

THE  
OCTAGON

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*A Journal of The American Institute of Architects*

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*Sans Roof: Sans Architect*  
*City Planning—Housing—*  
*Small Houses—Prefabricated Houses.*  
*Who Will Lead the Architect?*  
*With the Chapters—As of Interest*

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## Sans Roof : Sans Architect

AN EDITORIAL BY FREDERICK E. TOWNDROW, F. R. I. B. A.

In "Design and Construction"—July, 1936

THE Ottawa correspondent of the *Observer* has provided me with a two-point topic. A new Canadian Housing Act provides that where a prospective house-purchaser can furnish 20 per cent. of the cost of building his own home, the loan companies will furnish 80 per cent., of which 20 per cent. is loaned or guaranteed by the Dominion Government. But this Act lays down rigid regulations as to standards of construction and materials, and it was found—when they came to it—that the creations of the ordinary builders were not up to this standard. It was found, also, that the small home-owners could not afford architects. So, "to avoid the marring of the landscape which has taken place in England," the Government—through the Ministry of Finance—instituted a competition in which 526 architects submitted designs for a small, compact, low-cost house. A committee of architects were the judges. From the entries they selected the best five, and these with the next best fifty will be published in book form and sold at fifty cents the lot. This is my first point.

The second point is that the judges actually selected as the best design of all a house with a flat roof, because it was proved to them beyond doubt that the flat roof was eminently suitable to the rigours of the Canadian climate and that it *substantially reduced costs*.

The thoughts that arise out of this are these: it is important that a Government, especially when it

is lending part of the money, should insist on the proper assistance of trained architects. But here, in Canada, when they come to face up to the problem, they find that people always say that they cannot afford architects.

Yet they do not altogether dispense with them, because the choice work of some 526 architects is examined and fifty-five of them have the honour of having their designs put into a book and sold for fifty cents—which the builders and house-purchasers may copy.

I do not know what happens to the architects after their designs have been so honoured. Perhaps the speculative builders who cannot afford a few guineas for an architect's services send a small subscription to a Canadian Architects' Benevolent Fund; for one good turn deserves another. But more likely the builders and prospective owners discover that no one design is quite what they want, but by knocking two of them into one they can make a design of their very own; and, the design being their very own, they are under no obligation whatever. Or perhaps there is some system of royalties under which an architect is allowed to travel round all the suburbs of all the towns of Canada, and if he can recognise his design he is allowed to write to the builder or owner and ask for a copyright fee; only, of course, if the builder has *improved* on the design it would be rather bad form for an architect to expect any consideration. In short, picking the

architect's brain is an interesting and profitable occupation, and one which we can recommend to all sound business men; though in England the system is already so well established that it hardly needs further encouragement.

Yet, somehow, something ought to be done to preserve such a body of men who can show the builders and the public how money can be saved.

And, considering that they have saved the whole cost of a roof, could we not give a small proportion of the money saved to them as fees, and thus buy their personal services? The problem is how to preserve this species of money-savers and yet at the same time avoid paying their fees. Damn it all, man! They've got to live somehow—even though they are only a sort of artists.

## City Planning—Housing—Small Houses— Prefabricated Houses

SOME CURRENT VIEWS—ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL HOUSING COMMITTEE \*

**City Planning and the Urbanism Study.**

*Abstract of an address by L. Segoe, Director of the Research Committee on Urbanism of the National Resources Committee, at the Conference on Planning, Richmond, May 4, 1936.*

City planning and the research study on urbanism are clearly related to one another. The Urbanism Study should offer a more solid foundation for the planning of urban communities and regions and supply general directives. City planning, in turn, is one of the tools for accomplishing improvements in urban life by reshaping the physical structure of communities.

The objectives of the Urbanism Study are to determine what the role of the urban community is in national life; what the social and economic functions are which can best be performed in urban communities; and what can be done to enable these communities better to perform such functions, while correcting the evils associated with intensive urbanization.

The action of governmental agencies relating to urban communities depends on answers to funda-

mental questions, such as: Should urbanization be concentrated or dispersed; should industries be centralized and specialized in various regions, or diversified and balanced; should workers be moved from congested centers, or should those centers be rebuilt into more decent environments? These questions bear directly on federal policies in respect to transportation, public works and relief.

It is important to understand the extent and nature of urbanization, the forces that cause it, the future direction of the movement and methods of guiding it.

In detail, it is important to know the effects of urbanization on population, on the physical development of the community, on transportation, on the political, economic, and legal order, and on the national culture.

The present Urbanism Study can only hope to make an initial exploration of this extensive field on a broad front with but limited penetration. The studies proposed by the committee lie in four categories:

1. Studies that deal with the most important factors expected to influence the future course of urbanization, such as the population movement, trends of industries, transportation policies, power distribution, etc.

