlets correctly located and properly controlled for the complete, economical, and convenient use of electricity, as well as the necessary number of circuits and wire of ample size. This is a problem which demands the attention of every architect so that he may protect the best interests of his clients who cannot be expected to have a technical knowledge of the problems involved.

## With the Chapters

### EXTRACTS FROM CHAPTER MINUTES AND REPORTS

#### Austin Branch, West Texas Chapter—October Meeting

President Page reported a need for adequate legislation which will make it possible for an architect to have a legal contract with a school board in the State of Texas. The present law is that bonds must be sold at par and the money therefrom deposited before an architect can be employed. Since the architect acts as the legal adviser, this policy and the law do not permit the use of his full service.

#### Buffalo Chapter—November Meeting

A letter from the Buffalo Chapter to the Mayor of Buffalo stating that the Chapter appreciates the appointment of Edwin P. Bacon (A.I.A.) to the City Planning Commission, was proposed and adopted. Harry F. Hudson, President of the Chapter, volunteered to write the letter.

A copy of an advertisement appearing in San Francisco papers which lauded the Architects of that city, was presented. President Hudson suggested the formation of an advisory council within the Chapter to give advice, when asked, upon civic projects, to the Mayor, the Buffalo City Council, Business Men's Associations and architects.

#### Detroit Chapter—Fraternity Houses

Secretary Hyde read a communication from the College Fraternity Secretaries Association regarding an investigation into the activities of college fraternity house building organizations which finance, plan, and erect fraternity houses throughout the country.

Mr. O'Dell suggested the matter be given publicity and that the views of the architects on the policy be brought to the attention of college fraternity alumni through various professional journals and fraternity publications.

Mr. Cordner pointed out that the communication seemed to call for assistance by citing experiences of various architects rather than publicity of the attitude of the architectural profession toward the building companies in question.

#### New York Chapter—November Meeting

Eric Kebbon, Secretary of the New York Chapter, has notified the membership of that Chapter that a luncheon meeting to honor the President of the Institute, Ernest John Russell, will be held at 1:00 o'clock, at the Architectural League, November 17, thus giving an opportunity to the membership of the New York Chapter to welcome the new President of the Institute.

#### Northern California Chapter—Publicity

A page is devoted weekly in the *San Francisco Chronicle* to Architecture.

In the issue of October 31 appeared an editorial praising Arthur Brown, F.A.I.A., for San Francisco's new War Memorial. William I. Garren, A.I.A., Editor of this page and the Chairman of the Public Information Committee of the Northern California Chapter, states that the editorial on Mr. Brown is one example of publicity space which comes voluntarily from the newspaper, and which was rather rare in San Francisco before the institution of this architectural page in the *Chronicle*.

#### Washington, D. C. Chapter—November Meeting

Mr. E. S. Draper, Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, was the guest speaker of the Washington, D. C. Chapter at its November Meeting. Mr. Draper gave a slide lecture on Colonial and Early American Gardens of the South. The lecture gave a clear idea of Southern landscape work in its relation to European and American activities. He presented by word and picture a landscape summary of that interesting period of American life in the South from 1650 to 1820. While the presentation was primarily devoted to gardens, many interesting exterior views of Southern homes of different periods were shown.

#### Washington State Chapter—October Meeting

Victor Jones, Chairman of the Chapter Committee on Public Information, reported that the first of the illustration of future building projects contributed by members of the Chapter to the *Seattle Times* Rotogravure Section would appear Sunday, October 9, and others would appear weekly as long as Chapter members furnished material. A hope was expressed that there would be sufficient material to enable this feature to be continued until the first of the year.

President Holmes thought it fitting that the Chapter recognize the devotion of A. J. Russell to the Chapter for over a quarter of a century and the example set by him to the younger men in almost unflinching attendance at the meetings. To the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" the members arose and wished Mr. Russell many more years of membership.

#### Wisconsin Chapter—September Meeting

Mr. D. T. Haddock, a metallurgist with the American Sheet and Tinsplate Company was the guest speaker at the September meeting. Mr. Haddock spoke on the manufacture and application of stainless steel, illustrating his talk with slides.

## Items of Interest

### Financing Self-Liquidating Projects

"Financing the Construction of Self-Liquidating Public Projects Through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation," was the subject of an address by Mr. Harvey Couch, a Director of the Corporation, before the National Conference on Construction, October 13. This address may be obtained in booklet form on request to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Washington, D. C.

