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F. E. Davidson
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

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MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meet on the Second Tuesday of each month at noon at the University Club.

The Society meets on the Fourth Tuesday of each month, excepting December, at 6 P. M. at the Architects Club, 1801 Prairie Avenue.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP FROM THE INQUIRING EDITOR

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE COMPETITIVE BIDS IN YOUR OFFICES, PARTICULARLY FROM THE BIDS RECEIVED FROM THE ELECTRICAL AND PIPE COVERING TRADES?

COME TO THE MONTHLY MEETING ON NOVEMBER 25, PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION.

The principle of fair competition in building requires that every competitor shall be bidding on the equivalent of every other competitor for doing work to be installed under practically the same working conditions. Bidding should be a game governed by fair rules.

To insure that the competition is fair and that the meritorious bid wins, it is essential that the specifications be prepared by a technically competent disinterested third party and, also, that the bids be analyzed, equipment, good will and technical ability of the competitors studied and rated by this same technical disinterested expert. But this is not all. The lowest bidder must sign a contract which shall insure the execution of the work as specified and shown. No such assurance is possible unless there is a provision that the maker of the plans and specifications or some other person of equivalent technical ability and independence of interest supervises the installation of the work and certifies as to its progress and the amount due the contractor under the terms of the contract. The owner is not technically qualified, and if he were, he would not be disinterested. The contractor is likely to be technically competent, but the very nature of his position makes it impossible for him to be disinterested.

The technically competent, disinterested plan, specification maker, and superintendent is by principle an essential umpire in the highly competitive game of building construction. By all the laws of reason that man should be a competent and experienced architect,—not the owner, a relative of the owner, or business partner, and not in any sense interested in contracting or building materials. Specifications prepared by competing contractors and submitted with their bids can, in no sense, be considered as a basis for fair competition.

CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXHIBITION

The Illinois Society of Architects at its monthly meeting of October 28, 1930, was favored by an illustrated lecture in the Construction and Location of Buildings of the Century of Progress Exhibition. Mr. Clarence W. Farrier, in person, gave an able address and explained how these temporary buildings were being erected and the materials used in same.

This was very interesting to the many Architects present. These buildings and the construction of same are not permitted in the boundary lines of the City of Chicago, owing to the Building Code, and are only allowed on the property of the South Park Board, and for this reason, permit much "tricky" construction.

On Saturday, November 1, a group of about seventy-five Architects visited the site of the Fair and Mr. Farrier, who is Assistant Director of Works, accompanied them and explained the various designs, construction and materials used in these buildings. This was both interesting and educational and many in the party expressed themselves as having had a liberal education in the construction of temporary buildings that might be used in certain parts of the country.

Our President, Robert C. Ostergren, addressed the members of the party and stated that up to the start of the excursion he had very little interest in the "Fair" and the buildings that were being constructed for its use, but he said "I am enthusiastic now and feel that we as architects should watch this wonderful undertaking and interest ourselves in its progress and that we should boost the Fair and, as loyal citizens of Chicago should lend our assistance to the management whenever it is possible for us to do so.

"Let us boost for Chicago and its World's Fair. I hope that this invitation will again be extended to the members of the Illinois Society of Architects at a later date when the 'dead men' who are now slumbering become active and grab the cables that are to support the 300 foot span dome."

Mr. Farrier assured the men present that he would be glad to pilot them through the grounds after some of the other buildings had been partially erected.

REFRIGERATOR DRAINS

The president of the Plumbing Contractors' Association suggests a conference about refrigerator drains. In apartment buildings equipped with mechanical refrigeration these drains have no use whatsoever, but owners are still put to considerable expense to install them. The plumbers' union says, in effect, that if the owner will not spend money for needless refrigerator drains he can't hire any union plumbers to install bathtubs. The argument, needless to say, is a powerful one.

It has been suggested that the subject might prove of interest to the grand jury investigating racketeering. Mr. Rupert J. Weber, president of the Plumbing Contractors' Association, proposes a conference of architects, journeymen plumbers, plumbing contractors, and the city health department. Such a conference can do no harm, but the absence from the conference table of building owners and renters who are forced to pay for the unnecessary work is not a hopeful circumstance. They are better represented on the grand jury.

Mr. Weber says that the present building code implies the obligation to place drains under refrigerators whether

needed or not. This point might more properly be decided by the courts than by the contractors who profit from the unnecessary expenditure. He says that some people are afraid of mechanical refrigerators and insist upon using old-fashioned ice-boxes, and therefore drains should be placed in the buildings when under construction so that the change may be made easily. Statistics showing the number of such changes which have been demanded and made would be instructive. In the absence of them the argument carries little weight.

