

Live Oaks and Perennial Problems A Tale of the Deep South

The thought first came to me as we stood on the veranda at "Oak Alley." This fine old Louisiana plantation home had been restored to its former grandeur by our good friend Richard Koch. The perfume of flowers was in the air and the soft shadows of late afternoon played about the tall pink columns which surrounded the house on four sides. Before us extended the magnificent alley of huge live oaks from which this temple of the Greek Revival received its name. On the lawn, white cloths were being spread on long tables, thus indicating the imminence of welcome refreshments. The situation was inspiring.

For three humid days the Convention had pondered over the perennial problems of the profession—membership, unification, competitions, small houses. It all seemed so futile—speeches, talks and reports and then more of the same. Could nothing ever be accomplished without years of discussion? And then the majesty of the grand old oaks loomed up before us. They had not reached their magnificence in a day. For over one hundred years by imperceptible degrees they had steadily increased in stature and beauty.

Thus it is with the Institute. Founded eighty-one years ago, it has intrenched itself in national life and written a history that is inspiring. It is still growing. The Seventieth Convention at New Orleans had the thrill of welcoming to its fellowship the Seventieth Chapter of the Institute—Arizona, in the land of sunshine, cowboys and Indians—and real architects. Yes, it is still growing, but many think its growth is too reserved, its leadership too timid, its action too ineffective and its possibilities for service too closely circumscribed.

Pirate's Alley

So we came to New Orleans to see what could be done about it. Here is a city of contrasts, a city of phenomenal achievements that is both old and new. The new city has generally a mediocrity of appearance, but the charm of the old French Quarter—the Vieux Carré—has not been exaggerated. The fine planning and workmanship that went into its creation, the balconies of iron lace and the interesting facades of Pirate's Alley cannot fail to delight the architect's eye. One is puzzled by the neglect and lack of preservation which is so evident but this only seems to match the overall decadence of life that exists throughout this area.

When it comes to the friendly spirit of the city, there is only praise to be said. We were steeped in hospitality, made to eat and drink everything and almost smothered in delicious seafood. The pompano en papillote, crayfish bisque, sazeracs and ramos are never to be forgotten but deliver us please from the concoction that masquerades under the name of coffee.

Workin' on the Levee

With this background for a setting, and the convention

of the Southern Beauticians under the same roof as a counter attraction, the A.I.A. swung into action with the address by Charles Maginnis, a masterpiece of charm and erudition. Here is a man to grace the President's office!

The comprehensive report of the Housing Committee proved to be the one matter of greatest general interest and brought forth a discussion which occupied an entire day. Resolutions were approved on the subject of (1) proper fees to be paid architects on housing projects under the program of the U. S. Housing Authority, and (2) maintenance of housing standards under the FHA program.

Various industrialists and financiers who took part in the discussion agreed that the architect is the key man in any program for supplying sound design and proper supervision in the small house field.

Labor is awakening to the opportunity for creating jobs for itself, according to James G. Caffrey of Cleveland, who spoke most encouragingly of the Build America Movement which was inaugurated in that city early in this year and is spreading to building trades councils throughout the country.

Essential features of the Movement are aggressive action by organized labor to sell the country on home building, dispelling the belief that costs are unduly high and a pledge on the part of labor organizations to stabilize labor costs for stated periods of time. This is action of a most significant nature and we give it our earnest benediction.

A Going Plan

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, which is also the governing body of the HOLC, early discovered in its operations that poor design and shoddy building was a large factor in the losses sustained by home owners in the depression. The Board determined to guard against possible losses in the future from this source. Pierre Blouke, Architect Adviser of the HOLC, described the plan set up by the Board to make available sound designs to borrowers from its 4000 member building and loan associations.

This program applies to homes costing under \$7500 and utilizes the services of local architects, acquainted with local conditions, to provide plans of well-designed homes. It coordinates the services of the architect, the builder and the lending institution. The prospective borrower obtains through the building and loan Association sound plans, the services of a reputable builder and competent architectural supervision. The architect is paid for his supervision of construction and he recovers many times the reduced fee for his design services through repetition in the use of drawings.

This program is being actively promoted by Chapter Members in forty important areas. Construction is actually going ahead in many parts of the country. It is interesting to note that in some cases clients have examined the plans available to them and finally decided to go ahead on a full fee basis.

Architectural Services to be Utilized

Operations of the U. S. Housing Authority were outlined by A. C. Shire, Acting Director, Technical Division. He assured the architects that every effort was being made to decentralize the operations of that body and that local architects are being used entirely for all slum-clearance projects with a minimum of rules and regulations governing the erection of such housing.

