

THE  
OCTAGON

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*A Journal of The American Institute of Architects*

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*The Washington Scene*

*Place of the Architect in the Post-War World*

*Our Affiliate—The Producers' Council*

*The Department of Technical Services*

*Newly Elected Corporate Members*

*Notice of Board Meeting*

Volume 15

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# THE OCTAGON

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## The Washington Scene

By D. K. ESTE FISHER, JR.

*Washington Representative, A.I.A.*

### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY RELATIONS

There have been a number of suggestions from architects in recent months that the A.I.A. instigate an organization which would "integrate" the construction industry. It seems timely to report on happenings in Washington which, we believe, though not *formally* directed toward that objective are, in effect, accomplishing the principal results desired.

Many readers will be familiar with efforts which have been made in the past to coordinate the construction industry, all of which have failed of real accomplishment, perhaps through the divergence of views and major interests of the various elements of the industry involved, perhaps because of the extraordinary conditions and pressures developed by war conditions. It is our feeling that organizations now functioning, while ostensibly directed toward restricted objectives, are actually accomplishing a degree of unity of thinking and action on the part of those various elements of the construction industry, which promises results far better than have ever been obtained from the late lamented Construction League or other similar organizations.

Every important element in the construction industry is represented in Washington by a permanent officer or representative of high calibre. This includes not only A.I.A., the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Associated General Contractors of America, The Producers' Council, the National Association of Home Builders of the U. S., the National Association of Real Estate Boards, etc., but practically every important subcontracting and mate-

rials group, such as the National Electrical Contractors Association, the American Institute of Steel Construction, the Structural Clay Products Institute, and other like organizations, and representatives of labor, finance, planning officials, etc.

There are a number of points at which these representatives get together with some regularity for discussion of problems common to many or all. Members of a group of about 30 of them (including your Representative) originally assembled by Mr. Frank Cortwright, Executive Vice-President of the National Association of Home Builders of the U. S., and Mr. Herbert Nelson, Executive Vice-President of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, have had lunch together every week for over a year; from a dozen to two dozen always show up, interested guests in and out of government are frequently brought in, informal discussions range over the whole field of construction, and it is felt that this group serves as both a spark-plug and a safety-valve for somewhat more formal meetings in which the same elements take part elsewhere.

The Chamber of Commerce of the U. S., in its Construction and Civic Development Department, affords an area of "neutral ground" in which a number of activities, on a somewhat more formal basis, are taking place. That Department's Subcommittee on Postwar Construction, under the Chairmanship of F. Stuart Fitzpatrick, Manager of the Department, is composed of a number of members of the informal group above mentioned (including your Representative) and others. This group

meets about every six weeks, and several projects important to the industry have been initiated in its deliberations.

About a year ago, following suggestions made at the Detroit Convention by Dean Walter Mac-Cornack, F.A.I.A., and Mr. Guy Greer, then Economic Adviser to the Federal Reserve Board, the Chamber's Department sponsored a "Conference Committee on Urban Problems" for discussion of a variety of matters connected with urban development and post-war planning. The membership of this group is a broad cross-section of civic, construction and related interests, from all over the country, and includes from A.I.A., Dean Mac-Cornack, Arthur Holden and your Representative. Meetings have been held in Washington on December 16, 1942, March 31, 1943, May 24, 1943 and September 29, 1943. They have been well attended and discussions have been of broad scope and stimulating character.

What may prove to be one of the most important developments for the construction industry in the present picture, has originated from a suggestion made in the Chamber's Department Subcommittee. Following out this suggestion Mr. Eric Johnson, President of the Chamber, and Mr. E. P. Palmer, Chairman of the Department Committee, asked Mr. Arthur Whiteside, Vice-Chairman for Civilian Requirements, and Mr. Joseph Keenan, Vice-Chairman for Labor Production, of the War Production Board, to appoint and meet with a broadly representative group\* of the construction industry for open discussion of problems existing and anticipated in the construction field due to restrictions of the use of critical materials and to the tapering off of war necessitated construction.

This request was agreed to and the first meeting with W.P.B. was held on September 15. The discussion was very frank on both sides and the contribution of the labor representatives was particularly valuable. Briefly, the principal question at issue was whether or not, without prejudicing the war situation, any relaxation of restrictions on the use of critical materials could be expected in the near future. Labor pointed out that in view of completion of war construction there is immediate prospect of unemployment for 300,000 building mechanics, a large percentage of whom are over 50 years of

age and hence are not easily moved from their home localities, nor are they easily adapted to new trades in war plants; similar conditions apply to contractors, engineers, and architects. W.P.B. replied that war requirements do not yet permit general relaxation, although careful study is being given to possible revision of some apparently unreasonable limitations. It appeared particularly desirable that there be closer collaboration between W.P.B., the War Manpower Commission and the construction industry. It was suggested that "maintenance" work on war plants could be let to civilian contractors, thus using otherwise idle civilian mechanics and supervisory personnel. Mr. Whiteside and Mr. Keenan asked the group to hold themselves in readiness for further meetings on four to six week intervals.

This meeting with W.P.B. is also, perhaps, interesting as illustrating the way in which an *informal* circle of organization is functioning in the interest of the whole construction industry. As mentioned above, the idea was first broached in the subcommittee of a Department of the Chamber of Commerce of the U. S. Members of that subcommittee discussed the subject with the luncheon group on September 10th and the various Washington Representatives determined upon what they thought to be the wise and proper position for their principals to take on the subjects which would probably be on the agenda of the meeting with W.P.B. The agenda was discussed further in a meeting of the subcommittee of the Chamber Department on September 13th. The Advisory Group met at the Chamber throughout the day previous to the meeting with W.P.B. and discussed fully the subjects at issue; Mr. Keenan met with this group informally. The way was thus well prepared for a most illuminating and amicable meeting with the Federal officials in formal session on September 15th. The Advisory Group reconvened after the meeting with W.P.B. for review of the ground covered and for determination of policy to be pursued for the near future.

**Statement to War Production Board  
by Construction Industry Advisory Group**

September 15, 1943

We, representing a cross section of the construction industry, who have been invited by the WPB to confer on problems related to the war and civilian requirements now facing our country, wish at the

\* See list appended.

outset to make clear our position. We do not advocate, nor will we advocate any measures which we do not believe compatible with the war effort.

Successful prosecution of the war requires that all of our physical facilities, including industrial, commercial, housing, railway transportation, highways and streets, food production, water supply and sanitation, and other facilities essential to the public health, welfare and safety, be maintained in safe and efficient service. This is the minimum need, if maximum war production is to be maintained. Maintenance alone will not hold all of them at an efficient level indefinitely, and some reconstruction and replacement, some expansion and new construction are becoming increasingly necessary.

To attain these ends it seems highly desirable that the WPB and those engaged in lines of endeavor essential to providing these facilities, make a realistic appraisal periodically to determine what portion of our manpower and materials can be allocated to maintaining and improving the facilities cited without interference with the production of material required for the support of our armed forces.