2. Those studies that will draw conclusions as to the relative advantages of communities of various sizes and types.

3. Those studies that will appraise and endeavor to improve instruments already available for guiding the future development of the urban community,

\* *Note:* The Central Housing Committee was created by authority of President Roosevelt on August 29, 1935. It is a tentative organization and its members are appointed by the Coordinating Committee on Housing, with the approval of The President. The Committee is composed of representatives of the Farm Credit Administration, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Federal Housing Administration, National Emergency Council, Public Works Administration, R. F. C. Mortgage Company, Resettlement Administration, and the Treasury Department.

and to broaden the field of conscious social planning. This will involve a critical examination of the influence of traditional land and transit policies on urban development, and an introduction to industrial planning to rationalize the structure of urban communities.

4. Studies of the more mature foreign countries with comparable experience, to determine which of their methods of controlling urbanization may be adapted to our problems.

Studies in the first group will prevent over-optimistic prognostications for competing metropolitan regions, and consequently promote more reasonable zoning regulations. They should permit a sounder appraisal of the probable economic future of the community for planning purposes.

Studies in the second group should make it possible to formulate the basic general pattern of development appropriate for a specific urban community. To do so, it would be necessary to develop stronger tools than heretofore available for carrying out such a basic plan.

Studies in the third group will examine tools already in use, and explore the possibility of extending the field of planning to industry and of securing a stronger place for planning in government at various levels. It is important to consider the composition and fundamentals of the industrial structure on which the existence and future of the community depend, as well as the physical features of the region.

Such studies are to consider means of attaining such aims as stability of employment, improved relationship between industries, and fuller use of labor supply and natural resources. It is proposed only to extend the type of inducements that have been used indiscriminately by cities in the past to a selective program of development.

City planning must be integrated with the plans of regions and states, and it should approach its problem with more adequate tools and from a more fundamental point of view.

#### **Large-Scale Housing and The City Plan.**

*Abstract of an address by Russell V. Black, President of the American City Planning Institute, at the Conference on Planning, Richmond, May 4, 1936.*

Housing officials and city planners have been

unable to agree on the extent to which large-scale housing projects must be integrated with adequate city plans. Since houses are a major part of the flesh upon the skeleton of any city plan, the plan should determine the housing pattern, and define the extent and character of essential services to housing.

The first step in effective city planning is to make studies of existing and future use of land, including coverage, population density, and a real property inventory. Many city plans today are merely introductions to planning in their communities, and are therefore inadequate in determining the location of housing. Good planning must guide in the selection of the site, indicate the type of houses most appropriate, and the designation of a proper street plan. The inventory may be limited to otherwise determined specific problem areas, leaving information about other areas to be gathered from the usually available public records.

As a second step, the entire study must visualize the place of the city in the future regional and national pattern, and allocate functions to the various portions of the city. In taking this step, a reasonably well founded guess as to the future of the city must represent a fine balance between what it appears the city should be and what powerful forces are likely to make of it.

As a third step, the future land use plan should be legally established and, at least with respect to residential neighborhood units, should be fixed and virtually unchangeable. Possibly neither the courts nor the planners are now prepared to take this long step, but it remains the essential foundation for any housing plan and program of the future. The future land use plan must determine the structural form of the city, as represented by public facilities such as transportation, utilities, public properties, and natural features.

In the meantime, zoning, land subdivision control and public housing enterprise may preserve in considerable degree the integrity of the land use plan, until direct legislation is practicable.

Public housing will not end with the building of a few thousand dwellings in a few scattered cities, sponging upon existing school and park facilities. We need eight to ten million new or modernized low-cost houses, and will build them for our economic salvation if not for our social conscience.

The entire job should be conceived as one opera-



tion and old structure patterns must not be preserved. If a comprehensive city plan is good enough to serve the purposes for which it is maintained, it will probably serve equally well the needs of the housing official.

**City Planning as a Determinant of the Location and Character of City Housing Projects of All Kinds.**

*Abstract of an address by Frederick Bigger, A. I. A., Architect and City Planner, Pittsburgh, at the Conference on Planning, Richmond, May 4, 1936.*

There are significant differences between housing projects which raise questions of importance to the city planner.

1. In the first category are housing projects designed to be sold off, dwelling by dwelling, to future individual owners, who are unlikely to preserve the wholesome characteristics of the original unified design.

2. In the second category are projects designed as entities, but rented to many individual families either as a long term high class investment, or as a venture of speculation. In this case, the well-being of the occupants will undoubtedly receive greater consideration.

3. In the third category are housing projects of limited dividend corporations or housing authorities, which have social objectives and restrict their rents; in theory, permanent assets in a city plan. These projects need to be safeguarded by separation from neighborhoods affected by commercial manipulation.

There have been too many cases in which lack of barriers brought changes in zoning regulations, and damaging commercial frontages.

4. In the fourth category are similar projects owned by the occupants of the houses, which require similar protection.

The planner must know whether a project is to be split up for sale or held, whether it is to be merely a profit and loss commodity, whether a social objective is contemplated and whether or not it is owned by the occupants of the dwellings.