The Federal Housing Administration has deliberately attempted to make the public realize the value of architectural services according to Miles L. Colean, Deputy Administrator. While they are unable to require that architectural services must be used in connection with homes on which mortgages are guaranteed by them, every inducement is offered to encourage the use of such services.

Holy Hope and High Humility

The nation now needs between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 new homes and has enough private unemployed savings on hand to finance them, according to Ormond E. Loomis, Assistant to the Chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. The largest field for home construction is in the smaller cities and the most needed type of dwelling is the detached one-family house. The filling of these housing needs would create a market of between six and eight billion dollars for labor, materials and technical services. In addition, he estimated that repair work now required on 5,000,000 existing dwellings would amount to approximately two billion more dollars.

Accumulated shortages and necessary reconditioning if promptly attended to would quickly restore employment but, in addition to this need, there is a currently developing need for new housing which arises out of normal obsolescence, normal increases in population and a steady increase in the number of urban families. Well considered estimates place this annual need at approximately 600,000 dwelling units. The actual demand will depend, of course, upon family incomes and the kinds and costs of houses which can be provided.

Of the number of houses to be built in any one year in the future, it is probable that about two-thirds will be single or detached houses for the occupancy of a single family, about 10% will be built for the use of two families and the remainder will be largely multi-family.

The Committee Proposes

The problem which the Housing Committee is considering is how to supply proper drawings, specifications and supervision to the great majority of people in America who want a small home and who should have satisfactory architectural service at a price they can afford to pay.

The Committee's program follows closely the plan developed by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board as previously outlined. It aims, however, to limit such modified service as may be developed to the operations in which no architects are now serving the public and to those areas where architects are rarely called upon for service on the small house.

The program further contemplates that the Producers' Council with whom the Committee has been cooperating will assume the responsibility of a program of education, not a selfish one to sell their own material, but a program on a very high ethical plane, to sell well-designed, economically planned, supervised small homes. This program would be carried out in collaboration with the Structural Service Committee of The Institute.

Inquiries resulting from this publicity campaign would

clear back through the architects participating.

It is realized that distribution of plans is a difficult problem but can be aided by an agreement with local material supply dealers by which arrangements are made for proper drawings, specifications and supervision to be provided to all those consumers who come to them with inquiries.

The Convention approved the further study and development of this program and the Board immediately thereafter, by a happy act, selected William Stanley Parker as chairman of a special committee to draw up provisions for administration of the plan.

The Moving Hand Writes

With housing safely tucked under the covers, the Convention moved forward to what President Maginnis designated as its most significant action. It is not often that the Institute is presented with such a thorough, frank and skillful analysis of its organizational shortcomings as the Report of the Committee on State Organization. Under the able leadership of John R. Fugard, this Committee has performed a noteworthy service that beggars adequate appraisal.

Study and discussion of the report showed clearly the growing sentiment in favor of a more complete unification of the architectural profession. The challenge for constructive action was accepted and the Convention's imprimature was stamped on the proposition that the Institute "should aim to increase its prestige by so changing its form as to represent, organize and unite in fellowship all qualified architects."

To assure the effective promotion of this ideal, there was created the office of "State Association Director," whose status is to be similar to that of Regional Director, whose term of office is to be two years, who is to represent the state associations on the Board and who is to be nominated by such associations. Under this mandate, Leigh Hunt of Milwaukee was appointed by the Board to serve during the interim prior to the next Convention.

Can this be "but another futile gesture," as one delegate characterized it? Does the Board possess the will to carry out wholeheartedly the intent of this pronouncement? The Committee on State Organization recognizes the dangers of delay. The surge for real unification must find adequate outlet.

Magna Cum Laude

And so we pass to the crowning event of the Convention,—the annual award of honors. On Carl Milles of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, was bestowed the Fine Arts Medal and he in turn graciously presented to the Institute his bronze of Jonah and the Whale. To Joseph H. Dulles Allen of Philadelphia went the Craftsmanship Medal for his record in the field of ceramics as exemplified by the Bok Memorial Tower and the Pan-American Union. Honorary Membership was conferred upon Rufus C. Dawes of Chicago and Fellowship upon our own John Leonard Hamilton, and most fittingly also on Koch and Curtis of Louisiana, among a long list of other distinguished architects.

To most of us, it seemed that the real highlight of the Convention was the tribute to the genius of Paul Philippe Cret. The classic dignity of the Delgado Museum of Art, with its balconies and grand staircase, formed a brilliant setting for the inspiring presentation of the Gold Medal of the Institute. Ralph Walker's appreciation was brief and

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Mass Production

The last fifty years have witnessed a phenomenal change in American industrial and economic life. Royal luxuries of a century ago are common necessities today; comforts which would otherwise be beyond all possibility of attainment are ours, because of the general movement toward production in large volume—"mass" production.