During the period of tuning up for war production, the construction industry satisfactorily fulfilled its obligation and provided plants, housing, and military establishments with a rapidity and efficiency heretofore unexcelled in the world's history. The construction industry is now prepared and should be maintained in a position to perform the obligations which lie ahead.

Few of the nation's basic peacetime industries have experienced more drastic wartime restriction than that which has seemed necessary in the field of private building and construction. The annual volume of new construction for the civilian economy has been reduced from a 1941 level of about eight billion dollars to less than two and one-half billion dollars during the current year. There is a grave question as to whether the current level of civilian construction can be much further reduced without danger of curtailment to a point where indispensable civilian needs will be sacrificed. It may well be that difficulties exist with respect to carrying out essential maintenance and repair work which might be removed without detriment to the war program, and thus facilitate maintenance that can not be further deferred if our civilian facilities are to be safely and efficiently operated.

If, as and when war conditions permit, opportunity should be afforded to resume gradually an accelerated rate of civilian construction so that we may regain as much as may be the loss which has been sustained due to the substandard maintenance of such facilities which has prevailed during the last two years and provide the replacements and new facilities, the need for which is becoming increasingly apparent.

Therefore it seems highly desirable now that we start to plan this program of orderly reconversion from maximum war production on a step by step basis, to the end that, as war workers and service men are released they may be absorbed in our economy and their talents devoted to useful enterprise.

Only the war agencies, the WPB and the WMC, have access to the confidential information and statistical facilities which are needed to tell us which materials and what segments of the nation's manpower will become available first. When those facts are known, the construction industry can then proceed intelligently with its preparation to meet the critical problems which must be faced from now until the end of the war and the even more critical problems which must be faced at the close of hostilities.

#### Construction Industry Advisory Group—to WPB

##### *Professional and General Business*

Raymond J. Ashton, President, The American Institute of Architects, 312-314 Beneficial Life Bldg., Salt Lake City, Utah.

Allen J. Saville, President, Allen J. Saville, Inc., Law Building, Richmond, Va.; representing American Society of Civil Engineers.

E. P. Palmer, Chairman, Construction and Civic Development Department Committee, U. S. Chamber of Commerce; President, Senior and Palmer, 50 Church St., New York, N. Y.

##### *General Contracting and Operative Builders*

Oscar B. Coblenz, President, Associated General Contractors of America, Inc.; President of McLean Contracting Co., Baltimore, Md.

W. A. Klinger, President, W. A. Klinger, Inc., 801 Warnock Building, Sioux City, Iowa; Past President, Associated General Contractors of America.

D. W. Winkelman, Vice Chairman, Highway Contractors' Division, Associated General Contractors of America; D. W. Winkelman Co., Heffernan Bldg., Syracuse, N. Y.

Fritz Burns, President, National Association of Home Builders of the U. S.; Marlow-Burns & Co., 227 S. Windsor Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.

*Subcontracting**Electrical*

Robert W. McChesney, President, National Electrical Contractors' Association; Executive Vice President, Harry Alexander, Inc., Investment Bldg., Washington, D. C.

*Heating and Piping*

George P. Nachman, President, Heating, Piping & Air Conditioning Contractors National Association; Spohn Heating and Ventilating Co., 1775 E. 45th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

*Painting and Decorating*

Michael W. McCarthy, President, Painting & Decorating Contractors of America; Rambusch Decorating Co., 2 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y.

*Manufacturing*

C. G. Conley, President, American Institute of Steel Construction, President of Mt. Vernon Bridge Co., Mt. Vernon, Ohio.

J. Ernest Fender, President, Structural Clay Products Institute; Acme Brick Co., Fort Worth, Texas.

Frank T. Sheets, President, Portland Cement Association, 33 W. Grand Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Ray Wiess, Washington Representative, Weyerhaeuser Sales Company, Washington, D. C.

Douglas Whitlock, President, The Producers' Council, Shoreham Building, Washington, D. C.

Russell G. Creviston, Dir. of Promotion, Crane Co., 836 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.; Past President of The Producers' Council.

George C. Thomas, Jr., President, Thomas & Betts Co., 38 Butler St., Elizabeth, N. J.; Past President of National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

*Distributing*

Wesley M. Anderson, President, National Retail Lumber Dealers Assn.; Anderson Lumber Co., Ogden, Utah.

\*Charles Warner, President, Warner Co., 219 North Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa.

*Mortgage Financing and Real Estate*

Robert Fleming, President, Riggs National Bank, Washington, D. C.; Past President, American Bankers' Association.

John F. Scott, First Vice President, United States Savings and Loan League; President, Minnesota Federal Savings and Loan Association, St. Paul, Minn.

Cyrus Crane Willmore, President, National Association of Real Estate Boards; President of Cyrus Crane Willmore Organization, Inc., St. Louis, Mo.

*Labor Representatives Invited to WPB Meeting of September 15, 1943*

Bates, Harry C., Pres., Bricklayers, Masons & Plasterers' International Union, Bowen Building, Washington, D. C.

\*Brown, Ed J., International President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 1200 15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

\*Byron, Robert, President, Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, 642 Transportation Building, Washington, D. C.

Durkin, Martin P., Secretary, United Association of Journeymen Plumbers and Steam Fitters, Machinists Building, Washington, D. C. (Mr. Garret will represent Mr. Durkin)

Gallagher, Wm. J., Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers, 815 15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Gray, Richard J., Acting President, Building and Construction Trades Dept., American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

\*Hedges, Marion, Director of Research, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 1200 15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Hutcheson, Morris, Vice Pres., United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, 222 E. Michigan St., Indianapolis, Ind.

\*Lindelof, L. P., Pres., Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers, Painters and Decorators Building, Lafayette, Ind.

Maloney, Wm. E., Pres., International Union of Operating Engineers, 1003 K Street N. W., Washington, D. C.

Morrin, P. J., President, International Assn. of Bridge, Structural & Ornamental Iron Workers, St. Louis, Mo. (Lesley L. Myers will represent Mr. Morrin)

Rivers, Herbert, Secretary-Treasurer, Building and Construction Trades Dept., American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Wegener, A. L., International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 1200 15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

*Those Present at WPB Conference*

\*All were present, or represented as follows, at the meeting of September 15, except those marked with an asterisk.

Fritz Burns was represented by Frank W. Cortright, Executive Vice-President, National Association of Home Builders of the U. S.

Wesley M. Anderson was represented by H. R. Northrup, Secretary-Manager, National Retail Lumber Dealers Association.

Charles Warner was represented by V. P. Ahearn, Executive Secretary, National Sand and Gravel Association.

Robert Fleming was represented by John R. McMullen, Assistant Vice-President, Riggs National Bank.

Cyrus Crane Willmore was represented by Herbert V. Nelson, Executive Vice-President, National Association of Real Estate Boards.

Martin P. Durkin was represented by M. Garrett of the Plumbers and Steamfitters International Union.

Wm. E. Maloney was represented by Herbert Woods, Director of Research, International Union of Operating Engineers.

