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Unification and the Convention

"Damnant quod non intelligunt"—Quintilian

That unification is "all right for the other fellow but not for me" seems to be the attitude of the American Institute of Architects as expressed by its 67th Annual Convention which was held in Milwaukee during the last week in May. Expanding classes of membership, which would have provided an inducement for all architects to become members of the Institute, were voted down decisively.

This action was forecast at the meeting of state architectural societies prior to the Convention when delegates of this group went on record as opposed to surrendering any states rights. The net result of these two actions leaves the Institute with its own restricted numbers and the provision that any unification through Institute auspices will henceforth have to be in the nature of a simple federation of organizations in place of the amalgamation previously visualized.

The State Societies Deliberate

The meeting of the state organizations convened on Monday morning and lasted continuously until midnight. An additional session was held the following day, together with several committee meetings. Representatives of seven of the thirteen existing state societies were present, namely: California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin. Of these seven, California, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin are at present state association members of the American Institute of Architects.

Robert Orr of Los Angeles outlined the proposed plan of unification. John Fugard of Chicago, chairman of the Institute's Committee on State Societies, explained the various provisions of the plan and answered questions relative to its merits and faults. Objections were raised by various delegates on the grounds that the unification program was based on absorption instead of affiliation, that liberty of action of the state societies was quite definitely curtailed, that the publication of state bulletins and handbooks was prohibited, and that the creation of a variety of membership classifications was not only undemocratic but would limit the effectiveness of the state organizations.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the present by-laws, if amended, would come closer to meeting the requirements of the state associations than the proposed by-laws printed in the April Octagon. The provisions of Chapter V of the present by-laws were carefully studied and a series of corrections and changes were made in order to simplify their intent and provide for greater freedom of action by the state organizations. The group then unanimously voted that these changes be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Institute and to the Convention, with the additional suggestion that the Board be authorized to repeal or edit any contrary or inconsistent provisions found elsewhere in the proposed or existing by-laws.

The Convention Convenes

After the customary felicitations and amenities were properly disposed of, the 67th Convention of the Institute settled down to its serious labors. Preliminary matters were rapidly disposed of and the controversial unification and by-law amendments came to the fore. Two entire sessions were wasted in an endeavor to develop sufficient organizing ability to function. The air of expectancy which had hovered over the Convention proved to be of prophetic import, for the crisis was precipitated by the opening resolution of the Board's program. This was a simple proposition to consolidate the Constitution and the By-Laws into one uniform instrument. Forty nays from the eastern seaboard, with New York as the bellwether, served to drown this proposal and cleared the way for the successive scuttling of all other by-law provisions. Even such innocuous changes as the miscellaneous "corrections as to form" were cast by the boards.

The struggle over policies ebbed and flowed like the Battle of Waterloo as "solidarity of organization," "letting down the bars," dilution of membership," "denial of our ethics," "necessity of unity," "gratuitous stultification" and other slogans or bugaboos were alternately paraded forth.

Confusion seemed to be worse confounded, time-consuming roll calls were a frequent torture, many delegates left the hall and the possibility of securing any kind of two-thirds vote appeared to be a remote possibility. But the inexorable wheel of fate finally brought the dinner hour. Then sobered reflections, induced by good food, inspired new hope and a firm resolve to redeem such an intolerable situation.

The Institute Decides

A series of motions as to the "sense of the meeting" finally clarified the atmosphere and paved the way for some badly needed action. Chapter IV of the new by-laws was deleted and the revisions proposed by the state societies substituted therefor. Each delegate held his breath as the tellers polled the Convention and what a sigh of relief there was when the necessary two-thirds vote was announced. It was felt at last that some sort of accomplishment might be possible. Additional motions then approved the suggestions, first, that all sections of the by-laws inconsistent with the new unification chapter be repealed and corrected by the Board of Directors; second, that the state societies be left free to publish any bulletins or handbooks which they might elect; and third, that hereafter the convention programs set aside one day for a pre-convention meeting of the state organizations.

Thus was a conclusion reached after four years of effort in the great unification movement. Who can say that this is the final solution? To quote from President Russell's address to the Convention: "If we have not yet realized a complete fulfillment of our aspirations and achievement of our ideals, we may derive much satisfaction from the degree of public recognition which is today accorded the architectural profession. How immeasurably greater would that recognition be if all the practicing architects in America could be brought to realize that it is to their interest

to have a national organization assume and maintain a leadership!"

Such an organization is inevitable. Will it be the Institute which is to become more truly representative of the entire architectural profession, or will the Institute's own "hygienic obsessions" eventually stimulate the creation of another national group?

High Lights and Low Lights

And so with these speculations on the future course of events, we close for the summer our story on the unification of the architectural profession. There remain, however, a few thoughts which might be worth while recording. These were engendered by the Convention's remarkable spectacle in contrasts which will long be remembered with conflicting emotions.

The complete control of state organizations repeatedly insisted upon during the past four years was reduced to the simplest of affiliations. The delegates refused to accept the new provisions making it possible for all registered architects to become members of the Institute, but in the next moment they proceeded to approve the election of draftsmen to corporate membership even in states where registration laws are in effect. The Convention directed that the long-desired revision of the by-laws be carried into effect and then rejected the accumulated experience and suggestions of years without an effort to separate the necessities from the argumentative.

It insists that one man devote himself year in and year out to keeping its finances on a sound basis and then denies him the tools which he needs to make this work more effective and less onerous. It elects men to office and then rudely annihilates the results of years of faithful service. It doesn't even take the trouble to read the recommendations of its servants.