Large scale output makes possible more efficient utilization of economic resources and reduces waste, resulting in greater national wealth and a higher standard of living. The lower costs of high-volume operations make possible a reduction in prices of consumption goods. Lowered prices arouse "latent" demand for products which otherwise could never be marketed. This cycle continues—lower costs, lower prices, increased demand, higher output with still lower costs, and so on, increasing productivity at each turn of the wheel. Since we can consume only what we produce, unless we deplete our economic capital, greater productivity is essential to the raising of the national standard of living.

The principle of large scale operations has been applied effectively in many industries—motor cars, food products, textiles and steel. All have benefited from the application through more continuous employment, higher real incomes, and more satisfactory working conditions. Such a process, however, has been distinctly absent from the specific field of building construction, although its effects have been noted in various fabricating operations in the production of building materials. The advantages to be gained by the use of this principle are worth a bit of thought on the part of those engaged in, or concerned with, building construction.

The fact that mass production in building construction results in lower cost has been amply demonstrated by a number of house building organizations. Outstanding in this respect are two cases: one in England, one in this country. In both cases, continuity of employment and savings in material purchases and consumption were outstanding results; and reports would indicate that the savings,

passed on to home buyers, had the effect of increasing demand and volume of building construction.

This picture is not Utopian; it has been done, and can be done, on a national scale. Economies in transportation and production costs of materials, more rapid inventory turnovers and more effective use of presently available resources can do much to reduce material costs on the job. Steadier employment, even at lower rates of pay, will result in higher annual incomes to labor, more satisfied workmen, and more efficient work. More continuous operation will spread overhead costs throughout the industry, reducing still further the cost of construction, awakening still more the latent demand for housing.

The question is simply whether material suppliers, labor organizations, and contractors are willing to agree on terms that will open the way for progress. If these various factions in the building construction industry ever become sufficiently well integrated to give a fair trial to the principle of large scale production—reducing costs, increasing demand, and assuring labor of more continuous employment and a higher annual wage—they can count on the complete and enthusiastic cooperation of architects.

On May 12 Chairman Thielbar of the Chicago Building Code Commission submitted to the sub-committee of the Chicago Common Council the final draft of the remaining forty-two sections of the proposed code. The submission was followed by dismissal of the Commission with possibility of further consultation.

For four years the Commission discussed and labored, and the preceding commission put in seven years on the same task. So eleven years have been devoted to this work by unpaid architects and engineers. And has Chicago now a modern, scientific, workable building code? No indeed. The aldermen are wrangling, listening to labor union and building material representatives who seek an edge giving their interests some special advantage in the wording of the code.

The Building Code is a technical document for administration by the staff of the Chicago Building Department. The aldermen should put faith in the knowledge and judgment of the Commission appointed by the mayor for this specific purpose. The aldermen are not engineers with knowledge to intelligently weigh the document's merits. They do not understand it.

In the meantime new materials, inventions and processes available to other cities are not applicable in Chicago. And we say Chicago is progressive and a leader. What irony!

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well chosen.

In the words of William Emerson's citation: "Architect-Teacher-Scholar. Increasingly honored by a professional recognition that distinguishes him even among his peers. He has brought to the land of his adoption the sound sense, the clear logic, the discriminating taste that belong to the classic tradition of an older civilization. Thus armed he has met and mastered with outstanding skill those problems that are inherent in new materials in a new world. As his designs are acclaimed for their beauty, their order and character, so is he loved for his modesty and humor."

To the question once asked him: "What in your mind is the biggest problem facing the architectural profession?"—Paul Cret answered, "To do good work."

—Tirrell J. Ferrenz, A.I.A., I.S.A.

April and May Illinois Society Meetings

The regular April meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects held at the Architects' Club fell on the 26th. It was billed as a smoker, and while the attendance was not large, the meeting was very successful from the point of view of drawing from the attendants a general discussion airing their views on the trials and difficulties of the practice of architecture under present conditions. The majority took part in the discussion and the meeting was not adjourned until about 10:30 o'clock.

Secretary Fairclough, returned after a month of surf board riding at Waikiki, possesses the figure of Adonis and the tan of a Kanaka. He read Leo Weissenborn's minutes of the March meeting. President Jensen introduced Mr. Kristen, a new member. A report on I. K. Pond's condition, in St. Luke's Hospital after an accident, pronounced a slow and steady improvement.

The aim of the ornamental iron men's union to achieve an increase in pay of from 10c to 12½c per hour at this time was reported and its good judgment questioned.