### Government Competition in Private Enterprise

A special Committee on Government Competition with Private Enterprise of the United States Chamber of Commerce, prepared a report which the Chamber's Board of Directors directed be printed. A limited number of these reports have been obtained by the Institute and are on hand at The Octagon. They will be furnished to chapters and members on request as long as the supply lasts.

### Building Congresses

William O. Ludlow, as Chairman of the Committee on Industrial Relations, recently addressed a communication to the President of each Chapter of the Institute where there is no Building Congress, pointing out that sixteen Building Congresses have already been organized and that in many more communities there are less formal organizations of this character.

For the larger cities, a city Building Congress is recommended and for the smaller communities, a state Building Congress. This communication from Mr. Ludlow particularly pointed out the desirability of periodic conferences, luncheon meetings, outings, and committee organizations during this low tide of building operations when the leaders of the various trades and professions have more time and greater desire to organize for mutual benefit, and that the architects as leaders in the industry can most effectively take the lead in suggesting such organizations for cooperative conferences.

This communication was accompanied by a pamphlet—"The Building Congress"—the purpose of which was to give a brief explanation of the objects of Building Congresses now active, a brief summary of their history and achievements, a resume of procedure in starting a Building Congress, a list of the publications and documents available, etc.

### Specimen Contract—R.F.C.

The National Committee for Trade Recovery has recently prepared for distribution, a copy of the contract entered into by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the village of Wilmette, Illinois, in

the financing of the construction of a water system by Wilmette.

This action was taken by the Trade Recovery Committee in the thought that a copy of such a contract would be of interest to all who contemplate making applications for loans.

For a copy of this agreement, address the National Committee for Trade Recovery, 330 West 42nd Street, New York City.

### Construction League

*Internal Problems of Industry.* Formal recognition that the internal problems of the construction industry are within the sphere of the Construction League and that study of the external or inter-industry problems of the industry can be most effectively coordinated by the United States Chamber of Commerce through the National Conference on Construction or by some similar method, was voiced in a resolution adopted by the National Conference on Construction at its meeting October 13 and 14, following an explanatory address by General Chairman Robert D. Kohn as to the purposes of the League.

Adoption of the resolution leaves the sphere of activity of the League and the Conference clearly defined so that duplication of effort and expense by these two important bodies may be avoided. The Conference was attended by many other members of the League's constituent organizations and by its Joint Secretariat composed of executives of the American Institute of Architects, the American Road Builders Association, and the Associated General Contractors of America.

*General Assembly.* Following a detailed report from Mr. Charles M. Upham, of the Joint Secretariat, as to the plans for the Highway and Building Congress to be held at Detroit during the week of January 16, 1933, the Policy Committee at its recent meeting decided that the next General Assembly of the League would be held at Detroit on Saturday, January 21, at which time the Policy Committee also will meet.

The committee authorized the Joint Secretariat to invite the officers of those national non-member organizations cooperating with the Congress to be the guests of the League at its Assembly, the program of which is to be arranged by General Chairman Kohn in cooperation with other officers of the League.

The program of the Highway and Building Congress on Friday, January 20, is also to be conducted by the Construction League, with the General Chairman presiding at the morning session, and the Second Vice-Chairman in charge of the afternoon meeting.

(From "Construction"—the official publication of the Construction League of the United States.)

### A Diagnosis of Architectural Infirmities

Architects are now lifting their eyes from the drawing board to see the new horizons. At last they are beginning to realize that their methods are obsolete—that they have been designing better mouse traps in a impenetrable forest. Things have been allowed to go so far that among the few laymen who have learned that there is such a word as architect, few can pronounce or spell it and practically none can define it.

We are now just where the liniment, mouthwash, cigarette and tooth-paste boys were a few years ago. Let us join in the bizarre American game of alternately spoofing and insulting the public.

Let us ask the public whether they are living in a house which suffers from "sour style," warning them that their best friend won't tell them but that the architect with a few deft touches can do them a world of good. Or—"Does your dream house suffer from insomnia?" Or—"Does your fireplace inhale, if so use ours—they're toasted." Try one of our Norman peasant designs—they are "nature in the raw."