P. J. Morrin was represented by Leslie Myers of the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers.

The following gentlemen were also present with their principals:

D. K. Este Fisher, Jr., Washington Representative, The American Institute of Architects.

F. Stuart Fitzpatrick, Manager, Construction and Civic Development Department, U. S. Chamber of Commerce, Secretary of the Construction Industry Advisory Group.

The following gentlemen represented the War Production Board:

Chairman of the meeting—Joseph Keenan, Vice-Chairman for Labor Production.

F. J. C. Dresser, Projects Division Director.

Henry Fowler, Legal Division.

Maurice Heckscher, Assistant General Counsel.

Roy W. Johnson, Director, Facilities Bureau.

Spencer Pitts, Legal Division.

Alexander Smalley, Civilian Requirements.

Arthur D. Whiteside, Vice-Chairman for Civilian Requirements.

J. C. Whitridge, Jr., Director, Office of Industry Advisory Committees.

#### DIMENSIONAL COORDINATION

Mention is made in The President's statement in this issue on The Producers' Council, of The Institute's and The Council's joint sponsorship of the American Standards Association Project A-62 for Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment. We wonder how many architects are aware that this is a *live* project. Its black-bound, red-lettered, Octagon-size brochure was published late in 1941; perhaps it came to your desk at a time when you were (as the writer was) "up to the ears" in "defense," or the new "war," construction; perhaps you gave it a glance and sent it to the draughting room,—or,—to the waste basket.

That brochure is important to architects, for it contains, in clear and concise presentation, the fundamentals of a project for simplification of manufacturing and stocking problems (which affect so much the cost of building materials) and the basic principles of a modular system of dimensional design of interlocking building materials, which is well on the

way to acceptance by important industry elements.

The architect should familiarize himself with A-62, lest he find himself behind the steam-calliope. Until he knows what the project is, in detail, let him not cry out that this is just another crass attempt of a mechanized age to sterilize design. Manufacturers will not be loath to continue to produce for you whatever fine materials you want, of whatever dimensions you wish—for a suitable price, as has always been the fact. They see *now*, however, in the simplifications offered by this project and in the extraordinary conditions brought about by the war, an opportunity (the best,—perhaps the *only* one, in generations) to eliminate the absurd multiplicity of slightly varying sizes and the confusing fractional dimensions of many kinds of building materials, and thus greatly reduce costs of ordinary construction.

Working committees of A.S.A., of the highest calibre, have been studying individual industry problems steadily throughout the war period, realizing that when the war is over, due to depreciation or to the necessity for reconversion from war work, most industries will be ready to wipe the slate clean and start fresh with new plant equipment.

Most progress has been made in structural clay products and other masonry materials and in wood and metal windows and doors, which, after all, are the basic elements in such a project. The Structural Clay Products Institute is announcing, through advertising in the October "FORUM," that it will be prepared to manufacture brick, tile, etc., in conformity with the modular system of A-62, for all post-war construction. In the City of New York a number of post-war projects will be designed in conformity with that system. We understand that F.P.H.A. is sympathetic to approving the design of federally sponsored post-war public housing in conformity with the modular system.

Look up "ASA Project A-62"—you may not like it at first glance, but don't be ignorant of it—it's coming! If you can't find a copy of the brochure, try your nearest Producers' Council chapter or one of the building materials trade associations or write direct to the Modular Service Association, 110 Arlington St., Boston 16, Mass. (price \$1.00, but free to A.I.A. members). Theodore I. Coe, A.I.A. Technical Secretary, has already reviewed this subject in the September OCTAGON, and is always ready to cooperate.

**FOREWORD:** The following paper was read at a General Meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects held in London on June 29, 1943. It is a courageous statement concerning present and future problems of the architectural profession in Great Britain.

The difficulties and the disappointments, the hopes and aspirations of our brother professionals across the sea are similar in many respects to our own. Therefore, the point-of-view of Mr. Waterhouse and his forthright analysis of those conditions which affect the practice of architecture, both now and tomorrow, are commended to your reading.

ALEXANDER C. ROBINSON, III, *Secretary*

*Reprinted by courtesy  
The Journal of the R. I. B. A.*

## The Activities of the R.I.B.A. during the War and the Place of the Architect in the Post-War World

BY MICHAEL WATERHOUSE [F] HON. SEC.

*A paper read at the Informal General Meeting held at the R.I.B.A. on  
Tuesday, 29 June. The President in the Chair*

Fellow Members of the R.I.B.A.,

You have all seen the title of this address, so I will not bore you by repeating it.

This meeting—as you know—is called as an “Informal Meeting.” The reason for this is simple—that, under the Regulations of the Privy Council, an Ordinary General Meeting, as such, cannot be held.

The purpose of this meeting, as I see it, is so that we, the Hon. Officers—the War Executive—the Council—and the General Body of members may have an opportunity of voicing our own, and sensing each other's opinions.

In order that there may be a general ground of discussion I have been asked to introduce the matters that most interest us all. Hence the reason for the very wide title of this paper. But I shall not make it a recitation of all the doings of the R.I.B.A.—these can all be read in the JOURNAL.

I give you instead my own view of the policy of the R.I.B.A. toward our major problems. I shall be as short as possible, because what *we* really want is to hear *your* views—not you mine. I shall outline the picture in bold strokes of brushwork—not the fine line of the etcher. But I wish you to realise that the picture as I paint it is entirely my own personal view for which I take the responsibility.

For the last three years, during the present Presidency, I have been your Hon. Secretary and, in a little more than twenty-four hours, my term of

office ceases. If you dislike either what I say, or the way I say it, your remedy is easy.

Tell your friends on the Council to see to it that I am not re-elected to that, or any other officership, on the new Council.

To begin with: I want to look in the widest way at the present condition of the Profession as a whole; and by “present” I mean from the beginning of the War to now. This is an essential prelude to any reasoned consideration of the future. What word, out of the whole language, would you choose to describe most typically the feeling or condition of the profession in that period. The one I choose is Disgruntlement.

Our profession has suffered harder than any other. Far harder than Medicine—the Law—Accountancy—harder even than Surveyors or Engineers. Very early in this period all civil building was banned. There was no knowing where our daily bread—still less to-morrow's bread—was to come from.

After that first shock there have been alleviations and, as will be seen, the R.I.B.A. has had a great hand in bringing these about. But these alleviations even have been, almost all of them, at the expense of our normal outlook and normal type of work. For example, absorption into the Forces or into Government offices—work by Nominated Architects on Factories, Hospitals, Aerodromes, Camps, Hostels, and



all other Wartime Building. But this work did not cover the whole profession, and for those it did cover it cannot be called Architecture, either as we knew it—or as we know it ought to be. I don't know what it really can be called. I am tempted to define it as a combination of Organisation and Improvisation.

Then, of course, there was War Damage Work—and what definition to give to that defeats me altogether!

Can it be wondered that the giants Dissatisfaction, Resentment, Disgruntlement walk the Land?

When this happens men are apt to lose their philosophy and sense of perspective. They feel it should not be, should not have been allowed. The next step is to feel that someone is to blame; then to find somebody—or some body corporate—on whom to vent their feelings.