Emery Stanford Hall spoke on the architects' licensing law in Illinois and its enforcement. Mr. Hall then turned to the A. I. A. Convention in New Orleans, which he had attended. He pronounced it the most efficient Convention that the Institute had held in recent years. The subjects uppermost had been housing, education, unification.

Mr. Hall described graphically the presentation in the Museum of Art, New Orleans, of a gold medal to Paul Cret and pronounced it most impressive, with Dean Emerson of M. I. T. presiding. The picture was that of a monumental stairway with Dean Emerson and President Maginnis at the head and Cret at the bottom of the stairs, approaching to the heights. He spoke of the Fellowship awards and then dwelt upon the discussion of housing led by Walter R. McCornack, calling him a statesman and the discussion practical and progressive, with the solution most promising.

In the matter of architectural education, Mr. Hall reported progress in standardization and registration by the schools. Unification was a subject that was left for John Fugard, Chairman, Committee on State Organization, to report on in detail at the next meeting. Mr. Ludlow's report for the Public Information Committee revealed an amount of effective work that was surprising. Miles Colean of FHA had spoken well and lucidly.

The one subject that aroused hot discussion in the Convention was that of Public Works, presented by Francis P. Sullivan. The element that wanted the Federal Government, as well as local and state governments, to have all architectural work done by open public competition put up a fight which was not conclusive.

On April 18, the day before the A. I. A. Convention, the N. C. A. R. B. adopted a syllabus presented by Herbert Hewitt of Illinois.

Of the excursions made under the auspices of New Orleans architects to old sugar plantations and estates, Mr. Hall pronounced Oak Alley, now restored, most impressive. These plantations are located along the Mississippi River with a view from the house of the river in most cases. Some of those visited were in a sad state of decay.

After the talk of the Convention, Robert Franklin raised the subject of the small house in the new Chicago Building Ordinance, which is having such a difficult birth. Certain aldermen are in favor of ignoring fire limits and permitting frame houses to be built in sections where incombustible walls for homes are a legal necessity. In his discussion he brought out the fact that Chicago's population, in the area bounded by 39th Street, North Avenue, and Kedzie Avenue on the west, had been reduced since 1930 by 280,000 souls.

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The subject will not down. What subject? Housing the 72% of this country's families. Their annual income is under \$2000 and they have children—often many children. Alderman William A. Rowan of Chicago's 10th Ward lying at the south end of the city, within whose precincts are the steel mills employing thousands of laborers, had instituted in April a general talk fest, a symposium on housing, which carried over ten days in the Common Council Chamber in the City Hall.

The Illinois Society of Architects' May meeting was deferred from the 24th to the 31st to make possible the coming to the meeting of Alderman Rowan, to have him tell the architects his conclusions regarding the necessity for housing the families of the thousands of steel workers in this end of Chicago. He was accompanied

by Alderman Arthur G. Lindell of the 9th Ward, also in that end of town and with a similar working population.

Thirty men attended the dinner and meeting and after Secretary Fairclough's minutes of the April meeting, President Jensen reported his correspondence with a prominent building material concern which had conspicuously displayed its signs offering free architectural and engineering service, presumably where their material would be purchased. The concern, replying to the President's letter, agreed to stop the practice, which the President held was taking the bread from the mouths of these two classes of professional men. They would at once sweep away or paint out all these signs and thanked the President for his letter.

Aggressive action by a committee of the Society on infractions of the Illinois Architects' License Law was promised.

The President in introducing Alderman Rowan said that Chicago's blighted areas were increasing; that reclamation was a necessity which could no longer be delayed; that the long discussed subway was beginning to loom in the distance; and that Alderman Rowan in introducing the housing conference in the City Hall had made an important and valuable contribution to the housing program of the city.

Alderman Rowan in introducing his talk told the company that he himself had been a steel worker, working ten hours a day and serving every second Sunday in the mills as well; that now the eight hour day was universal and men and women had more leisure; that the population in his Ward was made up largely of foreign born people who had become citizens, established families, and had a tradition that leisure hours were best spent in working out of doors in a garden and letting the children play in open spaces close to home; that tenements did not appeal and that lack of decent accommodations with outdoor elbow room was driving this population beyond the limits of the city and in his Ward across the state line into Indiana. The city on the whole was losing population.

To build vast tenements such as the Government has recently completed was no solution for his population. Slum clearance must inevitably be coupled with new building to house those driven from their old shelters. A land use survey was a necessity and he was happy to report that Engineer Young of the Chicago Plan Commission was undertaking such a survey. Re-zoning was an inevitable concomitant.