If one holds a title deed but is obligated by a mortgage on his property, it is necessary to realize that this privilege of complete control over his property is limited.

If a project is not owned by its occupants, the

need for better living and the demand for profit are conflicting forces.

The planner is necessarily controlled by the expenses incidental to the basic cost of the project, such as public utilities, landscaping, etc. If the designer is influenced only by the profit motive, he will locate his housing project so that it can be subsidized by the existing community through an earlier provision of utilities and schools, though another location might be better from the standpoint of the city plan.

Housing designed for sale to individual owners, and large-scale housing on a speculative basis, promise no permanence and no stable contribution to improved housing. The other categories offer possibilities of greater stability and continuity of existence. Community planners must therefore favor the latter groups.

A general amount of open space is a basic element in planning a socially desirable housing project in which financial values are to be permanent.

The town planner must consider these fundamental points as of greater significance than the more technical aspects of studies of population and economics.

**"The Gymnastics of Municipal Planning Procedure."**

*By Charles B. Bennett, City Planner, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

City Planning must receive the support of elected officials, and then of general citizen groups, if it is to have the desired effect.

The best method is to begin with a research bureau, which should take into consideration the functioning of all municipal departments and the problem of taxation.

An unofficial master plan is more flexible and useful than an official plan beyond the financial ability of the city.

**"The City Official Needs The Plan."**

*By Clifford W. Ham, Executive Director, American Municipal Association, Chicago, Illinois.*

In the execution of any plan, the city official meets two different dilemmas. The first is the conflict between long term planning and the necessity for short term appropriations. The second is the conflict between imaginative planning and budgetary practice.

The city official needs a plan which will sell itself to the public, and provide a continuity of program. Until national, regional and state plans are translated into actual accomplishments, the attempt to set up local plans is too restricted, and fails in the opportunities for the best and most orderly developments.

The city official is also confronted with the problems of changing status of private industry. The planning aspects of administration and the administrative difficulties in planning should receive the greatest attention.

**Abstract from the Report of the Committee on Housing of The American Institute of Architects.**

*R. H. Shreve, Chairman.*

Housing must be attacked primarily as a social problem and not as a means of stimulating industry or reducing unemployment. It is a long time problem, and not an emergency condition. The Committee does not recommend a specific procedure, but points out the lines of approach to a solution along which the architectural profession can most effectively serve.

To meet the needs of families of low income, there must be either a contribution of capital or some other form of subsidy. It is pointed out, however, that provision of housing directly by Federal or State governments disturbs established local economic bases. Less objection is made to Federal discounting of loans or insurance of loans at low rates.

There is an increasingly favorable consideration of the principle that local improvements should be initiated, constructed and administered by the localities concerned, assisted financially as may be necessary by State or Federal agencies.

The effort of private enterprise cannot be broadly successful unless directed into the greatest field of home building—the low priced small house.

The Committee recommends a program of decentralization of activities, of Federal research and propaganda on enforcement of housing standards and community planning, and of individual effort by each A. I. A. member toward these ends.

*By The Board of Directors of the A. I. A.*

"In the field of housing at large, The Board endorses the opinion of the Committee on Housing that progress will be most effectively made by con-

centrating in the localities concerned the initiation, development, ownership and management of projects intended to provide low cost housing. Federal Government functions should be limited to those which guide and aid all localities, and interrelate one region with another in accordance with a national plan of action.

"It is further the judgment of The Board that The Institute should develop its study of the possibility of providing housing relief through social security measures favoring direct aid by tenant-rent-subsidy as distinguished from structure-capital-subsidy; the Federal, State and local government agencies to combine in providing funds for such a program, to be administered through a local organization."

*Resolution Regarding National Housing Program  
By the 68th Convention of the A. I. A.*

Whereas, The American Institute of Architects acknowledges that housing is a major nation-wide public responsibility and that it is the duty of the architectural profession to accept its due share of such responsibility; and

Whereas, The Government is hereby commended for having recognized housing as a nation-wide public responsibility; therefore be it

Resolved, That The American Institute of Architects urges the immediate creation by the Government of a central agency to undertake systematic and coordinated research in all matters pertaining to housing such as methods of taxation, land utilization, financial and managerial procedures, standards for dwellings, for recreational and educational facilities, all as outlined in the report of the Committee on Housing of The American Institute of Architects, that such agency continue the work started as a housing program initiated by the Government; and be it further

Resolved, That necessary legislation be passed so as to coordinate the activities of existing governmental agencies; and be it further

Resolved, That The American Institute of Architects urges the immediate creation of state and/or municipal housing authorities in every state duly empowered to purchase and condemn necessary land, and build and manage low cost housing projects; and be it further

Resolved, That The American Institute of Architects urges that the Government continue to assist, through appropriate measures, all such state and/or municipal housing authorities so constituted, until these are able to carry on the furtherance of their part of a true, long range, nation-wide, large scale housing program.