Whatever the requirements of the code may be and whatever the desires of tenants may be, the fact is that contractors and the union have consented in some cases to waive the requirement in whole or in part. In other cases, notably that of the Michigan Boulevard Garden apartments, erected by Mr. Julius Rosenwald for colored tenants, strikes have been called to force the owner to make the unnecessary installations. The diversity of procedure is, to say the least, odd. Further explanations are in order.

Unemployment in the building trades is greater, perhaps, than in any other line of business in Chicago. Under the circumstances it is desirable to reduce building costs as much as possible in order to encourage new projects. The installation of unnecessary equipment works in the opposite direction. If it increases the employment of plumbers, and we doubt that it does, it also contributes to the postponement of many undertakings. Any gain enjoyed by plumbers is at the expense of carpenters, masons, electrical workers, plasterers, lathers, and sheet metal workers among others. The practice is as unfair to these workmen as it is to building owners and apartment renters.—Editorial in Chicago Tribune, Nov. 11, 1930.

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION LEAGUE ELECTS OFFICERS FOR 1931

Francis M. Baldwin—President.
Robert C. Ostergren—Vice-President.
Howard L. Cheney—Vice-President.
Rudolph J. Nedved—Secretary.
Hubert Burnham—Treasurer.

The League organization is composed of nine members, of three representatives from the Illinois Society of Architects, Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., and the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club.

The Illinois Society of Architects is represented by Robert C. Ostergren, Leon E. Stanhope and Thomas E. Tallmadge; the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., by Howard L. Cheney, Pierre Blouke and Harry H. Bentley, and the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club by Francis M. Baldwin, Rudolph J. Nedved and T. M. Hofmeister, Jr.

THE SMALL HOUSE AGAIN

It was a sad day when the architect lost his grip on the small house. An indifference on the part of the architect, a legend that the small house is beneath the dignity of an organized office, and a noble experiment conceived and inspired by the Institute which took corporate form as a Small House Bureau contributed perhaps as much as anything to a situation which today is crying aloud for help. The legend swept the country with no denial from the architects. The noble experiment carried in its system all the congenital impediments of noble experiments in general. It is very questionable whether this propaganda has benefited architecture to any appreciable extent. It is absolutely certain that it has been no comfort to the young architect. Any policy or propaganda, no matter how inspired or colored by altruistic motives, that leaves out of consideration or denies the future of our young architects deserves condemnation, not merely because it deprives the young architect of his opportunity and birthright, but because it imperils the future of good architecture in our country. Certainly our older architects, the men who have arrived, the men whose conscience and vision direct the future of the Institute, are magnanimous enough to accept the youngster as the torch-bearer of the profession. Certainly they are generous enough to fortify him with a wholesome, comforting outlook instead of the present, pessimistic philosophy of despair and utter wretchedness. The present predicament calls for rectification. Perhaps the younger architects in their extremity will take the matter into their own hands, even at the risk of being called radicals. Any delay, we are sure, will only aggravate a condition now almost unbearable. The time to do it is—now.

No sacrifice is too great to restore the small house to where it rightfully belongs—in the young architect's office. And no price is too high to pay for its early consummation—not even the price of advertising.—Anton Scherrer in Indiana Construction Recorder.

REASONS FOR OWNING HOME

Herbert U. Nelson, Executive Secretary of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, has drawn up this list of things you get when you own your home and do not get when you rent. He says that he can add to the list, too, without thinking very hard. When you build or buy a home, you probably get a mortgage; but you also get the following:

Financial independence: More people have started on the road to financial independence, through home ownership, than in any other way.

Security: In times of stress the home is always something to fall back on.

A cash equity: A well-bought home is as good as a savings account.

Credit: Home owner can open charge accounts, etc., without difficulty.

Peace of mind: Based on the knowledge that provision has been made for your family.

Social background for your children.

Play place for your children without criticism from a landlord.

Development of responsibility; home owner feels more responsibility with regard to his dwelling and the neighborhood.

Interest in civic and municipal affairs.

Chance for individual expression: Exterior and interior of home can be made to express individuality of owner.

Permanent environment: Making neighbors and friends whose friendships last over a period of years.

Habit of thrift.

Healthful exercise: Pride of possession inspires work around home and garden, which is healthful for indoor business people.

Character development: Responsibilities of ownership in meeting emergencies and financial payments, and in making repairs, etc., develop business acumen and character.

Independence, other than financial: The home-owner can order his life as he wishes, with no restrictions or interference from a landlord.