There was also the question of low-cost building, and possibly changing the fire limits to achieve low cost. But the discussion of this change he would leave to Alderman Lindell, since Lindell was on the Building Code Sub-Committee of the Council. Alderman Rowan's constituents must have houses costing under \$4000, with land, the land sufficiently large to permit gardening. He thought it inconceivable that building technicians were unable to produce such results. Many had moved from the city to outlying districts, having succumbed to the blandishments of real estate sub-dividers, only to wake up to the fact that fire and police protection, water, streets, sidewalks, street lighting and cleaning were not provided in any degree comparable with that of the City of Chicago. He had heard that in Indianapolis a pact exists between labor, material men, finance, and builders to build cheap homes and that the results are successful. He closed on the note "Rebuild Chicago."

Alderman Lindell was introduced and spoke briefly on the Council Sub-Committee's efforts to frame and modify building code clauses offering concessions in requirements for the building of five room frame houses. Main arteries, however, where incombustible walls are called for, should not be encroached upon by new frame houses.

John R. Fugard had two subjects that he was to touch upon. One, unification of the architectural profession, as voiced by the recent New Orleans Convention. This subject was deferred, Mr. Fugard referring his hearers to the June "Octagon" for a complete report. He spoke on housing, however, and having been successively chairman of the Metropolitan Housing Council and Chicago Housing Authority, spoke with much knowledge of the subject. The Council, he held, had done immeasurable good and he had nothing but praise for Alderman Rowan's efforts in making audible the dire needs of the working population in the city through the housing congress in the City Hall. Salvaging old buildings for rehabilitation he thought should be undertaken as a demonstration by taking first one complete city block and wrecking or modifying old structures to make them fit the times and conditions. Building, he thought, must be done by private industry and not by government. Government housing as so far carried out was interesting and valuable, but would prove in time that much that was necessary was overlooked and much unnecessary incorporated.

President Jensen desired Henry K. Holsman to head a committee to make a new study of rehabilitation. Mr. Holsman replied that he had in the past five years made such studies and had valuable information, but leadership—inspirational leadership—such as goes into the building of a world's fair, is necessary to achieve in this field and is more important than any world's fair.

April and May Chapter Meetings

Three professional meetings for architects within three weeks—the FHA meeting at the Palmer House, the Professor Asplund dinner and meeting at the Palmer House, and the Chapter's regular monthly meeting—proved a strain on Chicago Chapter members as demonstrated by the attendance at the April 12 monthly meeting. Important business, however, had to be transacted before the national Convention at New Orleans April 19. With those in attendance and proxies given by others, a quorum was reached.

Immediately following the dinner, Ralph Winters, a guest from Crawfordsville, Indiana, was introduced. With a few graceful words, Mr. Winter replied, telling his hearers that Crawfordsville, known to fame as the home of Lew Wallace where he wrote "Ben Hur," was settled in 1816 and now has a population of about 10,000. The late Senator Lane who nominated Abraham Lincoln for President in the Wigwam at Chicago in 1860 built a home in Crawfordsville, now in possession of the city, which is the mecca of visitors.

After the briefed minutes of the March meeting were given by the Secretary, the President took up consideration of changes in by-laws left undiscussed in the March meeting, which the A. I. A. proposed the Chapters make before the A. I. A. Convention in New Orleans. These were passed.

A letter from Manager Frederick Maynard of the Architects' Club of Chicago was read wherein he requested the Chapter to provide tablets at each of the Chapter's portraits of distinguished architects hanging in the building, giving biographical outlines, outstanding buildings, etc. pertaining to each subject. The President appointed Lawrence Perkins chairman of a committee to do this work.

The President took up the subject of housing and called upon Carl Heimbrodt for a resumé of the latest thoughts on the small house problem as it will be presented at the Convention under the leadership of Walter H. McCornack. Mr. Heimbrodt stated that in this matter architects and the Producers' Council would cooperate.

Arthur Woltersdorf was called upon for a report on the status of the suggested reorganization of the A. I. A. to include state societies and associations. Elsewhere in this issue housing and reorganization are dwelt upon in connection with the New Orleans Convention.

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Man seeks variety—a change—and so the May 10 meeting of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. was held, not in its usual place, but at Normandy House, a restaurant occupying an old dwelling at the corner of Chicago Avenue and Tower Court. This meeting was arranged to be a joint meeting of the architects and the local chapter of the American Institute of Decorators. This Institute of Decorators is a comparatively new national organization. They dwell upon the A. I. D. in contra-distinction to or in alignment with the A. I. A.

The second floor of the house has been revamped into a club room and here about eighty architects and decorators met for a 6:30 dinner. Striking was the fact that all the architects were men and the overwhelming majority of the decorators were women. However, cocktails were a preliminary, introduced to establish the entente cordiale and at the dinner table it was planned that an architect should be flanked, if possible, by a decorator of the fair sex.