#### Housing and Prefabrication.

*Excerpts from address of Carl Snyder, President of "Houses, Incorporated," at the annual meeting of The Producers' Council.*

The building industry has been widely criticized for its failure to develop a prefabricated house. Personally, I protest the attempt to solve by a simple device a problem that is inherently complex. A building operation, to provide for its successful financial liquidation, must provide not only walls, room and bare equipment, but must anticipate adequate equipment within the shelter to guarantee permanency of occupancy and love of home. The development of such a product continues to challenge the architect.

A great deal of loose reasoning is responsible for the hope of factory fabrication of homes. The cult of utility was the result of post-war Germany making a virtue of necessity. The argument for standardized production in a machine age ignores the other elements in the cost of a home besides labor and material and the slow turnover in the market. Such loose thinking has unnecessarily perturbed manufacturers in scores of fields that would be directly or indirectly benefited or harmed. But there is very little to indicate that the low priced factory-made home is just around the corner.

The house of the immediate future might make increased use of fabricated units, but there are the following obstacles to the low priced factory-made house:

1. Transportation difficulties and expenses;
2. Variations in sizes, shapes and nature of building lots;
3. Climatic and other local conditions;
4. Variations in size of families;
5. High cost of elements in the home other than the shell of the house;
6. High cost of land and transportation;
7. Cost of financing, taxes, and depreciation;

8. Difficulty of handling after delivery;
9. Objections to standardization;
10. The problem of union labor;
11. The need for cellars;
12. Competition from the building industry;
13. Slowness of turnover;
14. The problem of selling and distribution.

The building industry must achieve modern production and selling methods but it is not likely to develop in the near future a factory-made house. It is not as important that it do so as that answers be found to the questions of:

1. Land revaluation;
2. New financing programs;
3. The gigantic merchandising and sales promotion investment necessary to build sales volume.

#### The General Subject of Prefabrication.

*Remarks of Louis La Beaume, F. A. I. A., as reviewed by himself:*

\* \* \* The prefabricated house seemed to me a bloodless thing sired by science out of industry, and did not exemplify any tenderness of feeling.

\* \* \* \*

So perhaps I did insinuate that the whole idea seemed to me a monumental piece of folly, the result of loose thinking and shortsighted avarice. I deplored the exit of the architect from the world's stage, and the entrance of the robot. I indicated that the future of architecture perhaps is doomed; that its course can no longer be guided by men trained in its subtleties, but must be handed over to the sales managers of the great industries and their allies, the advertising copywriters. I sensed the conflict between the producers of one or another building material or system of construction. I thought of the power industry (the Power Trust some call it), intent on extending the use of electric current and consequently sponsoring houses without windows, artificially lighted, heated and cooled and ventilated mechanically. I thought of the great glass industry fighting to preserve its integrity in the face of this development, and advocating more and more glass, less and less masonry. I thought of the clash of ideals and appetites between these two titanic forces, and wondered what gentle, middle way might be left for the simple minded architect.



I didn't really want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I did want to reflect a moment so that you and I and the rest of us might recognize Frankenstein when he comes along.

Home, Suite Home.

*By Carl Snyder, at the Annual Meeting of The Producers' Council.*

Mid pleasures and palaces though I may roam,  
I know I get much better plumbing at home;  
No termite can founder, no rust can corrode  
My perfectly mechanized modern abode—  
Home, home, prefabricate home,  
When I see gadgets I know that I'm home.

Nuts to the abbeys in England or castles in Spain,  
O give me my chromium icebox again;  
The instrument board on the living room wall,

And the motorized unit that takes care of all—  
Home, home, my standardized home,  
Be it ever so complex there's no place like home.

My dishes are washed at the throw of a switch  
(If I only remember which throttle is which)  
With the soundproof partitions the children are  
hushed,

I can't even hear when the bathroom is flushed,  
And when I return, oh, how dear to my heart  
Is each interchangeable factory part.

Grandmother has her aluminum chair  
And blowers and fans have conditioned the air;  
Scientific and perfect, efficiency's goal,  
Are meter and rheostat, gauge and control—

But if out on a toot, and I continue to roam:  
Then they all look alike, then there's none looks  
like home.

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## Distinguished Visitors

MR. Percy Edward Thomas, O. B. E., F. R. I. B. A., of Cardiff, President of The Royal Institute of British Architects, and Mr. William Henry Hamlyn, F. R. I. B. A., of London, Chief Architect of one of the principal railway systems of England, have been travelling in the United States.

The visit of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hamlyn has been a purely professional one, for the purpose of studying the principal hotels, office buildings, and railroad terminals.

They were entertained in New York by President Voorhees, and by officers and members of the New York Chapter.

The visitors spent three days in Washington, during which time they inspected the new Government buildings on The Triangle, the Supreme Court

building, The Folger Library and the Union Station.