It may be the R.I.B.A.—any, or all, Government Departments. All those in authority or just the mysterious intangible and everpresent "They."

We all do it—I've done it myself. Early in the war I started to make a collection of what the French, if they still have a sense of humour, might call "*Betises de Geurre*," Follies of War. Such things as the siting of Trenches, Defence Works, even Sewage Disposal Works—by a visiting official in Summer time, without taking advice from local inhabitants, on land that is under water in Winter. Or the hasty erection of light-framed buildings and the subsequent surrounding of them with blast walls instead of building in brick at the outset. Or the apparent Ministerial attitude of mind on the weather-proof qualities of a 4½ inch brick wall—This, by the way, appears to me to have historical precedent and parallel, of great antiquity, and Royal parentage; in the mental attitude of King Canute to the Tide.

But I gave it up—not for lack of material—but because I felt it to be definitely harmful to the country.

It was not loyal to the countless individuals who really are doing their best to win the war. It is not fair to talk as if they were all fools, either as individuals or collectively as Departments: Even the mysterious "They" when you analyse them will almost certainly turn out to be a series of Regulations, all very sound in principle, designed solely to prevent irresponsible subordinates from giving decisions which would be contrary to the public good.

I would like, in that spirit, to take some of the major Examples or Grumble Headings, of Dissatisfaction. To examine them—and to see if the remedy does not lie in our own hands as individuals quite as much as in the hands of any Professional Body: because we must remember that any body corporate and democratic is, after all, only a collection of individuals, and that for its corporate life it depends on the healthy functioning of all its individual cells or members.

First let us take a matter we often hear described as the General Decline of the Profession as the controlling force in the Building Industry.

I won't detail all the grounds, occasions, and examples of this, you can all formulate instances for yourselves. But I will ask you to look at it in the light of searching self-questioning.

To what extent is it really a decline? May not some of it be really the reluctant opening of our own eyes to the fact that we do not stand, perhaps never have stood, where we hoped we did in the view of the Public and the other Professions. If this is so, have we not been deceiving ourselves rather than the public?

If we are to play the part we want. If we are to stand where we think we ought to, we must be trained, fit, capable and able to vindicate in every respect our right to stand on that pedestal which we imagine for ourselves. Are we so fit, so fitted, so trained, each and every one of us individual members of this body corporate?

I have no doubt that if we were all so fitted the world would see the body corporate that we compose in the light that we should wish. How can we achieve this? Must we not find a remedy? To my mind there is but one answer—Education. Education of the whole community in the appreciation of Architecture in general, and in the services rendered by the Architect in particular.

But prior to that, both in importance and in time, the education of every Architect—or at least every member of the R.I.B.A.—to a standard of Technical ability, so high that there cannot be any question but that the Architect—or the firm or organisation of which he is a member—is fully capable of giving all the diverse and varied services that the public have, on our own claims, a right to expect from us. You may agree, may say that we still have far to go towards this ideal, and ask what is being done towards it. The R.I.B.A. has done much; not only

in all its past policy in Education, but especially in the last few years.

In 1939 the Board of Architectural Education instituted a Special Committee to study this particular matter. They have taken a great amount of evidence and opinions from different sources all over the country, and have now sub-divided under four Sub-Committees the main groups of the subject.

One of their chief considerations is the need for a minimum period and standard of office experience before election to the Associateship. Another is the level of the essential Standard of Construction and Building Science, that should be taught in the schools and required in the examinations. A report is also now being completed on the Training of the Architect in Town Planning.

I, for one, earnestly hope that they may soon reach conclusions and be able to put them into effect, because no improvement can be hoped for until this is done.

As to the education of the Community: I, personally, consider that one of the greatest losses that this Institute has suffered as a result of the war, is that of the services of the extremely capable and active Public Relations Committee, who with their staff served our interests so well before the war. The Council realises this acutely, and practical plans are in hand for its restoration as soon as possible.

As the second of our main points of dissatisfaction let me take the matter of Unity.

Here, again, I will not go into detail. Let us rather look at the picture in its largest view.

Unity, both spiritual and corporate; in aim, intention and method, is an ideal for the Profession as dear to my heart as to that of anyone in this room. But like all ideals it is apt to get clouded by ideas, and to my mind it is so much an ideal as to be unattainable on this earth at this time. But that does not prevent it being still the ideal for which I hope and strive.

Now let us look at the ideas that cloud it.

First, there is the *quasi*-political idea—the confusion of thought and issue between Unity and Unification.

Unification is, as I see it, another name for the problem of the relationship of the R.I.B.A., with all the other organisations either existent in, or as yet unformed within, the Profession. It is bound up with questions such as the following: Can they all

amalgamate? Is the R.I.B.A. to incorporate them? Or is there any other solution to achieve their fusion? Is Unification under any of these forms an essential prelude to Unity?

The other idea which is outstanding on the first serious thought of the practicability of Unity is Dilution. For Unity to mean Universality it must mean Dilution and, therefore, an inevitable lowering of the standard of qualification at the very moment when the need for raising our standard is imperative.

What part has the R.I.B.A. taken and what part can it and should it take? Here the R.I.B.A. has had to make a choice. This choice, as I see it, lay between either being in a position to speak for the entire profession; or adhering to its long-term policy of being able to voice the view of that part of it which sets before itself the highest ideals and standards.

Myself, I see only one line of action for this Institute. To adhere at all costs to its standards and to raise them progressively. Unity is an ideal—The Ideal—but it would be fatally wrong to try to attain this ideal by the sacrifice of our standards. We must set a standard of the best to which others will be compelled to conform by the force of public opinion. It is only on this basis that Unity is worthy of being an ideal.

We have proof of this close to hand. Next door there already exists corporal Unity of the Profession in visible and tangible form. There lies the Register—all the Profession united in one list and one card index. There *is* Unity. Why are we not satisfied with *that* as Unity?

Before I leave this matter of Unity there are two things that I must say. One is this: There can never be any sort of Unity so long as some people draw in their minds and speak with their tongues a distinction between the Private Architect and the Official Architect. That is a prejudice of a bye-gone age. So long as our aims and standards are the same we are all Architects together in spirit and practice. The last three years during which so many Architects have been absorbed into Government departments should shatter that prejudice for ever. The other is, let us beware of that form of criticism of each other and contest in the Public Press which is harmful to our united aims and endeavours.

As the third major point of anxiety and resent-

ment let us consider the relationship of our Profession to the Civil Engineer and the other branches of that profession.

Here, again, I deal on broad lines, and speak my own view of the problem.

The simplest way to view the essentials of the matter is to define the province of the Architect. For this I unashamedly borrow and quote a definition I saw lately. It is as follows:

"The distinctive function of the Architect lies in his trained powers of significant co-ordination; enabling him to analyse and synthesise the diverse elements of a building project, from the most human values down to its minutest structural requirements, into a complete harmony; not only meeting the functional demands, but also those of the spiritual sensibilities."

That is the definition.

All will agree that this service is indispensable both to the State and the individual citizen.