Following a good dinner, the chairmen—John Merrill for the architects and Marc Nielsen for the decorators—started operations on a subject they called "double crossics." This turned the chairmen into interlocutors, as they alternated in putting preconceived questions to the decorators and the architects present, all of whose names they had before them on the dinner cards which the diners were required to sign.

Someone must have poured over two glossaries, one of decorators' terms, the other of architectural terms. The decor ladies were given simple architectural terms to define, where they displayed abysmal ignorance, while the architects' answers to decorators' terms, particularly to kinds and weaves of fabrics and the many French variations of the terms "bureau" and "dresser" and the like, exposed an ignorance on the part of the architects that was appalling. One question, "What style of interior design incorporates table legs suffering from elephantiasis?" caused hesitation. There seemed to be some doubt whether the answer was Jacobean or Elizabethan. Dunce caps were circulated and worn. Such questions put to

the ladies of decor as soffit, reveal, plinth, entasis, abacus, muntin, and mullion, left them in a confused daze, and it required Leo Weissenborn's answer to the question, "What is necking in architecture?" to dissipate the thought on the part of the ladies that it was a parlor game. When the interlocutor asked Mable Schamberg the definition of a hip roof, she referred the question to Mae West.

Biedermeier, whose name seems to be popular with the decorators, was not entirely unfamiliar to the architects.

Anyway, a good time was had by all. The assembly broke up about 10 P. M.

Annual Planning Conference at U. of I.

"City planning has passed the point where it is considered desirable chiefly from an aesthetic and social standpoint. Now the control of community growth is recognized as a vital factor in reducing cost of home construction, in creating sounder mortgage security, in reducing cost of civic supervision, and in benefiting builder, buyer and banker."

Thus spoke Seward H. Mott, Chief of Land Planning Section, FHA, and this was the theme song of perhaps twenty addresses by other experts in city planning and zoning.

The Conference was held at Urbana on May 13 and 14 and was attended by one hundred and fifty men and women.

Harland Bartholomew of St. Louis said that the development of the automobile has resulted in two paths which communities must choose from. The two paths are: "A straggling, scattered, disorganized, decentralized and costly form of development," or "growth so controlled and so directed by careful and firm planning and zoning measures that an orderly, efficient, healthful and satisfactory city structure is produced."

Robert Kingery, who had the opening address, stated that the Illinois State Planning Commission would not plan a park, for example, nor in any way take work away from city planners and architects, but that the Illinois State Planning Commission did aim to encourage a nine-point program. This program includes: Promotion of zoning laws; increased acreage in state parks; preservation of historic sites; county forest preserves; water pollution abatement; highway planning; military reserves; public welfare institutions; game refuges.

William Lister, a Chicago attorney, cited court decisions on zoning. His "Sparks from the Anvil" showed many decisions directly contradictory. He urged a general revision of zoning laws. The meeting passed Professor Schaeffer's resolution that a committee of five men from the Conference be appointed to recommend how the Illinois State Zoning Law should be stiffened.

Dean Rexford Newcomb of the College of Fine and Applied Arts welcomed the conference to Urbana.

The Face of the City

The faces of buildings which are turned toward the world are obviously of interest to the public, and all citizens have a property in them. The spectator is, in fact, part owner. No man builds to himself alone. General interest and intelligent appreciation of public arts are a necessity of civilization. Civic alertness, honest pride, or firm protest are not matters of taste for a few; they are essential activities of the urban mind. In cities, buildings take the place of fields, trees and hedgerows. Buildings are an artificial form of nature. We have a right to consideration and some politeness in buildings. Our cities do not wholly belong to profit lords, railway companies and advertisers.

—W. R. Lethaby in the "London Mercury."

To make circus life safer and more pleasant for an African gorilla, its cage is being air-conditioned to resemble the climate of the Belgian Congo.

Mahogany is being bleached to a cream color to meet a vogue for light colored woods in furniture.

Asplund Tells of Sweden's Housing

The members of three local architectural bodies—the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., the Illinois Society of Architects, and the Metropolitan Housing Council—were invited to learn about “Housing Standards in Sweden” as presented by E. G. Asplund, Professor of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, and internationally known expert on housing, at the Palmer House on Tuesday evening, April 5. Interest in his subject was such that one hundred members and guests came to hear what there was to learn from the sane and solid Swedes.