Tours were made of governmental and private housing developments in the environs of Washington, to the park areas, and to the Mayflower Hotel.

Officers of the Washington, D. C., Chapter and the Executive Secretary of The Institute extended to them the hospitality of the occasion.

Subsequent visits were made to Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Chicago, where the latest developments in architecture and architectural practice were inspected and discussed.

All who came in contact with these two distinguished architects found them keenly appreciative of the things which the profession is doing in the United States and, in the main, complimentary of its accomplishments.

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## If the Architect Will Not Lead— Who Will Lead the Architect?

BY N. MAX DUNNING, F. A. I. A., CHAIRMAN, STRUCTURAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

**I**F WE think back to the days preceding the beginning of the search for prosperity—which was said to be lurking just around the corner—we will recall a new movement stirring in the air.

Under the urgings of rugged individualism the construction markets were filled with materials and products embracing an unlimited range of size, form, weight, thickness, and innumerable other factors.

Trade names and practices had superseded the plain meaning and definition of every-day language and, in specification writing it was, more or less, every man for himself.

Into this scene of confusion and wastefulness came The American Society for Testing Materials, the American Standards Association, the Federal Bureau of Standards, and other interested agencies, to undertake the work of establishing standards for materials and manufactured products and the elimination of waste through simplified practice recommendations.

In the inception of the work it was recognized that to be effective and insure the widest possible acceptance of the standards established their formulation must be, in every respect, a collaborative effort in which every interest would contribute its part and in which the consumer and the public interest would have active representation.

That this was accomplished is convincingly shown by a survey of the sponsors for the many specifications and standards, which have been and are being developed, and the personnel of the multitude of sectional committees responsible for the detail work.

It was to be expected that the eyes of other interested groups would turn toward the architect when consideration focused on the materials, products or methods entering into the work of construction.

We have heard much, although perhaps not from the profession itself, as to the leadership of the architect in the field of building activity.

Here was opportunity, in the opinion of those who understood the relationship of the architect to

the materials of construction and his stewardship as the accepted representative of the ultimate consumer, knocking at the door.

Here was work going forward related to matters of vital interest to the architect.

Here was effort in the public interest, with the reward of participation an enrichment of knowledge and experience concerning the things of the practical side of the architect's every-day work.

Here was the opportunity to cooperate with others interested in a common problem where cooperation would stimulate the qualities of leadership and dissipate, without argument, the tradition of the flowing tie, the spats and cane, and the pretty drawing—as the architect's only tools of trade.

The Institute, through its Structural Service Department, endeavored to accept the responsibility of the architect for this cooperative effort and with the interest and assistance of a limited number of Institute members managed, fairly well, to play its part until the spell of depression fell on all points—north, south, east, and west.

Up to that time an unbelievable amount of work had been done in the development of standard and tentative specifications and simplified practice recommendations of use and value to the architect and the construction industry.

In general these specifications were developed under the sponsorship of one or more interested groups or organizations, of which The Institute was one, the detail work being done by sectional committees composed of representatives of every interest, such as, producers, distributors, consumers and the public.

The architect was recognized as the logical representative of the consumer or general interest.

Those who have not followed what has been accomplished and the extent of the work now in hand would find illuminating reading in the Specification Lists of the A. S. T. M., the A. S. A., and the Bureau of Standards.

With the unavoidable curtailment of Institute activities, during recent years, the Structural Service

Department was put on short rations. A year ago it suffered a severe loss in the death of its efficient Technical Secretary, F. Leo Smith.

For nearly a year following the passing of Mr. Smith, the work of the Structural Service Department has been cared for on a temporary basis by the curtailed staff at The Octagon. However, it was fully recognized that The Institute could not maintain its place and prestige in this work without a Structural Service Department and the services of a Technical Secretary.

Ways and means were discussed by The Board to insure the continuation of the Structural Service Department in the fundamentals of its work, and to maintain the contacts already made by The Institute. In the hope that, for the present, these things may be maintained on a limited scale, and in order that the Structural Service Department may take on renewed life and activity, Theodore Irving Coe,

A. I. A., has been appointed as Technical Secretary on a part-time basis.

There is a growing feeling of optimism for the construction industry as the spell of depression passes. Times and conditions move forward with changes on every hand.

Architecture in the future will mean more than a well planned building with a pleasing exterior. We live in an age of science, and of material things. Increasing attention is being given to the character and quality of materials and methods of construction.

If the architect is to justify his right to leadership in the field of building, his knowledge can no longer be limited to the aesthetic but must include the practical as well.

If the architect will not lead who will lead the architect?