There are thousands of sufferers from "colonial complex." All they need is to have a little shutter and foot-scraper adjustment and all will be well once more.

We could address apartment house dwellers with the question—"Do you ever have that oppressive low ceiling feeling?" Let us treat you for sardine fixation."

Let's have a testimonial with portraits by a prominent architect. "Those who use my specifications will not suffer from efflorescence. My brick parapets and walls always retain their school girl complexion." (From "The Charette", by Dr. Karl Mortz.)

### Architect—United States Civil Service

The United States Civil Service Commission announces an open competitive examination for *Principal Architect (Hospital)*.

Applications for the position of principal architect (hospital) must be on file with the U. S. Civil Service Commission at Washington, D. C., not later than December 13, 1932.

The examination is to fill a vacancy in Freedman's Hospital, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C., for intermittent service only, and vacancies occurring throughout the United States in positions requiring similar qualifications.

The entrance salary is \$5,600 a year, less a fur-  
lough deduction of 8 1-3 per cent and retirement deduction of 3 1-2 per cent.

Applicants will not be required to report for examination at any place, but will be rated on their education, training, and experience, and on specimens of drawings to be filed with applications. Applicants must have had certain education and certain

high-grade professional experience in architecture. The experience must have included at least two years in the design of hospital buildings of public proportions.

Full information may be obtained from the Secretary of the United States Civil Service Board of Examiners at the post office or customhouse in any city, or from the United States Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

### British Architects' Conference—1933

The Secretary has received a communication from Mr. Ian McAlister, Secretary of the R.I.B.A., in regard to the Architects' Conference at Cambridge in 1933.

This is believed to be of interest to many members and the letter is here quoted:

"Your members may be interested to know that our Annual Conference next year is to be held in Cambridge, and a very interesting programme is being arranged. The date is from the 21st to the 24th June, 1933. We are always glad on these occasions to have the company of visitors from the United States, and if any of your members are likely to be in Europe at that date I hope they will communicate with me and let me send them copies of the programme of the Conference."

### The Competition Idea

(From the "Monthly Bulletin" of the Washington Society of Architects.)

Another published item brought to the attention of the Bulletin Editor is the following giving an account of the assistance given by a distinguished British artist to our fight against unfair competitions.

When Sir Philip Burne-Jones was traveling in the United States he received a circular letter from a firm engaged in the sale of dried fruit inviting him to compete for a prize for the best design to be used in advertising their wares. Only one prize, the circular stated, was to be given, and all unsuccessful drawings were to become the property of the firm. After reading the circular, Sir Philip sat down and wrote the following letter:

Manager Dried Fruit Company.

Dear Sir:

I am offering a prize of fifty cents for the best specimen of dried fruit, and should be glad to have you take part in the competition. Twelve dozen boxes of each kind of fruit should be sent for examination, and all fruit that is not adjudged worthy of the prize will remain the property of the undersigned. It is also required that the charges on the fruit so forwarded be paid by the sender.

Yours very truly,

P. BURNE-JONES.

# Applications For Membership

November 17, 1932.

## *Notice to Members of the Institute:*

The names of the following applicants may come before the Board of Directors, or its Executive Committee, for action on their admission to the Institute, and, if elected, the applicants will be assigned to the Chapters indicated:

<i>Alabama Chapter</i>	- - - - -	JACK BASS SMITH
<i>Boston Chapter</i>	- - - - -	ELIOT T. PUTNAM
<i>Colorado Chapter</i>	- - - - -	CHARLES E. THOMAS
<i>Dayton Chapter</i>	- - - - -	ARTHUR R. GEYER, GEORGE T. NEUFFER
<i>Delaware Chapter</i>	- - - - -	WALTER CARLSON, REAH DE BOURG ROBINSON, ALLAN BURTON STANHOPE
<i>Mississippi Chapter</i>	- - - - -	JAMES R. STEVENS, III
<i>New York Chapter</i>	- - - - -	WARD W. FENNER, HUGH FERRISS
<i>Northern California Chapter</i>	- - - - -	LESLIE I. NICHOLS
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FRANK C. BALDWIN, *Secretary.*

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Published Monthly by

**The American Institute of Architects**

Executive and Publication Offices, The Octagon, 1741 New York Avenue N. W., Washington, D. C.

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Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1929, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C.

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