Can the Institute continue to command the conscientious efforts of its faithful members, can it realize its full promise of service to the profession and society, can it grow in influence and size, or can it even hold its own if it continues to proceed on such a basis? Does not the vaunted code of professional conduct apply to these homely matters?

—Tirrell J. Ferrenz.

The Mentor—His Duties

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards in cooperation with the American Institute of Architects and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture suggest consideration of their ideas on the duties of the mentor. In offering this statement concerning the duties of the Mentor, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, recognizing the full responsibility of the Mentor toward the Candidates under his guidance, stresses the fact that this very responsibility makes of the position of Mentor one of honor in the profession today and of great influence on the profession of the future.

The Mentor is a member of the architectural profession qualified by experience and training to guide a Candidate for architectural practice during the period of his preparation or candidacy for a Standard Examination of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

The Mentor acts as adviser to the Candidate. Such an obligation can be properly discharged only by those members of the profession who have a genuine interest in assisting their younger fellows to a proper understanding of their high responsibilities as professional men. The discharge of this obligation should be neither burdensome nor technically difficult.

The Council calls upon the applicant to nominate a Mentor. In the choice of a Mentor the Candidate may, if he wishes, turn for guidance to the Committee on Education of the Chapter of the A. I. A., in whose territory he lives, or request advice directly of the National Council.

If the architect nominated as Mentor is satisfactory to the Council, the Council communicates with him. Upon the architect's statement of his willingness to act as Mentor to the applicant, the Council so advises the latter and his period of candidacy begins.

From then on, the relationship between the Mentor and the Candidate depends largely upon the personalities of these individuals, the responsibility resting upon the Mentor to guide his young friend in final preparation for practice. It is not essential that the Candidate be in the office of his Mentor. The Candidate may reside and be employed in a different city from that of his Mentor. But the relationship must be such as to permit the Mentor to fulfill his responsibilities to both the Council and the Candidate.

The Mentor is informed, by Circular No. 3, of the details of the examination for which the Candidate is preparing. It is in no sense the Mentor's province to examine the Candidate. On the other hand, the Mentor must exercise a general supervision over the Candidate's methods of study and the use of his time during the period of candidacy, for the Council does not permit a Candidate to present himself for examination until the Mentor certifies that in his judgment the Candidate is properly prepared.

The Mentor therefore sees to it that at some time during his candidacy the Candidate is employed in each of the several functions of an architect in the execution of real building problems, viz.: preparation of preliminary studies, general drawings, specifications, and details, and supervision of work in process of construction.

Generally speaking, it has been assumed that the period of candidacy would be a minimum of three years. It is possible that in special cases and for special reasons this period may be less, but it is more likely to be longer. This, however, is determined by the Council on the advice of the Mentor.

Said Retiring President Russell:

When you realize that less than fifteen per cent of the structures that are erected in this country are designed by men architecturally trained to design them, you can visualize the enormous field for future development. Add to this the advances that are being made in methods and materials for construction you can see how greatly this again enlarges the field. The full development will take years to accomplish; will require self-analysis on the part of each member of the profession, as well as a consecration to the cause of good architecture.

ANNUAL RENEWAL FEE of $1 for each registered architect in Illinois is due and payable before July 1, 1935. Restoring a license after August 1 costs $5.

The week beginning May 26 found assembled in Milwaukee the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, the State Societies of Architects, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, the Producers' Council, and the Sixty-Seventh Convention of the American Institute of Architects.

The dominant question before the State Societies and the Institute was Unification of the Profession. In this issue of the Bulletin Tirrell J. Ferrenz presents a lucid report of the proceedings and action taken on this much agitated subject.

Other subjects discussed in the A. I. A. Convention included publicizing the profession and regulation and taxation by the state of outdoor advertising. Federal building and federal aid to building reports by government officials were listened to with much interest.

The day at Kohler was the work of an alchemist: perfect weather, royal hospitality on the part of the entire Kohler family, instructive demonstrations in the production of plumbing goods and motors, model homes for workers' families, town planning, Waelderhaus. Most impressive was the evidence of a great employer living as a sympathetic helpful neighbor to factory workers dwelling in model homes set in well-kept gardens.

The profession owes its Milwaukee brothers and their ladies sincere thanks for the hospitality and excellent arrangements provided.

Federal Housing Administration through its Industries Division Director B. J. Flynn announces June 15 as National Better Housing Day to be observed throughout the country under the direction of 7400 Better Housing Committees. Breaking ground simultaneously for the erection of several thousand new homes built with federal insurance of mortgages under Title II of the FHA will take place on National Better Housing Day.

The plan generally followed is for a leading builder and contractor to build houses under the sponsorship of the Committee, the contractor doing the construction and arranging for the financing. The Committee checks the plans. Where possible the houses are furnished, thrown open for public inspection and sold to individual owners. The mortgages may extend over 20 years and cover 80 per cent of the property value.

Mr. Flynn says not enough new homes have been built in the last three years to replace those destroyed by fire alone.

From the Committee's Report

The Committee on Public Works, A. I. A., is investigating the methods actually in use in the government departments by which they obtain plans for buildings both through the agencies under their own control and by the employment of architects in private practice, and those investigations have been going forward as rapidly as might be during the past several months. It would be too much to say they have even yet been completed, but great progress has been made in it considering the meagerness of the machinery available for it. If anything further is to be accomplished, it must be carried forward with greater energy and with more continuous attention.