All of the speakers who preceded Prof. Asplund dwelt upon the facility of Swedish architects in combining the old and the new, of preserving the traditions of their forefathers in solving today's problems. Prof. Asplund's slides, however, showed that the solution of low-cost housing in Sweden has been found in reinforced concrete and glass with their resultant uniformity of type which is independent of race and geographical location.

Professor Asplund presented the facts as found in the City of Stockholm without glorifying what his country had done to solve the need for small, low-cost dwelling units. He began with the important question: “What do the people earn?” Sweden is known, he said, for its middle way; there are not many rich people and but few who are very poor. There are also very few unemployed. Interesting statistics were given on 312,000 cases investigated in 1936. Of these, 280,000 families had an annual income of \$1280 or less; 30,000 had an income between \$1280 and \$2500; and only 2,000 families had an income of more than \$6500. The average income for male workers in Stockholm during the past eighteen years is about \$920.

“How much of the income can be spent for housing?” was the second question. At present 25% of the income of those who have a family goes for rent. The Swedes have a proverb which directs them to live beneath their income, but Prof. Asplund showed that the people have been forced to house themselves above their income, since one-fourth of the income is too much to spend on rent. A family can live “below” its means only by being satisfied with less space than it needs.

In 1934 average rental with central heating was \$7.50 per 10 square feet per year. For older houses without central heating, the figures were \$7.00 for 10 square feet per year. The rent for a 1-room and kitchen apartment averages \$260 per year. These rentals are such that great numbers of office employees having salaries below \$620 per year cannot have their own dwellings.

A workingman's family with an income of \$700 to \$900 must pay 32% to 35% of its income for rent. This necessitates the curtailment of other living expenses and has resulted in a declining birthrate. A 2-room and kitchen apartment with an average rental of \$390 is within the reach of only those families who have an income of \$1500. An apartment of this size in a new building is beyond the means of the average workingman in Stockholm. He must rent in unmodern buildings without central heat and the comprehensive tearing down of old buildings has contributed to the scarcity of tenement units of this type.

A surprising statement was that in Stockholm more than half the adult population is single, which presents still another housing problem since the great number of solitary, self-supporting men and women find it increasingly difficult to secure dwelling places.

Technical standards for tenements are considered good, said Prof. Asplund, and there has been a decrease in overcrowding of about 20%, although this is largely caused by the diminishing birthrate. Overcrowded conditions are still deplorable, particularly in single rooms and in 1-room and kitchen dwellings. In one section of town the density was five to six persons per room.

Prof. Asplund outlined the programs of the municipalities and the state for raising housing standards. More than 30,000 flats have been provided in Stockholm with the assistance of the government. Loans to private corporations at low interest rates encourage private enterprise, but the authorities have found it necessary to control such enterprises by limiting rents and insisting upon the acceptance of tenants recommended by the authorities. Five thousand

flats of this kind were built from 1929 to 1933, which is about one-fourth of the housing constructed during that period. Rents in these dwellings are about 23% lower than houses in the open market. The government is striving to bring down the rentals, especially for people of small means. The parliament established a house loan fund for rent allowances, not to be classed as poor relief, for the purpose of housing people now living where population density is greatest.

Plans are now ready for rebuilding the dense areas, but these can only be carried out gradually as the owners of the houses tear down existing buildings. A public utility company has been formed with the assistance of the municipality to provide new housing in the old part of Stockholm. The city loaned this company \$30,000—the loan carrying no interest obligation if the company is not financially successful.

Government standard for sunlight in rooms has resulted in four and five story buildings having a width of 22 feet. Prof. Asplund regretted that government housing standards are so rigid that the solution is fixed before the architect comes to the scene.

—Dorothy G. Wendt.

On Ornament

Ornament is the flower of architecture, blooming only after root, stalk, leaf, are fully developed, and blooming not at all if the plant is not vigorous enough to sustain it. For ornament represents excess of life, the fullness of beauty—the spilled wine from an overbrimming cup. Ornament is related to structure much as song is related to speech, as dancing is related to walking. Watch a child walking along the street: presently the tide of life becomes too strong for that manner of locomotion and the walk becomes a hippity-hop; the hippity-hop becomes a dance. This dance, expressing as it does excess of life, is ornament. The self-styled “functionalists” banish ornament from their buildings because they have so little of this joy of life that they do not want to dance or sing. Were that lyric theme in them, it would express itself in ornament, as it did in the work of the father of them all, Louis Sullivan.

Today we are not *en rapport*; city dwellers that we are, we know corn only in the can, and tobacco in cigarettes—our divorce from nature has become so complete that we no longer dwell in the old-time intimate communion with her.

The imposition of the ornamental mode of a single individual upon an entire architecture would be unfortunate. The history of ornament shows it to be a product of many individuals—an evolutionary process in which the law of the survival of the fittest appeared to operate.