Savings: Statistics prove that one can occupy and pay for a home at approximately the same cost as he can rent an apartment of the same size as the house. When he has completed his payments, he lives in the owned home much more cheaply than in rented quarters. Thus, over a period of years, he is money ahead by buying and occupying a home.

AGREE ON BOARD TO END BUILDING TRADE DISPUTES

After a year of negotiations, representatives of the building trades department of the American Federation of Labor and the National Association of Building Trades Employers signed an agreement in Washington November 10th for the creation of a national board of trades claims. The new board is designed to prevent strikes in jurisdictional trade disputes by means of arbitration.

The board, which will serve as a supreme court of appeals, will take office December 15, after the agreement has been submitted for the signatures of all individual international trade bodies, as well as employers' associations. The agreement was signed by M. J. McDonough, president, and W. J. Spencer, secretary, for the trades, and David T. Riffle, president, and E. M. Craig, secretary, for the contractors' association.

WHAT HO?

Are the Architects Getting Into Things?

Last week you read in these columns a letter from our President to the Mayor of Detroit. Sukert, with his characteristic energy for getting the architects into things, has fired letters, telegrams and what-nots at the new Mayor and, strange to say, replies have been immediately shot back, putting the architects on the spot.

Mayor Murphy, everyone will admit, has an opportunity in the present crisis which has been offered few Mayors in the history of Detroit. Moreover, from all indications Mr. Murphy intends to make the most of this opportunity.

We find that it is only necessary to let him know that the architects have ideas on unemployment and other mat-

ters of immediate importance and he immediately calls them in, holds conference with them and puts them to work.

The Mayor has been approached by our President on the subject of distributing city building jobs among the various offices instead of having them done by city departments. There are thousands of draftsmen out of employment and they are not of the type who would register with a charitable organization.

By parceling out the work to different architects the entire program could be carried forward immediately, giving employment when it is most needed.

One thing stands out in this matter and that is architects can be of service to their community. If they only show willingness they will be put to work.

While the meeting Tuesday had to do with labor questions and unemployment, the Mayor stated it was also for the purpose of formulating plans in which the architects were concerned. He stated that he wished them to use his office as a meeting ground to work out problems common to the city government and the building industry.—Bulletin of Michigan Society of Architects.

Dear Readers:—This refers to Detroit, Michigan—not Chicago, Illinois, so do not become unduly excited.—Ye Editor.

ARCHITECTURE HAS HUMAN INTEREST

The architect makes a good story. For instance Ruth Boyle's in *The American Architect*. "Perhaps because there is romance in the profession, and color, and human interest," says Richard Marr.

"I have in mind a great many architects, who are as mellow as old wine—as picturesque and interesting as a Rembrandt. I say a great many, not only in Pittsburgh and Ann Arbor.

"Recently I visited a night club. The proprietor proudly pointed out the many interesting guests. Over in a corner were a good looking, well-to-do elderly lady and her handsome young escort. The proprietor said, 'See that couple over there? He's her architect.' My companion queried, 'My gosh! is that what they call those fellows now?'"

"All nations have the governments they deserve, and the architects they deserve. The architect does not make the client; the client makes the architect. Encourage architects with taste and they will multiply. Discourage them, and only the rare, obstinate enthusiast for beauty and comeliness will survive. He does survive. The sacred lamp is always tended."—Arnold Bennett.

CHARLES BULFINCH, ARCHITECT OF CAPITOL, NOMINATED FOR HALL OF FAME

Charles Bulfinch, "the first American architect," and designer of the United States Capitol at Washington, has been nominated to the Hall of Fame by the board of directors of the American Institute of Architects. Summaries of the achievements of the early American architect have been sent to each elector of the Hall of Fame by the board.

"Few architects of today can boast of a list of such notable buildings as those designed by Bulfinch," says the board in its plea. It was stated that Bulfinch's record as a statesman during the formative period of Boston should be sufficient to elect the architect to the Hall of Fame as a statesman, if not as an architect.

Bulfinch was born in Bowdoin Square, Boston, August 8, 1763. He died April 15, 1844.

A graduate of Harvard, Bulfinch became interested in designing work while attending to improvements on his father's and friends' houses. Later he was able to make an extensive tour of Europe, studying the types of architecture used in the old cities.

While serving as a selectman in Boston, Bulfinch inaugurated street lighting, the system of co-education, establishment of a board of health, and a financial committee that brought about order and system in the method of collecting city taxes.

In 1817, after completing his second term on the board of select men, Bulfinch was appointed architect of the United States Capitol in Washington.