There is pending before Congress legislation intended to remove some of the purely artificial barriers which have hampered government agencies even in those cases where they have desired to make use of the service of architects on some basis other than that of a salaried employee. Conferences have been begun to explore the possibilities of separating the appropriations for the preparation of plans for buildings from the appropriations for the construction of the buildings themselves. All these, however, are matters of detail. It is the long range program for settling once for all the relationship between the architect and the government department on a mutually satisfactory basis that appears to me most urgent and most important.—*Francis P. Sullivan, Chairman, Committee on Public Works, A. I. A.*

Let us hope that the Federal Government will profit by the experience of the State of Nebraska. The good people of Nebraska, after building the finest State House in America, hired Augustus Vincent Tack to decorate the walls of the Governor's reception room. Tack is unaware of the flow of modern life, especially the life of the West. He painted a series of effete incongruities, silly symbols in the Byzantine style—dead, nursery conceptions supposed to represent Justice, Knowledge, Liberty, Labor and Love.

The people of Nebraska have appropriated funds for further decorations. Wiser this time, they are entertaining the idea of assigning the work to Thomas Benton, Grant Wood and John Curry, artists all three, and men who know the Middle West and understand its special requirements.

This commission, if approved, would bring together, in the happiest of circumstances, the three leading exponents of regional art in America; it would be a triumph for the State of Nebraska, and it would encourage the Public Works Branch of the Government in its efforts to put the right men in the right place.—*Thomas Craven.*

April and May Illinois Society Meetings

The Chicago Chapter's April meeting was devoted to color in architecture. The Illinois Society of Architects in their April 23 meeting discussed the theme, Interior Wall Treatment in Cabinet Woods and in Wallpapers, and here the question of color constantly recurred. The Society's three special speakers were John Henry Smith of J. H. Smith Veneers, Inc., devoting himself to wood; Samuel Schlesinger, President, Chicago Wallpaper Association, concentrating on the decorative possibilities of wallpaper; Harry Freund, specializing on acoustic wallpaper.

Mr. Smith began by telling of the difficulties today, through cost, of introducing fine woods in the time-tried manner of 5- and 7-ply veneers for panels and solid material for stiles and rails. The development he proposed to show the architects was the use of 150 well known and rare cabinet woods available in thin veneers mounted on paper and secured to the wall, ceiling or floor by means of a special waterproof paste, the veneer being 1/100th of an inch in thickness. This is known as Lastic Veneer.

But this was not all. He showed how the natural color of the wood could be bleached and then innoculated with any color desired to fit a scheme of decoration. The colors illustrated with wood samples were all pastel colors, Smith stating that there are 35 now available. Innoculating color through chemicals acting through the tree's roots has been practiced in Germany for some years. Only a percentage of the trees can be counted upon to react as desired. The new method advocated by Mr. Smith treats the cut log through impregnation. An economic result of using Lastic Veneer is a reduction to one-eighth the price of the older method of 5- to 7-ply veneers.

Mr. Schlesinger, carrying the manufacture of wallpaper back to ancient China and then jumping to about 1460 A. D., showed by sample a reproduction of wallpaper made soon after Gutenberg's printing press was in operation. From this paper on many samples were shown and history given of the development of the art down to the present day. Wallpapers costing from 10c to $12 a roll were shown. The two most expensive were imported Japanese papers having much handwork, the $12 paper being 3-ply, the designs of the lower showing through the intermediate and upper papers. Great advance in the manufacture of American wallpapers at the present time was registered in that watercolors were being dropped in favor of casein colors, the papers being made washable. The speaker showed versatility in design in the matter of building up wallpaper panels with borders and in the plain field mounting floral pieces made from other paper. Beautiful effects were achieved. Not forgetting the previous speaker's demonstration of wood veneers for walls, Mr. Schlesinger displayed wallpaper that looked as much like grown wood as the veneers did. The moral involved of using wood peelings, called veneers, or a paper print of such veneers, is one that the architect must settle for himself.

The brevity of Mr. Freund's talk was compensated for in the sensation of his product. The acoustic paper is not alone a surface paper. It includes the application on the wall of corrugated or, better, honeycombed paper board from $\frac{5}{16}$ths to 1¼ inch in thickness. This paper board comes in sheets 24 by 32 inches and is treated chemically to be fire-resistant. Any design wallpaper may be selected and before this is applied to the board, the paper is run through a perforating machine to make effective the honeycomb below for acoustic purposes. Wonders never end.

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The Illinois Society's monthly meeting occurring on May 21 concerned itself with "Consultation" and Unification of the Profession, and after an animated discussion on these questions, turned to listen to J. L. Stair, an illuminating engineer of note, who presented the newly invented metal surface "Lunax," whose luminosity as a reflecting surface exceeds that of any reflector on the market.

"Consultation" as here understood refers to the practice by a group of Philadelphia architects who had to do with smaller operations through Government aid bureaus, such as the HOLC, and FHA, and found in the beginning that architects were imposed upon for free advice. They then banded together into a group and fixed fees of $5.00 per consultation in the architect's office and $10.00 per consultation elsewhere. When the President presented this question for consideration and possible application in Chicago, John J. Davey maintained that building material concerns offered such advice gratis. He held out no hope for the architect. Architect Leon Urbain, functioning as inspector for the HOLC, explained that that Federal bureau locally now called in architects to measure and draft existing properties and write specifications on the HOLC standard for improvements. With that the architect's service ended and the bureau followed the letting of the work independent of the architect. HOLC in other sections of the country might follow different practices. He could not discuss FHA practices.