## The Broader Field of the Architect

(Excerpts from a letter of June 26, 1936, addressed to Arthur C. Holden, A. I. A., Chairman of the Land Utilization Committee of the New York Building Congress, by Stephen F. Voorhees, F. A. I. A., President of The American Institute of Architects)

THE position which the architect has won for himself in American life is founded upon his ability to conceive and execute plans. The architect is expected to take the lead in the design of better communities. But in spite of the acclaim which he is given, the community has not begun to enjoy the benefits which would be possible were the talents of the architect and his brothers, the engineers, fully and properly employed.

In the first place the architect cannot act alone. It is his job to analyze the problems of property owners and aid them toward a solution. He cannot, however, plan effectively for the owner, for whom he is working, unless he can secure the cooperation of those whose business it is to lend money to finance real estate and construction enterprises. Furthermore, he must know how to utilize the executive and engineering brains in the building industry; how to utilize the abilities of craftsmen and unskilled labor and how to utilize materials. In addition there must be intelligent cooperation with, and the economical performance of necessary services by the local government, including the

maintenance of reasonable standards of safety, health, and equity as may be set by local ordinances.

To make himself a master of the knowledge necessary to secure such cooperation, the architect must furnish both ordinary and extraordinary services. It is a comparatively easy task for him to furnish the specific designs for a specific building for a particular client. It is far more difficult for him to perform services which are of social importance when the architect is expected to show the way to accomplish tasks which call for the replanning and rebuilding of neglected sections of our towns and cities in order to bring them into conformity with standards of modern life that are both desirable and possible.

Although the architect has contributed much to the improvement of modern cities by his suggestions, he has made very little more than a beginning at a type of work which is calling for greater and greater expenditure of his talents, ingenuity and energy. As yet no adequate means has been devised for compensating the architect for this type of work. As a result too little studying is being done

to discover how to do the things that need to be done as well as how to determine the reasonable limits of possible action.

In this connection it is well to point out that had the recent governmental grants to low cost housing been applied to finance advance and exploratory planning and to the development of a methodology for the replanning and gradual replacement of blighted and obsolete districts, we might by this time have been well launched upon a program

of reconstruction financed upon an economic basis instead of finding ourselves thwarted by the inadequacy of capital subsidies.

For this reason the resolution respecting advance planning passed as the sense of the meeting at the 1936 Convention of The American Institute of Architects deserves careful study and consideration by all who are interested in the improvement of our methods of land usage.

## The Functionalism of the Architect

A LETTER FROM ALFRED BUSSELLE, A. I. A.

RARELY, if ever, have I read a more heartening and thought provoking statement on the practice of architecture than the paper of Dr. Leicester B. Holland in the July OCTAGON on "The Function of Functionalism." Far beyond its nominal scope it suggests the status of a true architect. While THE OCTAGON's pages are necessarily filled with the records of *doings* of architects collectively it seems to me the publication might well feel and express serious concern as to what architects should *be* individually.

We cry aloud for recognition. My feeling is that many of us are more concerned with being *recognized* than we are with being *architects*. There is no reason, other than in ourselves, why we should have to battle for our jobs with commerce, with industry, with home builders, and with government itself, quite apart from emulation among ourselves. Mr. Holland has covered or suggested the general ground: I will attempt to supplement in the more particular, as applying to those whose names rarely appear in THE OCTAGON after the first bulletin of their election.

Let us ask ourselves searchingly, "Are we master craftsmen?" If we are *not*, we are not architects. We may be great designers in a limited sense, good business-getters or golf-players, but not architects.

A master-craftsman sees his whole problem; the creation of a thing of use, convenience and beauty, made to serve its whole purpose. The client can employ no other without at least partial failure of

his purpose. There should be no question about it in the public mind.

The master-craftsman concerns himself with his clients' interests from every point of view. He may incidentally build a personal monument, in fact he *should* do so, but only as a by-product, not as an objective. Great men there have been and doubtless are, who seem to have built such personal monuments consciously. But this has happened mostly when the problem itself was monumental.

The master-craftsman knows of himself how things are done, how buildings and their several parts go together and as he designs he constructs. I am afraid too many of us are not sufficiently scourged by the comment: "He's a good architect, but he's an impractical fellow." Such comment illuminates the popular conception. It means that the speaker does not expect very much from an architect, and that if the client had a really important piece of work to do, the architect would have as small a place and as small a fee as possible.

The master-craftsman feels that he is responsible for good work, and he refuses to take as his tools those who cannot or will not produce it. He is not plagued by "the lowest bidder," or any considerable number of bidders. He selects those he wants. That this statement should be called Utopian merely shows how far we have fallen.

Let us try to raise ourselves by realizing that our highest praise is to be worthy of the full rich meaning of the term "master craftsmen."

Thank you, Dr. Holland!



## A Modern Style of Architecture for Egypt

**T**HE OCTAGON is in receipt of a communication from the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Egypt, announcing an exhibition of modern architecture, city planning, landscaping, decorations and furniture, etc., to be held in Cairo in April, 1937.

An appeal is addressed to all architects interested in modern architecture and town planning, particularly with reference to its adaptability to Egypt, to submit photographs and drawings of work designed by them in the modern spirit.