Among the many buildings designed by the architect are: the Connecticut State House in Hartford in 1792, the first theatre in Boston, and five institutional buildings, ten churches, three hospitals, seven schools, and seven commercial and bank buildings.

THE WASH TUB

Says—When the armistice was signed, business in this country took a strange turn. Big business talked about idealism. The word "service" was charged with a new meaning and significance. Business realized that the professions—the lawyer, banker, architect, engineer—had something to offer in conduct and ethics and ideals. Much of this was absorbed and as a result business became more professional. While all this was going on the architects renounced the practice of architecture as a profession and put it on what they were pleased to call a "business basis." A doctrine spread that the drafting room could be organized like a factory. An architectural society with the aid of an accountant spent much time in devising an accounting system, which, if it proved anything at all, proved that architecture couldn't support a wife, three kids and a Ford car. The Institute, not to be outdone, stepped into the arena with a Small House Bureau which, no matter how nobly inspired was inoculated with all the uglier aspects of mail order merchandising. In short, we had this anomaly: Business became charged with personality and the practice of architecture became something impersonal. Of course, all men did not subscribe to this tendency, and because they did not an acute situation was created. A group of business men were quick to seize upon the practice of architecture which, by the architect's own definition, had become a "business." They sensed the tremendous possibilities of an architecture devoid of personality. The age-long conception of architecture as an expression of personality had been removed and declared a heresy. The day of the drafting room conceived as a factory had arrived. It was in the hands of realtors, realty companies and gigantic building organizations, by invitation of the architects.

This sounds like a tragedy but it isn't. It's merely another problem—a problem to be inherited by the young architects. The young architects will solve it, only, when older, to make a mistake of their own. All of which makes the practice of architecture the funny thing it is.

THE COLORED GENTLEMAN IN THE KINDLING

The Bulletin need not dwell on the horrible mess into which our tax revaluation activities have placed us. The matter has been thoroughly thrashed out in the daily press and it is rumored that anywhere from 80,000 to 300,000 property owners in Cook County are fighting, in many instances, for the very existence of their property against confiscation. One particular phase of this situation has not been covered by the daily press and The Bulletin believes it should champion the cause of our Illinois architects by giving this publicity.

As an illustration: In one of our wealthy High School districts, outside of the corporate limits of Chicago, the tax payers have banded together in a powerful association, with competent attorneys, and have secured orders in the courts, enjoining the collection of taxes they claim excessive.

Our readers will ask, "Well, how does this concern architects?"

The Bulletin replies that architects are tax payers the same as any other class of human beings and, as such, they have the privilege of expressing their opinions. Now, in this particular school district, to add insult to injury, it is rumored that the School Board is about to engage an architect, reported to be an "expert", living in another state, doing business and paying taxes in another city.

People will say—"Well, why be narrow? Aren't there just as good architects in the East as well as in the Central West?" The answer is that living in the school district previously mentioned is a firm of architects whose standing in school design cannot be questioned and who has done millions of dollars worth of work throughout the United States. The members of this firm, as well as some twenty or more of Chicago's capable architects, are living in this school district, paying their share of the taxes and who will be called upon to vote the bonds to help furnish the fee to the aforesaid "expert"? from another city.

The Bulletin is informed that the School Board has turned a deaf ear to any plea that would furnish employment to architects in their own school district. It would probably be another wonderful thing for the community if they could let the contract for the building to some contractor from Providence, R. I., or San Diego, Calif., who would bring his entire staff of workmen with him.

The Bulletin is also advised that Cook County is faced with a tax bill in 1931, totaling five hundred forty-eight million dollars (\$548,640,248.00).

The annual payment on the National Debt of the United States is eight hundred million dollars (\$800,000,000.00).

Under the Young Plan for the payment of reparations through the Bank of International Settlements, Germany's annual installment is four hundred eighty-eight million dollars (\$488,000,000.00). This amount is presumed to represent "the maximum ability to pay" of all the agriculture, mines, industries, railways and steamship lines of the German Government. It is sixty million dollars (\$60,000,000.00) less than the tax bill of Cook County for 1931.

Five hundred forty-eight million dollars is two and one-half times the amount of Federal Income taxes paid by the entire State of Illinois for the fiscal year ending July 1, 1929. This tax totaled two hundred seventeen million dollars (\$217,401,425.49). It is twenty-four million dollars more than twice the appraised value of the elevated and surface railway lines in Chicago.

The Bulletin does not wish to be provincial, but if bonds are to be voted, if taxes are to be paid and if good old-fashioned American School and Village Boards are NOT to be replaced with Soviet Commissioners, the "powers that be" at the present time must awaken and realize that citizens and tax payers have "certain inalienable rights."