President Jensen introduced the subject of unification by saying ing that the national convention of state societies of architects meeting in Milwaukee on May 27, as well as the national A. I. A. Convention covering the following four days, would devote much time to the subject of unification of the profession and that discussion of this subject was timely. He called on John R. Fugard to explain the plan. Others who spoke on this subject were E. S. Hall, V. A. Mattesen, Elmer C. Jensen. Henry J. Schlacks and John J. Davey were appointed official observers to attend the state societies convention in Milwaukee. Besides these the President and other officers of the Illinois Society will attend this convention preceding that of the A. I. A.

New members elected are Messrs. Nichols and Newhouse.

Mr. Stair had with him many samples of "Lunax," the new metal reflecting surface; but before dwelling on this and its advantages he discussed, with samples, all materials used for reflectors for mechanical lighting from the earliest times. Lunax is a patented metal alloy applicable to aluminum by the Alzac process. It is a plating or bath, not effected by sulphurous fumes and many acids. It is produced, polished or etched and so stiffens the aluminum as to make it unbendable. While it is expensive, it is finding immediate application. An instance is the WGN Broadcasting Studio now nearing completion. Here all lamps are hidden behind glass bands. Back of the lamps occur reflectors usually in long, continuous bands following the glass bands on the surface. All these reflectors are of Lunax.

April and May Chapter Meetings

"What is architecture and what is color?" asked President Hall of the company assembled on April 9 at the Architects' Club for the monthly meeting of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. The answers to this question causing no acceleration of the bloodstream, the President introduced the special speakers on the program whose subject "Color in Architecture," while not producing any consensus of opinion did arouse a lively interest in certain phases of color treatment and color juxtaposition.

The stars were Edgar Miller, who is known as a fine artist, adept in many mediums—paint, glass, wood, metals, etc.; and Shepard Vogelgesang, with whom Chicago became acquainted in 1933 as the man responsible for the color of interiors in the Century of Progress and who in 1934 was general color dictator for both exterior and interior.

Mr. Vogelgesang opened the presentation, beginning with the three primary colors—red, yellow, blue—proceeding to mixtures and differentiating between advancing and receding colors. He conceded Mr. Pond's point that gold, silver and grey held a middle distance between advancing and receding colors. Mr. Vogelgesang's discourse appeared to have its basis in paint, particularly as applied to exteriors. He cited Century of Progress experience. The human factors—gaiety and sadness as well as warmth and coldness—were dwelt upon. He tried to lay down certain rules or guides in the use of color, ending with the admission that intuition in the use of color is all-important.

Mr. Miller could not subscribe to Vogelgesang's general rules. Precepts laid down for him in his art school had proved fallacious in the practice of his profession. He cited instances. Blue, considered a receding color and generally cool, could be found in art glass to be an advancing color juxtaposed with red where the red fell back. He could cite many instances in the work of Renaissance masters where these rules of advancing and receding colors were exactly reversed. He pleaded for trial—trial and failure—to learn what to do in each instance. To profit by the other fellow's failures was recommended to supplement one's own experiments. In his interesting explosion of theories, he did lay down a philosophy.

Vogelgesang returned to the fray, conceding much of Miller's philosophy, yet holding that certain elemental principles could not be violated. He closed with reading his reactions on viewing the "Forbidden City" in Peking, the buildings, their roofs, the surrounding habitations of the population, and the distant landscape; and finally, his visit to the monastery on Mount Athos in Greece, a mountain fastness restricted in area, whose court, with everything off axis, nevertheless impressed him through the unusual colors effectively used to create a marked religious and spiritual feeling.

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The work of the Pre-Convention Committee of the Chicago Chapter, undertaken immediately after the March meeting and continuing into April with weekly meetings and many additional meetings of sub-committees, deserves the respect and thanks of the entire profession in Illinois and the Middle West. Their efforts were gathered together in the form of resolutions and reports and forwarded to the A. I. A. authorities in Washington for presentation and discussion at the National Convention in Milwaukee.

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Architects' examinations for license in Illinois taking place at Urbana on May 14 where President E. S. Hall functioned as examiner, prevented him from attending the May meeting of the Chicago Chapter on that afternoon. Vice-President John O. Merrill presided, conducting a very condensed business meeting, for the evening was a joint one with the Producers Council Club of Chicago. For this joint dinner and meeting serious subjects were to be taboo.

At the business meeting Chairman W. J. Smith reported the work of the Pre-Convention Committee and asked for the Chapter's endorsement. This endorsement was readily granted. The gist of correspondence on another subject between Messrs. Burkhardt, William Stanley Parker and President Hall was given.

The cocktail hour had arrived. Fraternization with Producers Council members was in order and the whole company sat down to dinner. Enlivening the dinner came Alice Blue, radio singing artist, known to advertise Pluto Water. Miss Blue's songs and antics animated the diaphragm and digestive organs. Miss Blue is pretty and as elusive as Pluto Water.

Following the dinner came two male entertainers, one with "tricks and chatter;" the other with "A Trip to the Fourth Dimension." The tripper demonstrated the possession of a marvelous memory. A carefree evening was had by all.

University of Illinois Inaugurates New Approach in City Planning

Plans for a miniature City Planning Commission made up of advanced and superior students in sociology, political science, economics, landscape architecture, architecture, civil engineering, law and journalism have been announced by the Department of Landscape Architecture of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois. The "Commission" recently began its studies under this new "collaborative" plan under the direction of Stanley White, Professor of Landscape Architecture.