Each exhibitor will be entitled to submit drawings and photographs of his work to be arranged in from one to three panels, each panel to be approximately (1.05 x .85 metres) or in six panels half this size. The panels submitted are to show drawings, plans or photographs of work of all kinds either executed or proposed, of monumental buildings, residences, apartments or flats, schools, hospitals, parks, site-plans and designs for furniture.

Each exhibit is to be accompanied by an explanatory description of the work.

A committee or jury of award is to be formed which will award prizes of a total value of fifteen hundred pounds Egyptian (one pound Egyptian is equivalent to 1-0-6 English pounds). The first prize will be eight hundred pounds; second prize, four hundred pounds; third prize, two hundred pounds; and the fourth prize, one hundred pounds.

It is hoped, through this exhibition, with its inducements of cash awards, to attract a representative class of entries, thereby obtaining the most advanced architectural ideas in order to lay a solid foundation for all future civic improvements in Cairo.

Architects desiring further information, particularly with reference to transportation, closing dates, etc., should address the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Education, Cairo, Egypt.

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## Rhode Island Registration Law

**I**T is gratifying to learn, through the courtesy of F. Ellis Jackson, F. A. I. A., President of the Rhode Island Chapter, that the personnel of the newly formed Rhode Island State Board of Examiners and Registration of Architects includes four members of The Institute.

The personnel of The Board is as follows:

JOHN F. HOGAN, A. I. A., *Chairman*  
 ALBERT HARKNESS, A. I. A., *Secretary*  
 WALLIS E. HOWE, F. A. I. A.  
 WALTER F. FONTAINE, A. I. A.  
 ORESTO DiSALA

The Registration Law, which became effective this year, stipulates that architects who had been

in practice for at least one year prior to April 20, 1936, would be required to apply for exemption from examinations before July 1, 1936. After July 1, architects applying for registration will be required to undergo the examinations which will be prepared by The Board.

Under the law, all architects must register annually. The State Board has broad powers in the examination and certification of applicants.

The Rhode Island Chapter, through the vigorous efforts of its members over a period of years, has been instrumental in bringing to realization this registration law, which is in every respect distinctly satisfactory to the chapter members and the profession at large.

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## Survey of School Building Requirements

**P**RESIDENT VOORHEES has appointed Charles T. Ingham, F. A. I. A., of Ingham and Boyd, Pittsburgh, to represent the profession on the survey now under consideration by the

American Council on Education. The purpose is to conduct a comprehensive research in the field of school building construction, equipment, operation and maintenance.

## With the Chapters

EXCERPTS FROM MINUTES, BULLETINS AND REPORTS

### Brooklyn.

Through the courtesy of Adolph Goldberg, Chairman of the Public Information Committee of the Brooklyn Chapter, we are advised that the Chapter, at its meeting on June 30, adopted a resolution urging a thorough restudy of the entire zoning problem in New York City.

The text of the communication follows:

"The Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Chapter, believing that the many and important changes which have occurred in the twenty years since the present zoning regulations were adopted by the City of New York, now, make necessary the careful and complete restudy of the entire zoning problem and therefor, at its meeting of June 30, 1936,

*"Resolved* that the Brooklyn Chapter, American Institute of Architects request that the Mayor be authorized to, and does, appoint a well qualified commission with the necessary technical staff to thoroughly restudy the entire zoning problem of the City and that the Board of Estimate make an appropriation ample to cover the cost thereof, and be it further

*"Resolved* that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Mayor and one to the New York Building Congress for their consideration.

"Supplementing the resolution of the Brooklyn Chapter of The American Institute of Architects at its meeting of May 25, 1936, condemning Chapter 28 of the Proposed Charter for the City of New York, the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Chapter at a special meeting held June 30, 1936,

*"Further Resolved* that any new charter for the City should provide for the discontinuance of the Architectural Bureaus now existing in the Board of Education and in the Department of Parks, except as bureaus of direction, record, maintenance and repair;

*"Be It Further Resolved* that in order that architectural appointments shall be made on the basis of recognized professional merit, that the Charter provide for the continuance of the system set up by the present Mayor acting with the advice of the combined architectural societies of the City, under which all architectural appointments must be made from an eligible list prepared annually by the Civil Service Commission with the advice of the combined architectural societies.

"Copy of this resolution to be forwarded to the

Mayor, the Chairman of the Charter Revision Commission and to the New York Chapter."

### Scranton-Wilkes Barre.

The June 30 meeting at the Scranton Club was the occasion for the transaction of much important chapter business, especially with regard to the matter of the formation of a small house service.

The form of small house program adopted by the State Architectural Association was discussed with much interest, and on motion of Wm. S. Lowndes, which was seconded by Edward H. Davis, The Secretary was instructed to request further information from the State Architectural Association as to their program and especially as to what measures had been taken by them to cooperate with The Institute.