All men know that no profession other than our own is trained to give this service.

Put thus, as a form of simple Syllogism, the answer is clear and uncontrovertible. It only remains for us to keep this clear aspect sharply defined in all the minds that matter. The mind of the Public; the mind of the Engineer; and lastly our own. If we do this there is no problem at all. The provinces of the two professions are entirely different. Each offers unique and Special Services; which, though they may at many times have to be joined together on works, and be complementary thereon the one to the other, are, nevertheless, utterly distinct the one from the other.

It is essential that this should be known and understood. Here, again, the answer is Education. The community must be educated to know exactly what each profession can give and how best to combine these gifts. Those Engineers who are unaware of this fact must be educated—or, as I would rather put it, initiated so far into the Mysteries of our Craft, as to be able to appreciate fully the provinces of the two and the very definite boundary between them.

Perhaps on our own side, too, some of us might learn to realise that some of the so-called mysteries of their craft are really little more than the application to everyday problems of a blending of common

sense, the rules of simple arithmetic, and the principles of elementary algebra and geometry.

Now to take a more domestic and, perhaps, more personal matter of Resentment. I refer to the Criticism that the present *régime* of the R.I.B.A. lacks the proper Democratic feeling and spirit.

To deal with this point in full would really need an evening to itself on this alone. That evening should start with a talk on the Constitution of the R.I.B.A. and an outline of its history, which is, in itself, a subject full of interest and probably unknown to many members.

To summarise the matter as briefly as possible, I see it as follows:

Democracy, as we know it to-day, is based upon, and is only made possible by, the Representative principle.

That principle is the foundation of our present constitution, as embodied in our Charter and By-laws.

Our constitution is framed to give full and comparatively proportionate Representation to our members throughout the country through the mediumship of the Allied Societies.

The affairs and business of the Institute and its policy in all matters major or minor are directed, governed, and controlled, solely by the Council, who alone take responsibility for every act or action of the Institute.

The Council membership, being based on the Representative basis just referred to, the organisation of the R.I.B.A. is as democratic as it is possible to be; and (whether there be an Annual Election or no) it is an ever-changing Body to a far greater extent than Parliament.

The complaints that have arisen, and the answers to them, have been fully given in the professional Press, and I do not propose to go over them all again. But the point that I *do* want to make is that it is the Council alone who are the Governing Body.

It was the Council who—with all the facts before them—decided in each of the last three years against petitioning the Privy Council for an election. You will realise that among the seventy-one members of the Council there are represented every shade and variety of opinion, and that all members of the Council are open to approach by any member of the Institute.

If it is objected that the Council is dominated or

dictated to by the War Executive, I ask you to remember that it is the Council themselves who select and elect the members of that Executive. They do this yearly; and in thirty-six hours the present War Executive will cease to be. The Council, at their next meeting in a week's time, start with a clean sheet for the election of a new Executive for the coming year. Their remedy is in their own hands.

Now before turning to the future there are some other major activities of the R.I.B.A. to which I must refer very briefly.

You may remember in the very earliest war days that there was formulated by this Institute a complete scheme by which the services of the whole profession could have been promptly used by the State. This scheme, urged in every way in every possible quarter, was turned down by the Government. What has happened since you all know well enough, without my recounting it, but perhaps you are not aware of the immense influence for the good of the profession that has emanated from our President in the last three years, both unofficially with the Ministries and Departments, and officially as a member of Lord Portal's Advisory Council and other bodies. To try to summarise those three years of his unremitting toil would itself require a full evening's talk.

\* \* \*

You may say, however, in bitterness, that it seems to make no difference—that the R.I.B.A. does not make its voice heard or get its way in the Ministries or Cabinet; that the labour is lost or will only be shelved. But that I cannot believe; either that it is all in vain, or that we might just as well have sat down and done nothing.

There is another side to the picture, and it often hurts me to hear so many Architects blowing the mournful flute of despondency instead of their own trumpets of victory. There *are* those who play the right tune and realise that the contributions of the Architect to the war and the future have been invaluable and indispensable (as for example, Howard Robertson, in his letter to the *Architects' Journal*, of 4 February). And if you would like to know how our profession here appears to the world at large, I commend to you recent numbers of *The Octagon*, *Journal of The American Institute of Architects*, and the *Architectural Record of Canada*—particularly those of March and April.

In addition to the work of which Records have been published, you should know that the Contracts Tribunal—our closest link with the Employers in the Industry has been at work on the many problems before them.

Also the Practice Committee has for some months been drafting a proposed Revision both of the Scale of Charges and the Code of Professional Practice.

All members will, in accordance with the Constitution, have an opportunity of criticism of these before they are accepted.

Much, too, has been done with the Forces, obtaining Commissions for Members and Students, and transfers to the R.E. from non-technical Units.

\* \* \*

With this brief review I bring Past and Present to the Future. You may say I have taken so much time on the past that I have left little for the future. True—but my reasons are these: First, the Future is in your hands. It is for you—all of you—all of us—to make. We cannot leave it to make itself or to others to make for us. If we wish it to be as we would have it we must ourselves make it *now*.

Here I share the disgruntlement of every Architect. We know better than anyone else the chaos that must be if there is no Plan. We know that every effort—everything we have done or striven for, or shall strive for—is vain and frustrated without a Plan.

Not only a Physical Plan, but a National Plan, to embrace Industry, Economics, Sociology, in the widest and fullest sense.

In our own particular sphere we have been given a Ministry of Planning, but not even from this has anything concrete yet been forthcoming. We know from the questions in Parliament, the correspondence in the *Times* and elsewhere, that the Nation is becoming alive to the disorder and disaster that menace the country unless we can be allowed to visualise at least the outlines of that Plan.

We know that Government and Nation have the immediate task and burden of the war upon them, but unless that war is to have been fought in vain, we must insist that those appointed to the task prepare the way for peace.

We cannot let these vital matters lie on the lap of the Government. We cannot allow all that we, as a profession, have contributed to the National Plan to go either to the wastepaper basket or the

melting pot. On this point, at least, we can all be united in feeling and action.

As to our more personal attitude to the future. We all know the few indisputable facts.

The unlikelihood that the coming of World Peace or World Peace conditions will be either sudden or soon.

The inevitable duration of a shortage of materials and possibly of labour due to conditions of the World, Europe, and Shipping.

The fact that this condition will be the most irksome and frustrating at the very time when the urge for Reconstruction is at its strongest, and is, apparently, most feasible and most desirable.

The fact that the obvious remedy to this shortage is wise and sympathetic control, of Materials, of Labour, and of programme of Reconstruction; based on relative needs and urgencies.

How are these going to affect us—individually and as a body?

We are all anxious, and rightly so. How do we fit in to these conditions, and this part of the Plan? We know that there is before the Profession and the Industry an immense prospect of work. How shall we share and fare in it?

Is it all to be done by Ministries, Departments, and local Authorities? Is it to be so controlled and regimented that there is no place for the private Architect and, indeed, small room for the individual client?

We see grave threats of this. Growing instances of this tendency are before you all every day.