The problem which is to be dealt with by the "Commission" is the planning of a city of about 100,000 population, near the sea coast. The location of the proposed town has been determined and the character of the ground upon which it is to be placed so the planners will be faced by typical problems.

In actual experience, said Professor White, there is no such thing as a city planner. Lawyers, architects and even poets have tried to be in the past. A landscape architect cannot do it alone; he needs the advice of lawyers, sociologists, physicians, and people from various other walks of life. A man, to be successful at city planning, must either be very widely experienced, or else be very good at handling a corps of assistants.

One of the chief dangers ahead in modern city planning is that the technique of planning will become completely subservient to legal and administrative control. To make a city plan should be to make a constructive design for the development or re-development of a city or town. Of course every plan should be based on proper consideration of what is practical, and conform to regulations that are essential to carry it out; but merely to make a map for the purpose of graphically illustrating the requirements of a set of standardized rules is not to make a city plan.—*Thomas Adams.*

Among the plans for development of new towns and villages that have been prepared during the past thirty years are those for the capital cities of New Delhi, in India, and Canberra in Australia. Delhi is famous for its new public buildings, designed by Sir Edwin L. Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker between 1913 and the present time. The plan of Canberra was prepared by W. B. Griffin of Chicago in an international competition in 1913. The latter has been found to be faulty in practical application because its elaborate plan has not proved adaptable to the conditions under which the city has had to be developed.

—*Thomas Adams* in "Outline of Town and City Planning."

Bookplate Competition

The Library Committee of The Architects Club of Chicago invites competitive designs for its Club bookplate.

Competitors must be architectural designers and draftsmen residing within a radius of forty miles of Cook County Courthouse, Illinois.

Drawings must be 6½ by 8½ inches on white paper 10½ by 14 inches. The design shall be in black and white for reduction to 3¼ by 4¼ inches and reproduction from zinc etching. The design must incorporate "Ex Libris" and "The Architects Club of Chicago."

A symbol shall appear on the lower left corner of the sheet. No name or further identification shall appear. Accompanying the design there shall be a sealed white envelope enclosing name and address of competitor. On the envelope face shall appear the symbol and "Bookplate Competition, A. C. of C."

PRIZES

1st prize $50.00 2nd prize $25.00 3rd prize $10.00

Premiated designs become the property of The Architects Club of Chicago. All others may be reclaimed by the competitors.

The Jury of Award will be the undersigned Library Committee.

Drawings must be delivered at The Architects Club of Chicago, 1801 Prairie Avenue by 12 Noon Monday, July 15, 1935. Judgment by August 1, 1935.

Results will be published in the Monthly Bulletin of the Illinois Society of Architects.

The Committee reserves the right to exhibit all designs submitted.

Walter M. Buchroeder
George F. Fairbrass
Arthur Woltersdorf, Chairman
Library Committee, The Architects Club of Chicago

"Nation's Business" for January carries Stuart Fitzpatrick's "Housing in Great Britain." Mr. Fitzpatrick stresses the material aid to recovery in Britain given by *privately financed* housing projects.

The chief need for modern housing is in the rental ranges below $20. With the experience of the last few years, with the agencies and personnel now set up, and with the flexible provisions of the Works-Relief Act, there should be no excuse for not meeting this need."—*Coleman Woodbury.*

It used to be when a fellow missed a stage coach he waited a week for another. Nowadays he gets hopping mad if he misses one section of a revolving door.

Sullivan Ornamentation

Many comments have been made on what is universally known as Sullivan ornamentation—some literate, some illiterate.

It has been said that the inspiration for the system, as used by Louis Henri Sullivan, was derived from various sources, Eastern and Western. Some have said it came from Spain and her Moorish civilization; some, from the Near East and from India; some, that it came from patterns of snowflakes and from the various flora of America and Europe and clearly recognized as such, depending on the visual prejudice of the commentator. Some have said the leaves were thistle leaves, acanthus leaves, cabbage leaves, and so on. All of this is just plain nonsense as far as the origin goes and is easily proved as such by evidence at hand. Mr. Sullivan developed, at the close of his life, a complete and fascinating illustrated thesis on the ornament, the original drawings with text now permanently housed in the Burnham Library at the Art Institute of Chicago, where all may see them and enjoy their marvelous quality. While these drawings only approximate in brilliancy the drawings made in earlier years and now mostly lost, they set forth the theory very well.

Perhaps the text is occasionally over wordy and passages introduced here and there explaining, or rather disclosing, philosophical and spiritual elements the existence of which is a purely personal question of interpretation. Knowledge of these elements is not vital to common sense every-day enjoyment of the work by the average observer any more than in the more abstract elements in music. It has been said that the book is misnamed in being called a "System of Architectural Ornamentation." This is true as I look at it. The word "architectural" should not have appeared.

The chief point of interest in the system as a whole is that it lends itself to decorative design in all the materials used in building construction and decoration. It has been effectively and interestingly used not only on exteriors and interiors, but in designing rugs, draperies, jewelry, glass, pottery, and so on. The system's most engaging and fascinating quality is its flexibility and plasticity —but it is not an open sesame to the thoughtless—far from it. Hence the myriad caricatures in practically every town in the United States of any appreciable size. A vogue? Yes! But a most discouraging and witless vogue.