After these reports have been received by the Chapter, it will be decided what action will be taken toward further affiliation with the Association.

Each member present at the meeting volunteered to prepare two small house sketches, which are to be used for publicity purposes in furthering the program.

Searle H. VonStorch and Arthur P. Coon were appointed a committee to formulate plans for the small house service. The committee is to be ready to report their findings and tentative program at a special meeting of the Chapter which is scheduled for an early date.

### Southern California.

The August meeting of the Chapter will be held at the Little Theatre in the Padua Hills, near Claremont, Tuesday, August 11.

Dinner will be served at 7:00 P. M., followed by a short business meeting at 8:00 P. M., and at 8:30 P. M., entertainment will be provided by the Padua Hills Players.

All members are especially urged to attend this meeting, as the Chapter assures them of an excellent dinner and an entertaining program amid delightful settings.

New members of the Chapter will be introduced at this meeting, and male guests of members will be welcomed.

A large attendance is anticipated.

**Wisconsin.**

The annual meeting and banquet of the Wisconsin Chapter was held in the Plankinton Hotel in Milwaukee on June 9.

The Chapter officers held an informal reception preceding the banquet, which was attended by nearly sixty members and guests.

The dignity of the speakers' table was enhanced by the presence of Gerrit J. deGelleke, Director of the Illinois-Wisconsin District, and Theodore L. Eschweiler, former Chapter President and now President of the Wisconsin State Association of Architects.

Following dinner, Chapter President William G. Herbst opened the business meeting. The reading of previous minutes was promptly disposed of, after which Chapter Secretary Alexander C. Guth proceeded with the reading of the annual reports. The reports of the Executive Committee, The Treasurer and the Auditing Committee were read in rapid succession and all reports were ordered received and adopted.

These purely routine matters being out of the way, President Herbst delivered his speech of the evening, in which his resume of chapter activities of the past year was interspersed with delightful humor, friendly counsel and wise advice, all of which was gratefully received by his hearers.

Director deGelleke then spoke, confining his remarks to a recital of the more national aspects of Institute activities and to a sketch of its historic background.

Mr. Eschweiler spoke briefly on the activities of the Wisconsin State Association of Architects.

The addresses over, the company settled themselves to enjoy a well-planned concert presented by a popular string trio.

The 1930 annual meeting will be long remembered as one notable in every respect. Good attendance, excellent food, splendid music, notable guests, and delightful companionship, amid an interestingly designed entourage from the drawing board of Richard Philipp, all contributed toward the complete enjoyment of a memorable occasion.

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## As of Interest

**The Stewardson Scholarship Award.**

The Stewardson Scholarship Committee announces that the John Stewardson Memorial Traveling Scholarship in Architecture for the year 1936 was awarded to S. Robert Anshen of Ambler, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Anshen received his preliminary education in Providence, Rhode Island, spent one year in the College of the University of Pennsylvania, six months at Sorbonne, and five years as an undergraduate and graduate student in the Department of Architecture of the University of Pennsylvania where he received his master's degree in June.

**A Record.**

It is noted that the Wisconsin Chapter at its annual meeting on June 30, re-elected Alexander C. Guth, Secretary of the Chapter for the ensuing year. This marks Mr. Guth's thirteenth consecutive year as Secretary and Treasurer and is probably a record. Mr. Guth has the congratulations of his brother architects, and their best wishes for many more years of successful administration.

**Construction League of the United States—  
Representatives Appointed.**

President Voorhees has appointed the following to represent The Institute on the General Assembly of the Construction League of the United States:

STEPHEN F. VOORHEES, President of The Institute, *ex-officio*, 101 Park Avenue, New York City.

RICHMOND H. SHREVE, General Chairman of the Construction League, 11 East 44th Street, New York City.

ROBERT D. KOHN, Past President of The Institute and of the Construction League, 56 West 45th Street, New York City.

WILLIAM STANLEY PARKER, Chairman of the Construction Industry Relations Committee, A. I. A., 120 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

E. C. KEMPER, Executive Secretary of The Institute, 1741 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C.

These appointments are in effect until the adjournment of The Institute's Convention in 1937.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the world, from the beginning of the world to the present time. The author begins with the creation of the world, and proceeds to the various ages of the world, and the different empires and kingdoms that have been established in it. He then comes to the present time, and describes the state of the world as it is at present. The second part of the book is devoted to a particular history of the British nation, from the first settlement of the island to the present time. The author begins with the first settlement of the island, and proceeds to the various reigns of the British monarchs, and the different states of the nation during that time. He then comes to the present time, and describes the state of the nation as it is at present.

The third part of the book is devoted to a particular history of the British nation, from the first settlement of the island to the present time. The author begins with the first settlement of the island, and proceeds to the various reigns of the British monarchs, and the different states of the nation during that time. He then comes to the present time, and describes the state of the nation as it is at present.

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