Will it go so far that there are Ministry Type plans for every conceivable type of job, and that these jobs will be supervised by Civil Engineers? Will it be that there are no Architects except in the Ministries and Departments, and that even they are not given their due recognition? Or, on another aspect, will pre-fabrication and modern materials and technique oust, not only the Architect from his job, but even the craftsman from the Industry?

A frightening prospect—what can prevent it?

Two things, I think.

On our part proof that our technical ability cannot be overlooked.

On the part of the public—our clients, I look for salvation to the common sense of the common people.

By this I mean the Englishman's natural instinctive desire to do a job well and see it well done. His

dislike of muddle and inefficiency, his fundamental individualism, and, above all, his intense dislike of being "messed about."

There is bound to come a surge of revulsion; a Reaction against that Collectivism which is necessary to, and a part of, war. A desire for the reassertion of Individualism which will sweep away most of the cumbersome methods which burden us to-day. I foresee that reaction so strong that it will not tolerate such examples of Inter-Ministerial muddle as the fantastic history of the 3,000 Agricultural Workers' Cottages: I anticipate a desire of the individual to enjoy at least some of that liberty for which he has fought, which will be strong enough to insist upon the scrapping of the more irksome fetters of Control and Collectivism.

Let us only hope that this Revulsion to Individualism knows where to stop. That it does not sweep away the good of a National Plan with those responsible for the slowness of its birth. That the history of the rebuilding of an unplanned London after the Great Fire does not repeat itself too exactly.

Another whole series of problems before us (in which we must play our part), is the restoration of the Building Industry. The adaptation to and of new materials both in matter and in men. The restoration of craftsmanship in traditional and home-produced materials; a factor which might do much to counter the difficulties of shortage and also those aspects of pre-fabrication which are a menace to the industry. All these are too big to do more than mention to-night, for time is too short.

Let us come to the conclusion of the matter. What is the picture I have painted?

It is the picture of a brutal and competitive world in which all must fight to live.

We know that in the fight our chances are better if we stand together united.

But if we are to be united it must be Unity not only of Aim but of Efficiency.

We must have no weak links in our chain. We know from Euclid that "The whole is equal to the sum of all its parts."

Each one of us is responsible for his own part in that "whole," both in execution as in aim.

The aim—to my mind—is the power to convince the world by our technical skill and ability that the Architect truly deserves that high position which he knows he ought to merit.

## Our Affiliate—The Producers' Council

A STATEMENT BY RAYMOND J. ASHTON, PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTE

**T**HE question is frequently asked "What is The Institute's relation to The Producers' Council?"

The more thought I give to it, the more I am impressed with the great mutuality of interest between the architect and the manufacturer of building materials and equipment. The architect and the producer have a common interest in many more subjects today than at the time The Producers' Council was founded.

The Council has long been recognized as a principal exponent of quality building products and quality construction; it has encouraged research and improvement of building products. These subjects, in themselves, are perhaps sufficient to support the close collaboration of the two groups. But the architect is equally interested in the many new activities of The Council, especially its planning for expanded construction activities after the war.

Last fall The Council marked its 21st Anniversary—or "became of age." As The Institute is reputed to be the progenitor of The Council, such an anniversary is the occasion for the expression of parental pride, but more so of giving considerate thought to the further development of our relationships with this new adult.

First, it is well to review our relationship during past years. And in doing so, we bring older members of The Institute up-to-date on the collaboration of which they will recall the beginning—and give newer members perhaps their first clear picture of the affiliation of The Producers' Council with The Institute.

### **Wastage in Informational Material was Initial Motive to Bring the Groups Together**

It was November, 1921, that The Board of Directors of The Institute invited a number of manufacturers of building materials and equipment to send representatives to meet with The Board in Indianapolis, to discuss matters of mutual interest. About twenty manufacturing firms accepted this invitation. Many of these have continued as members of The Council since. The Board first brought up the question of advertising matter prepared for the architect. A stack of material received by an

architect's office was produced and analyzed from the standpoint of its usefulness to the architect. There had been much wastage in the then existing methods, which the architect objected to as adding unnecessarily to the cost of the product to the owner. Not only was the possibility of mutual assistance evident in this item of information to the architect, but other possibilities were foreseen. As a result of the meeting there was formed "The Producers' Section of The American Institute of Architects."

Later, for several reasons, The Institute Board suggested to the manufacturers that they supersede this Section with an entirely separate organization, to which they agreed to give official recognition as "Affiliated with The American Institute of Architects." Consequently, there was formed "The Producers' Research Council." Later this title was changed to "The Producers' Council" to obviate misunderstanding as to its purposes and activities.

These purposes, as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation, are as follows (in condensed form):

1. To cooperate with The American Institute of Architects; architects, engineers, contractors, builders, individually or collectively; the press and the public generally; in furthering the highest ideals in architecture and building construction and equipment.
2. To provide facilities for solution of mutual problems of architects, engineers, builders and producers of building products.
3. To assist in the standardization of building materials and equipment and their use.
4. To encourage adoption and use of new and improved building products.
5. To encourage building product research.
6. To furnish factual information on building products.

Certainly this is a broad fundamental program of service to architects and engineers and the entire building industry—and to the public.

### **Structural Service Department Is Established for Mutual Usefulness**

To make the working of such an affiliation possible, The Institute created a Structural Service De-

partment (now the Department of Technical Services) under a Technical Secretary, which Department was to be the contact between The Council and The Institute, and also a service agency to members of The Institute on questions concerning building materials and equipment, specifications, and techniques of construction. Originally this Department shared offices with The Council in New York City, with a Secretary-Manager acting for the two organizations. As activities increased this joint office was separated, and the Technical Service Department was moved to A.I.A. Headquarters in Washington. There it was felt it could perform its functions for Institute members to better advantage. Recently, the headquarters of The Council were moved to Washington, at 815 15th Street, N. W.

From this early collaboration through the Structural Service Department several important developments got their start. One was The Institute's Standard Filing System and Alphabetical Index now so widely used in architects' offices and the entire building industry.

Possible expansion of the services of The Institute to its members through the present Department of Technical Services was studied last year by a special committee authorized by The Institute Board, under the chairmanship of Matthew W. Del Gaudio.

#### MUTUAL ADVANTAGES OF THE AFFILIATION

##### Consultation Service to Manufacturers

In the use and fabrication of quality materials The Institute agreed to furnish consultation service to The Council or to its members on requests made by The Council. For such advice The Council pays a charge fixed by mutual agreement from time to time. Review of advertising material was specifically covered by this service to be limited to criticism by The Institute of the general character of the statements made and the form of their presentation, and not to be deemed as approval, endorsement or disapproval by The Institute of the building products so described. The use of this service by members of The Council has resulted in a marked improvement in the factual and technical usefulness, to the architect, of producers' promotional and informational literature.

##### Bulletin Material Is Reviewed by Institute

The Council, on its part, has brought an ever-

increasing volume of consultation requests to The Institute in connection with the publication of the Bulletin of The Producers' Council, established some fifteen years ago. This technical Bulletin, now distributed to every member of The Institute and to several thousand other architects, engineers, and governmental officials, with a total circulation of 10,000 per issue, contains those presentations which have been submitted for the comment and criticism of The Institute's Department of Technical Services.