The real source of the ornament, one may say its inspiration, was Gray's Botany and little else. That this is true is well authenticated by his well-thumbed copy of this splendid book showing his careful, accurate and deeply sympathetic studies in plant morphology. There is also in existence his original sketch book wherein he noted down the various elements of the origins of plant life and their final development into complete flower forms. This was a fascinating world to him as he often declared and on which he never tired talking to those who were interested. He was especially fascinated by leaf growth and the differentiations and permutations of forms within a single genus of plant, as well as the extraordinary and well nigh incredible ways in which leaves grow from the parent stems.

To imagine that Sullivan drew in a haphazard way without real knowledge of what he was doing is an error. That he played with existing forms at the beginning of his career and introduced truly organic variations of his own fancy all through his life is, naturally enough, quite true as any careful observer may see. The simplicity and directness of some of his early work may be seen in some work done by him as early as 1881.

It has been said that his ideas were second hand and that another was responsible for his initiation into the field of ornament as an enrichment of the basic character of his structures. That is not so. It has been said that the enrichment of the Ryerson building at the northeast corner of Adams and Wabash was derived in all its essential elements from another building in Chicago. It may be said in contradiction to this that the Ryerson building ornament is a lineal descendent of the ornament in a building by Adler & Sullivan at 212 West Monroe street, which was erected at least two years before the other building was thought of.

Much of this early work in ornament, while it has a certain naive felicity and interest, was rather stiff and formal, but the fundamental basis is there, in reality, for all the ornamental work he ever did. While this early work was sharp and angular in many ways, it was, nevertheless, vertebrate as some of his much later work was not; as witness a lot of the over-exuberent evolutions and involutions of some of the work from 1910 and on wherein the vertebrate system seems lost, in many cases, in a medley of entangled foliations.

But, taking it all in all, it was only over-joyous at times, and while occasionally it was not as well related to the structure as it might have been, it is nevertheless the work of a virtuoso and as such, it is, at times, as in music, over-rich—over-ripe. It was very worth while and brought real and enthusiastic pleasure to many people here and abroad the world. It is not difficult for the thoughtful to design on the basis Sullivan laid down and in scores of patterns yet unborn, it may continue to its destined end, as all things of a like nature ultimately end, and make room for the new. Machine shops are perhaps symbolic enough for our age; let it go at that. In the future, decorative architectural decorations or symbols will suggest themselves, inevitably, as in the past ages, and in the hands of capable men and women will enrich and dramatize in a lyrical manner the Fine Art output of the nation.

—*George G. Elmslie.*

Architect Otis Rises to Say

To members of the Architectural Profession:

Continuance of the depression causes many architects to think radically and to speculate on changes that may be made by them to improve their status. There seems to exist a blind hope that somehow a Moses will shortly arise and lead the profession into the promised land; but as to the path to be taken, there is little crystallization of thought at present.

Architecture, like other aspects of the social and economic order, must bow to the forces which surround it. These forces tend toward more scientific functioning along existing lines, preserving fundamental conditions and effecting power to put these concepts in force. The profession of architecture alone can do little to stimulate the general economic recovery on which a revival of activity is bound to be predicated, but it can cooperate to do its part. More specifically, however, the opportunity of the moment lies in bettering the organization within the profession so as to take advantage of future improved conditions, if, as, and when, they arrive.

The first prerequisite of any such plan implies the bestowal of more power and authority, than has heretofore existed, in the hands of the official heads of the profession. This concentration of power is what manifests itself in the national codes. The present hostility among architects to a code, or anything like it, is unprogressive and lamentable. If the profession is to progress, it must bow to the trends of the day and regulate itself. It must provide a potent authority in the hands of its elected leaders sufficient to enable them effectively to carry out the expressed wishes of the electorate.

Such authority can best and probably only arise if several of the leading firms in such a city as Chicago, for example, agree to start the ball rolling and virtually endow the Illinois Society, or the American Institute, or some other instrument, with the necessary backing. Membership in such a group might mean that each member would put up a bond guaranteeing adherence to rules laid down, with severe penalties for infractions.

Pressure to join in with such a group might be brought through a number of channels, but chiefly through the aid of those who serve or work with the profession such as material men, draftsmen, blueprinters, contractors, and others who at the instigation of the leading group might make service to non-subscribers distinctly disadvantageous. The leading firms in any metropolitan center could, beyond a doubt, accomplish something of this sort. At any rate, they could make the start, and give to a movement the necessary initial impetus which, while seemingly difficult, is by no means beyond the scope of conjectural possibility.

Once such an authority is constituted, the chance of benefits (as well as abuses) at once increases. On the whole, however, anyone with some faith in humanity will hazard the chance that benefits will predominate.

Speculate, if you will for a minute, on what some of these benefits might be. In the past, a rather cantankerous individualism on the part of most architects has made professional ethics a mere travesty. Numberless articles have been written and a vast amount has been said and is still continuing to be said, all "ad nauseam" and to no purpose. In the matter of fees, for example, hypocrisy and the evasion of the ethical code are so obviously of frequent occurrence as to constitute almost the order of the day. Cut throat competition prevails on a broad and wide scale to the detriment of all concerned. How different it would be were a central society to lay down a schedule of fees and then to audit with a firm and vigorous hand, the books, contracts, gross revenue, and disbursements of every architectural office? An architect might then be chosen more on professional merit and less because his fees were cheaper. Any number of abuses, impositions and malodorous practices might be cited and many good correctives have been suggested, but to what avail? Let it be thus flatly stated—*the profession must have a centralized authority, sufficiently powerful and sufficiently positive to impose on any and every architect at all times, not only the rules laid down by the majority but also any punitive measures necessary to carry out the same.*

Notice also the status of young architects and draftsmen. Centralized authority might improve their lot. It might also improve the present spectacle of schools of architecture training students along many lines not really appreciated or wanted by the profession as a whole. Witness, for example, the license examination in Illinois, in which the graduate student finds most of his broad training in architectural history, design, and the humanities in general, to be of little use. Either the schools should cease teaching as they do, or the profession should recognize the value of their teaching. This could probably be largely remedied by a strong centralized control.