Registration and License Laws—A Discussion

Our own Emery Stanford Hall, F. A. I. A., has "made the line" in The Octagon for October. His discussion, "Registration and License Laws" on pages 12 and 13, handled with the skill of an expert, is well worth careful study.

"No matter how fine an addition to human comfort or pleasure a given service may be, unless there is a diffusion of knowledge, and information with respect to it, it will not itself become quickly accepted."—President Hoover.

Supervision Important

Many architects believe that supervision is more important to the house than good plans, for good plans alone do not insure good building. It is the least expensive part of the architect's service. He charges less for this than for making the plans and specifications, because it takes less time to do it.

Irving Fineman, novelist, has written a new book. It's all about Roger, the architect, and is called "The Pure Young Men." Roger dies long before the book is finished.

Ye Editor says—"Contrast this with the long-lived raconteurs on our Board of Directors."

"Consult your banker" is good policy for the man who doesn't want to lose money. But the man who wants to make money may get rheumatic advice from his banker. Louis Swift gave his employees advice based on a successful career of money-making. He told them to spend money, to owe money. We need both stop and go signals in our economic life. Men like Swift give us the green light; our bankers give us the red light.

"Buildings in our own age need no more look like machines than machines need look like buildings.

"Architecture was never old and never will be new if it is architecture.

"The gas station is the yellow dog of architecture and architects ought to do something about it.

"Next to farmers, architects can pull away from each other better than any other group."—Frank Lloyd Wright in M. S. A. Bulletin.

"There is no substitute for an architect."

"The present recession in business has produced a condition of public mind which I regard as favorable to America's future prosperity. It has developed waste consciousness. Our general business is showing more than seasonable improvement and we look for a slow but definite recovery."—C. A. Dunham, President C. A. Dunham Co., Chicago.

Oscar W. Rosenthal's statement that "the construction industry can only show less than two and a half per cent profit from eight years" took us by complete surprise. After listening to contractors for thirty years, we were convinced that all completed buildings represent a contractor's loss.—Anton Scherrer in Indiana Construction Recorder.

Walter W. Price, partner of Livingston & Co., New York brokers, published a statement a few weeks ago in which he recalled former depressions in this country.

Price was a runner in the Bank of New York when James D. Fish closed the doors of the Marine Bank. He saw the Grant & Ward failure that followed. He was in the brokerage business at the time of the Baring panic, which marked uniform prostration throughout the world. He lived through the dull period from 1893 to 1898, and the panics of 1901, 1907, 1909, and 1914, when the Stock Exchange was closed.

Yet in none of these years, nor 1920, does Price recall a state of mind "as hysterical and apprehensive as that which exists at the present time."

He thinks the mood of the people during the current depression is absurd and unjustified by actual economic conditions. He cites many statistical indexes, and denies that they justify the deep pessimism that prevails. He asks us to contrast our own state of mind with the spirit of the British people throughout fifteen years of overwhelming difficulties; with the buoyancy of the Frenchman; and with the fortitude of the German people who were reduced to the lowest point financially in their history as a nation.

Price continues: "I have seen Union Pacific in 1897 worth nothing and assessed for \$15 a share. I have seen the Atchison Railroad sold under foreclosure in 1895. I have witnessed the day when, by reason of bad legislation, the consequent endless chain of greenbacks developed, as the result of which the supply of gold in the United States Treasury had sunk below fifty millions of dollars and had to be replaced, through the direction of Grover Cleveland with the aid of J. P. Morgan, by the purchase of gold in Europe to the extent of one hundred millions of dollars which was paid for in 4% bonds issued by this government at par without commission.

"But throughout all these depressing periods, I have never witnessed a state of mind as exaggerated as that which now exists. Throughout the past, people have invariably been able to make a living by reason of enforced economics and in such periods, the saner and better qualities of mankind have asserted themselves and reflected a morale that was distinctly favorable as compared with that which exists at present."

Price suggests that we are acting somewhat like spoiled children—at least that is the way people are acting in Wall Street. Whether his picture represents sentiment in other parts of the country, the reader can judge. Unemployment, poor business, and declining profits are never pleasant. But business is still going on, the major part of our population is employed, and profits are being made, despite the weeping and wailing.

Let us have faith, pleads Price, in the ability of our people to make rapid recovery from this depression, as they have from situations unrecognizably severer.

IN MEMORIAM

Lorenz H. Heinz
October 20, 1930

William C. Jones
November 13, 1930