The Council's Bulletin is intended to be a group of factual statements, authentic information as to manufacture and suggested use of particular materials or equipment, together with design and specification data useful to the architect. For that reason, the Bulletin should occupy a preferred position with members of The Institute and the surveys which have been made indicate that quite generally this is the case. Yet there are undoubtedly some members of The Institute, but particularly newer members who, being unfamiliar with the background of the Bulletin, may not fully appreciate the service which producers, organized through The Council, are endeavoring to give them.

The affiliation provides that literature of The Council or any member thereof which has been submitted to The Institute for criticism may have printed thereon the following statement:

"We acknowledge the assistance of The American Institute of Architects in criticizing the subject matter and form of presentation of this publication."

This is a symbol of Institute review of material published by The Council and its members, emphasizing for members of The Institute a service performed under our affiliation with The Council, for the architect's benefit.

##### Council Chapters Serve the Architect

In order to extend the benefit of the affiliation into local communities where architects practice, The Council organized in many cities local Council Clubs (which have come to be known as local "Chapters"). The local representatives of national members of The Council comprise the local Chapter. They conduct a program of activities of which the keystone is service to the architect. Accordingly, they arrange several meetings a year to which the architect is invited, to hear presentations on the manufacture

and use of building products produced by one company or several companies, or to view exhibits of building products.

The Informational Meeting has become a fixture in The Council's local operations and has been widely accepted by the architect in twenty-one cities where Council Chapters are organized. Current familiarity with new developments in building materials and equipment is a recognized need of a practicing architect and these meetings contribute importantly to that purpose. This is another direction in which the advantages of our affiliation with The Council might be further explored and further strengthened and a program to accomplish that objective is under study and will subsequently be reported to members of The Institute.

The Institute affiliation with The Council has been the impetus to several programs of collaboration between the two organizations in recent years. It will be recalled that at the San Antonio Convention, The Institute and Council took joint action towards establishing the Construction League of the United States as a representative body for the entire construction industry. The fact that the League rose and waned does not prove that there is not a need for cooperation among all the elements of the construction industry, such as has been so beneficial for twenty-one years in the case of The Council and Institute.

#### **Dimensional Coordination**

Architects may not be fully acquainted with another joint effort by The Institute and The Council—their joint sponsorship of Project A62 of the American Standards Association—Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment. This is one of the basic programs which requires long and arduous labor. It holds forth important benefit to the architect in simplifying the detailing of building projects. At the same time, it promises important savings to the producer in reducing the variety of sizes of materials and equipment, and hence inventories. To the owner it should give better performance and reduced cost. The Proposed American Standard Basis for coordination is being circulated for industry review and criticism.

#### **Small House Problem**

Further evidence of collaboration between The Institute and The Council, growing out of the affilia-

tion, developed in the studies, several years ago, of the small house problem—in an effort to provide better design and improve construction. On the recommendation of The Institute's Housing Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Walter R. MacCornack, The Institute and The Council entered into a cooperative program with the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

#### **Conservation of Critical Materials in Construction**

In 1942, as a direct assistance to the huge war construction program, The Institute and Council found an important subject for collaboration in a program to emphasize conservation of critical materials in construction. An Institute committee under the chairmanship of H. R. Dowswell, cooperated with a Council committee under Albert B. Tibbets. Together, these committees established a clearing house for information for architects and producers under the Technical Secretary, advised with the responsible governmental agencies and released to the construction industry Memoranda, containing pertinent design and specification suggestions.

#### **Post-War Program Presents the Greatest Opportunity**

Perhaps the greatest opportunity ever for collaboration by the two groups is afforded in the field of post-war planning. The Council's comprehensive program, dealing with the analysis of all types of post-war construction markets and means of attaining and sustaining these markets, is a natural complement to The Institute's program under Dean MacCornack to direct the talents of the architect into the technical planning phases, which are so vital to the big task ahead.

In closing this running account of the organizing and development of our affiliate, The Producers' Council, we can most appropriately refer to the fundamental objectives set forth many years ago in the first Agreement of Affiliation—to wit:

"to bring about (a) a closer and more professional relationship between architects and the producers of material—(b) the issuance of more trustworthy information regarding materials and their use."

It is the general consensus of opinion that much of value has been accomplished in furthering both of these objectives, but it is also the feeling that there



has not yet been developed the full possibilities of usefulness envisioned by these objectives. The Institute Board of Directors is giving continued consideration to recommendations made by the special committee, and some of its recommendations will be

discussed subsequently in *THE OCTAGON*.

Thus, after considerate thought, we do have in mind how our relationship with this new adult, the twenty-one year old Producers' Council, can be further developed to mutual advantage.

## The Department of Technical Services—Notes

BY THEODORE IRVING COE, TECHNICAL SECRETARY

### The BMS Reports of the National Bureau of Standards

Recognizing the need for research in answering the many technical questions confronting the Government housing agencies, Congress, in 1937, made available to the National Bureau of Standards the sum of \$198,000 for a research program, recommended by the Central Housing Committee, its subcommittees, and affiliated groups, directed particularly toward the investigation of materials and methods of construction suitable for use in low-cost housing.

The results of the research which proceeded under this program have been published in a series of BMS Reports, 101 of which have been published and made available up to this time.

Reference has been made in issues of *THE OCTAGON* to the subject matter and cost of these Reports as they have been issued.

While intended primarily to apply to materials and methods of construction suitable for low-cost housing, many of the Reports have a much wider application.

In the July, 1943, issue of *THE OCTAGON* reference was made to the BMS Reports dealing with the "Permeability of Masonry Walls."

Among other of the Reports having general application are those referring to the following subjects:

- Survey of Roofing Materials, BMS Reports 6 and 29.
- Backflow Prevention in Over-Rim Water Supplies, BMS28.
- Plastic Calking Materials, BMS33.
- Surface Treatment of Steel Prior to Painting, BMS44.
- Air Infiltration through Windows, BMS45.
- Properties of Adhesives for Floor Coverings, BMS59.
- Moisture Condensation in Building Walls, BMS63.
- Methods of Estimating Loads in Plumbing Systems, BMS65.

Plumbing Manual, BMS66.

Indentation Characteristics of Floor Coverings, BMS73.

Water Distributing Systems for Buildings, BMS79.

Fire-Resistance Classifications of Building Constructions, BMS92.

Relative Slipperiness of Floor and Deck Surfaces, BMS100.

Strength and Resistance to Corrosion of Ties for Cavity Walls, BMS101.

### The Miracle Home?

Newspaper advertising featuring such headlines as "Ready Now, *Today*—The 'Miracle Home' of Postwar America. This Miracle Home is ready now, the minute the Armistice is signed," is in marked contrast to more factual and realistic statements, such as the editorial "The House of the Future, 194?-195?" which appeared in the July issue of *ARCHITECTURAL RECORD*.