Resulting indirectly from fee cutting, is the pay and worth of draftsmen. The past order wherein the draftsman was the true protegé and beneficiary of his employer has given way to a system of exploitation. It is characteristic of the whole condition of society, the country over, that no longer can enterprising youth seek new frontiers of unopened opportunities wherein he can build up his own business. The old frontiers are gone and the rising architect must build virtually, and with few exceptions, on the foundation of some older organization. Thus the condition of the draftsman becomes more static than formerly. Time and again heads of drafting rooms have deplored the low order of service existing with their men, often the remnants of a more progressive group who have turned to other fields, and yet what else is to be expected? What incentive leads the average draftsman to become proficient and to apply himself to his work? His lot is to be paid the lowest that a well combed market will possibly allow and to be laid off immediately his usefulness ceases. If the profession ever expects loyal and competent draftsmen in its following, this condition will have to cease. In its place every drafting room should be allowed a fixed portion of the profits (as well as the losses) of the firm, to be divided among the men as later decided, but the status should be closely akin to a partnership basis. There is no reason either why the draftsmen should not have an organization of their own similar to the architects, and it is perfectly conceivable that such an organization might work in conjunction with the architects to their mutual benefit, particularly in the matter of enforcing the rules. An architectural office bereft of all capable draftsmen might, indeed, present a rather dismal spectacle.

Space does not permit at the present writing more detailed analyses of the possibilities arising from concentrated authority. That far-reaching results would obtain, is scarcely to be doubted. On the other hand, concentration of authority is merely a means to an end and there is always implied a latent will to change and a genuine desire to try something new. If the profession is to continue as it has in the past, steeped in greed and hypocrisy, and in the hands of rather incapable, hide-bound oldsters, it can count on treading a path of retrogression. If, on the other hand, it is preparing to meet the challenge of newer, technical, economic and organizational problems, which unquestionably lie before it, and if it is to dominate in true reality all matters pertaining to building, then the profession will do well to put its house in order at once in an attempt to meet the future with some better semblance of accord and understanding.—*Samuel S. Otis.*

DEAN EDGELL, replying to the above, says, *Dear Mr. Otis:* Your letter I should describe as peppy rather than peppery. I do not know if I have the confidence in central authority that you have. I am getting a little fed up with the central authority vested in the Federal Government. I am even more fed up, however, with the profession of architecture not having done something in the present crisis. In Heaven's name, let us get started and, if your letter will provoke a start, more power to your arm!

Sincerely yours,

G. H. Edgell, Dean
School of Architecture, Harvard University.

The Bulletin takes no responsibility for the opinions of contributors.—Editor.

Forest Products Laboratory Demonstrates

Forest Products Laboratory of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Madison, Wis., has built a demonstration house of four rooms, bath and utility room, erected complete by seven men in twenty-one working hours, illustrating the use of pre-fabricated structural wood parts. Unit panels all of the same width are approximately 4 feet wide and from 8 to 14 feet long. The "stressed covering" principle common in aircraft construction to secure strength and lightness, is utilized. Plywood sheets form in- and outside panel faces, glued to structural framing, thus becoming a definite part of the load carrying system. The depth of the joists in floor panels is thus reduced from 10 to 6 inches.

Roof panels are of the same construction as the floor, but made longer to provide overhang at eaves. Wall panels are 1⅞ inches thick over plywood. Upright mullions with double grooves cover inner and outer plywood, thus securing easy fitting and tight joints. All panels are insulated against sound as well as heat and cold and all necessary electric wiring and outlets for servicing the house are built into the units.

Forest Products Laboratory claims that wood products must play a vital part in any true national housing program and that its new construction is a preparedness measure to fit wood for the greater service that lies ahead.

Juan C. Cebrian, Spanish architect long resident in California, donor through twenty years to the Ryerson and Burnham libraries of the Art Institute of Chicago, died February 20, aged 86. He enriched these libraries with some six hundred volumes and nearly three hundred photographs on the art of Spain. The unusually fine photographs of architectural monuments in Cordova, Granada and Seville in these libraries are his gifts.

Famous Archaeologist Urges Near East Countries to Follow Syria

Beirut, Syria, April 11, 1935.

"It will be difficult to reconstruct the ancient history of the Near East with the present policies of the various independent governments," says Sir William M. Flinders-Petrie, renowned English archaeologist. After sixty years of continuous research, he is confident that the beginnings of world civilization lie buried in the Near and Middle East, probably within or near the "fertile crescent." This is the area that begins at the Persian Gulf, bends northwest along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the great plain containing Aleppo, and then turns southwest along the Mediterranean coast.

So long as Iraq, Persia, Turkey, Palestine and Egypt insist on keeping the larger part of the "finds" and are unwilling to share them with the museums and archaeological expeditions of the West that finance the digging, there will be little consistent work accomplished, says Sir William. These governments are unable to finance the work themselves, nor have they the trained archaeologists necessary. Only in Syria has he found the government willing to cooperate and eager to forward the work of excavation by allowing the expeditions to take from the country a fair half of what is brought to the surface.