Extravagant promises or prophecies, which envision fantastic changes in materials or methods of construction for immediate post-war construction, tend to discourage the initiating of building projects by those who accept the glowing promises of the "Miracle Home" and await its early advent.

While the responsible producers of building materials and equipment have every desire to make available the results of sound research and experience in the development of new products and technics of construction, they know it is of the utmost importance that when such new products and constructions are made available they meet the requirements of quality, strength, and durability associated with proven materials and methods for which they are offered as substitutes.

The history of building materials and equipment production has been marked by developments and advances from year to year and the materials and

equipment for post-war construction will prove no exception.

The continuing welfare of the construction industry depends upon the use of materials and methods of construction capable of meeting the generally accepted standards of quality, structural stability, durability, and economy of maintenance.

This may delay the advent of the "Miracle Home" but if materials of less than proven quality are adopted in the period of immediate post-war construction, it will call for a miracle to establish the desired quality and satisfactory performance of this construction.

Perhaps this is the "miracle" to which the newspaper advertising refers.

#### Keeping Drinking Water Pure

The polluting of drinking water by faulty plumbing connections was brought sharply to public attention by the serious outbreak of amebic dysentery in Chicago during the World's Fair of 1933.

Since that date several similar conditions of lesser magnitude have been traced to cross-connections between pure and impure water and to the back-siphonage or backflow from toilet fixtures.

The terms back-siphonage and backflow are used interchangeably, although backflow may occur, due to vacuum conditions, where there is no back-siphonage.

For several years a Sectional Committee of the American Standards Association has been active in the study of this problem and the formulation of suitable preventive measures.

The work of the committee has resulted in the adoption by ASA of "American Standard Air Gaps and Backflow Preventers in Plumbing Systems, (A40.4) and (A40.6)."

These have been published in a single document, copies of which may be obtained from the ASA, 29 West 39th Street, New York 18, N. Y. at 45¢ each, postage paid.

The details of an investigation conducted at the National Bureau of Standards to determine methods of preventing backflow from plumbing fixtures by means of air gaps is contained in Report BMS28, copies of which may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. at 10¢ a copy. (Stamps not accepted.)

#### The A.I.A. Standard Filing System

The usefulness of the Standard Filing System and Alphabetical Index to those desirous of filing information on building materials, appliances, and equipment, has been greatly increased by the revised and augmented 1942 edition.

A comparison of its classifications with those in early editions indicates the rapid development of building products and new equipment which has occurred during the past 20 years.

There is a growing appreciation of the fact that the Standard Filing System (A.I.A. Document 172) facilitates the filing of information of interest not only to the architect but to the engineer, the contractor, material dealer, landscape architect, many government departments and manufacturers, construction projects, and technical school and institutional libraries.

The permanent exhibit of materials established by The Department of Public Works of the City of New York has made use of the classifications and file numbers of the Standard Filing System and an increasing number of producers are premarking their descriptive and technical literature with the appropriate A.I.A. File Numbers to facilitate its filing and preservation for future reference.

While the 1942 edition has been materially expanded over previous issues, the price has been maintained at \$1.00 a copy, postage paid.

#### National Bureau of Standards Research on Building Materials and Structures

To the list of reports mentioned in previous issues of THE OCTAGON the following have been added and may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at the prices indicated (stamps not accepted):

- BMS97—Experimental Dry-Wall Construction with Fiber Insulating Board. 10¢
- BMS98—Physical Properties of Terrazzo Aggregates. 15¢
- BMS99—Structural and Heat-Transfer Properties of "Multiple Box-Girder Plywood Panels" for Walls, Floors, and Roofs. 15¢
- BMS100—Relative Slipperiness of Floor and Deck Surfaces. 10¢
- BMS101—Strength and Resistance to Corrosion of Ties for Cavity Walls. 10¢

## Newly Elected Corporate Members

### EFFECTIVE MAY 24, 1943

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Name</i>
WASHINGTON, D. C.	*T. J. D. Fuller

### EFFECTIVE AUGUST 16, 1943

BOSTON	Miles Standish Richmond
BUFFALO	*Will Alban Cannon, Raymond A. Freeburg Benjamin Franklin Kelly
CENTRAL ILLINOIS	James H. La Rowe Harold Braden Wilson
DETROIT	Carl Benning Marr
HAWAII	William Frederick Elliott, Philip Clark Fisk William Dickey Merrill, Kenneth William Roehrig James Clyde Simms, Theodore Alameda Vierra
KENTUCKY	Fred J. Hartstern
NEW JERSEY	Robert Ramsden Cueman Arthur Haenichen
NEW YORK	Hermann Haviland Field, Elsa Gidoni Francis X. Gina, Wallace Walton Heath George Strange Holderness
ST. LOUIS	Macon Armistead Abbit Julian Frederick Eckles, Emmet J. Layton Frederick C. Sternberg

### EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 14, 1943

BOSTON	Payson Rex Webber
BROOKLYN	Roger Burton, William Sambur
BUFFALO	C. V. Kenneth Kruchten
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA	Raymond C. Bobb
COLUMBUS	Todd Tibbals
DETROIT	Gothard Arntzen, George John Bery Clarence Bronson Merrill, Arnold A. Weitzman

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Name</i>
FLORIDA SOUTH	Thomas Hunter Henderson, Jr.
GEORGIA	Alfredo Barili, Jr., John Wharton Humphreys
KANSAS	Thomas Marion Heter
MISSISSIPPI	Earl Truman Gilmore
NEW YORK	Robert Theodore Handren Aaron Nathan Kiff, Lester Storms LaPierre Allen Gordon Lorimer, Thomas Stapleton
OREGON	George Melville Wolf
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	Carl C. McElvy
UTAH	Harold K. Beecher, Jr., Carl Walter Scott Art Shreeve, Slack W. Winburn
WASHINGTON, D. C.	Mackey Wood White

### EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 12, 1943

BROOKLYN	Richard Thomas Leslie
BUFFALO	Donald Wiley Love
CENTRAL TEXAS	*Louis F. Southerland
CLEVELAND	Joseph Ceruti
COLUMBUS	Timothy Gilbert Armstrong Hilda Young
DETROIT	Cornelius Donkervoet, George John Fuchs Horace William Hartman
GEORGIA	Alexander Pearson Almond, James Joseph Walton Biggers, Thomas Firth Lockwood
GRAND RAPIDS	Clark Russell Ackley Bernard Jerin DeVries
NORTH TEXAS	Edward Lawrence Wilson
SOUTH GEORGIA	Walter Francis Kiley Edmund Hill Kuhlke
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	Henry Lyman Wright

\* Readmission.

## Notice of Semi-Annual Meeting The Board of Directors

THE semi-annual meeting of The Board of Directors will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, December 1, 2, and 3, 1943.

Notice is hereby given to all members, chapters, and committees that communications for the attention of The Board should be mailed so as to reach

the office of The Secretary, The Octagon, 1741 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., not later than November 22, as the agenda will be closed as of that date.

ALEXANDER C. ROBINSON, III

Secretary