In commenting on the immediate object of his tour of northern Syria, Professor Petrie said that his eight years of digging at Gaza, Palestine, had convinced him that the Amorite civilization which he found there had its antecedents in the Eleutheros plain near Aleppo, Syria; that the observations now made confirm this conviction. The racial characteristics of the ancient Hittite and Assyrian peoples who lived in this great plain are visible today in their descendants marked by the strongly aquiline nose, unusually pointed head well flattened at the back. The great similarity of the pottery is another convincing fact pointing to the well recognized theory that early migrations followed a southwesterly direction.

Sir William gives no credence to the new hypothesis that a great prehistoric continent existed in the Pacific; he believes no scientific archaeologist will be misled by such fantastic claims, many expeditions now working in southern Pacific Islands for evidence notwithstanding.

At 81, Sir William is in good health and unusually active. He is assisted in all his researches by Lady Petrie who, in fact, superintends the actual digging. For more than half a century Professor Petrie has been recognized as an authority in matters archaeological. His books and research have contributed immeasurably to the great body of historical data brought to light during that time.

There is a great deal of very interesting architectural material in Syria. Most architects know something of the fine old examples of the Greek and Roman period, but I have been more interested in the Phoenician, Crusader and late modern buildings that are now springing up on all sides. I am enclosing a print of a Phoenician tomb which is said to be that of King Hiram, who is so well known to all Free-Masons. It probably dates from the late Phoenician period and, of course, has more archaeological interest than architectural.

Beirut is changing its achitecture rapidly and there is not much left which is older than 75 years, for since the war everything has been modernized. However, there is much old Arabic work of great beauty and interest in Aleppo and Damascus and several of the smaller cities, which is well worth recording and I shall hope to send you some brief manuscripts as rapidly as I have time to put them together.

Just now I am working on the plans of a new dormitory for the American Junior College for Girls which we hope to build this summer. But unfortunately the same conditions seem to persist in Syria that architects know so well in America, namely, that there is but $1000 for every $1500 worth of building—*Howell Taylor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Syria.*

Every land has grown its own civilization, and has shown a surprising resistance to change. Egypt resisted, for thousands of years, obvious improvements used in other lands. Crete might import a few things by trade, but was entirely unchanged by Egyptian design or ideas. Syria was an Egyptian parade ground for centuries, yet adopted nothing from Egypt. Further afield, a few Egyptian products passed as rarities by trade, but not a shadow of Egyptian influence appears. Even in the greatest examples of influence, those of the Greek and Roman conquests of the world, there is scarcely any country that did not lose the effects of those dominations in as few centuries as it had taken to acquire them. We may see in the Russians of today how rapidly the civilization imposed on them two centuries ago has vanished. Nothing beyond what is self-developed in the brain of a race is permanently gained, or will survive the changes of time.—*W. M. Flinders Petrie.*

What is called "zoning" was used by the Romans to keep industries out of central areas, to prevent projection of buildings into streets, and to limit the height of buildings. The last were limited first to 70 feet by Augustus but later to 60 feet by Trajan and, subsequently by Nero, to twice the street width.—*Thomas Adams.*

The new structural forms are not mere dreams of an inventive mind. Biologists point out that species in an incipient form have always existed. The mammal is represented in the reptile and the reptile in the amphibian. The same principle of evolution is evident in the arts of man. A close student of patent reports asserts that no man has ever invented anything. And so it is with new architectural forms. Paraboloidal towers and domes antedate the historic architecture of India. A similar form carries the dome of the baptistry of Florence. A more perfectly formed type of the same, cut by four inclined planes, supports the dome of the Pantheon in Paris. These are masonry; but on the outskirts of Vienna the same forms are adapted to modern plan-requirements and built of concrete. In France, a new cathedral has been built recently in which columns and beams are omitted and the new structural forms started from the foundations.—*John T. Vawter.*

Genesis of the Washington Plan

Two influences lay behind the design as a composition: first, the influence of the rectangular system of planning used in laying out land in America; second, the influence of European tradition in town making, as carried out in France and other countries, with its tendencies toward radial forms. The European influence was introduced not only by L'Enfant—with his French training—but also by Jefferson, who had studied European cities and brought back to President Washington plans of Karlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpellier, Marseilles, Turin and Milan.

The first foundation of the plan seems to have been the right-angled streets and blocks. On this L'Enfant superimposed his diagonals, and skilfully adjusted them to the configuration of the land. He developed them as approaches to strategic sites already selected for monumental buildings, and grouped his radials and connections so as to form a unified system. The effect was to subordinate completely the rectangular to the radial part of the plan. Jefferson suggested regulations for limiting heights of buildings. One of the early requirements was that houses in central areas be built of brick or stone, the walls to be 30 feet high and built parallel to the line of the street. The plan remains as the one monumental example of comprehensive planning in the United States.—*Thomas Adams* in "Outline of Town and City Planning."

Lewis Mumford interprets American civilization through its architecture. Our modern architecture, from the buildings of the old Chicago World's Fair up to Radio City, he calls the architecture of our Imperial Age and damns roundly both the age and the buildings.

—*Ludwig Lewisohn.*

On December 6, 1836, eleven architects met in New York and organized the American Institution of Architects. Ellery K. Taylor, architect, of Philadelphia, suggests that the centennial be celebrated in 1936.