—Claude Bragdon in “The Architect's World.”

Washington Monument Sinking

Professor Dimitri P. Krynine, Research Associate in Soil Mechanics at Yale University, has just made a diagnosis of soil conditions under the Washington Monument and under Pisa's famous leaning tower. The professor made his report at a clinic at the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences at New Haven. The Washington Monument, he says, is sinking and Pisa's tower is swaying. The former he considers safe though afflicted with a slight foot disorder. A layer of clay 10 to 40 feet thick far below the monument is compressing like a sponge and the monument is settling slowly.

At Pisa the results of his studies seem almost incredible. “During September 1934 the tower moved north; but at the end of that month turned around and moved south. In January the movement to the north started again and the tower also moved eastward.”

Luminous stucco that glitters in the sun is being used on some buildings for the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco.

Lighting

Fundamentally lighting must be designed with the rest of the building. Its final effect is not so much the problem of the illuminating engineer but the architect's own responsibility.

Practically all training in the design of architecture, sculpture, and painting has been carried on under the conditions of natural illumination. These conditions are almost impossible to produce with artificial light short of the flexibility provided by stage lighting equipment. Assuming that artificial lighting were able to produce the precise conditions of natural illumination, which it cannot efficiently, the designer might continue in his present methods comfortably, but the inefficient and exorbitant use of power would be as anachronistic and wasteful as the erection of an all steel building designed to simulate stone architecture.

As long as artificial lighting does not create nature's conditions upon which the design is usually based, the appearance is bound to be altered and the composition will change accordingly. It comes down to the choice of accepting bad design under artificial illumination, discounting artificial lighting in our plan, or designing for both natural and artificial illumination. Certainly the last is the only tenet to follow.

Centuries of tradition have accustomed us to judging the visual arts as they appear under natural light. Inasmuch as our sense of taste has been developed under these conditions, what should be the basis for judgment under artificial illumination where the field of visual expression is so much broader? Some will question its offering greater opportunity for expression because present-day equipment does not permit the simulation of natural effects. It is obviously necessary to judge artificial lighting, even as it can be produced today, from a different point of view than the traditional measuring stick applied to the visual arts designed alone for natural lighting. From a practical point of view, with the small electric lamp as the unit of expression, puny and microscopic compared to the sun, we are forced to see beauty abstractly and not as nature shows it. The standards are similar to those of the architect designing a modern building devoid of traditional elements, but insofar as the human being responds to the beauty of visual effects developed under natural light most completely, so the function of lighting, even though abstractly expressed, is to satisfy these conditions.

The ability to emphasize or suppress architectural form, to enforce composition, to lend mystery and scale, to play with color, and beyond all these to be able to alter the appearance of essentially static elements, appeals to any architect. These are obvious possibilities of artificial illumination, but they will seldom be realized until the architect accepts the added complications in his problem and changes his approach to design.

From one point of view, lighting can be thought of as an architectural material which is used in a building to help it serve various functions. Lighting has certain characteristics which determine its use and design like other materials, such as brick, steel, stone, and concrete. It should be designed by the architect as definitely as when he uses these materials.

From another point of view, lighting is somewhat like furniture and decoration that can be added after the building has been designed. It is something the engineer and the fixture manufacturer can supply when conditions have been previously determined. If this latter point of view persists, lighting practice is bound to continue in the same channel. Difficult as it may be to visualize lighting as a structural element in architectural design, this consideration must eventually exist as a conviction in the mind of the architect.

Lighting is compared to new materials which are now available for architectural design only to support the point that it should be designed with the building, and that since the development of the electric lamp, new uses beyond that of giving visibility where and when natural light does not exist, have become apparent. The design of lighting is determined by three things: Function, Characteristics, Technical Developments.

—S. R. McCandless, A. I. A., Yale University.

Only one Roman gateway in Britain has remained in continuous use for traffic down to the present—the Newport Arch at Lincoln.

A Diagnosis

It is thrilling to think that our generation is actually participating in one of those periods of transition we were accustomed to read about in student days. Our curiosity about those critical moments of history got little enough satisfaction from the cold narratives of Fergusson, which always left the impression that a traditional architectural system, finding itself in a predicament, meekly acknowledged its invalidity and gave up the ghost.

Of course we know better. In the pride of his nervous anatomies, the Gothist of the 12th Century must have developed a fine contempt for the Romanesque ponderosities and have expressed it, too, in a considerable literature which is unhappily lost to us. One senses the stubbornness of that phlegmatic resistance and doubts not at all there was disagreeable talk about archaeology, for even then it must have been a blistering word. But when, in the inexorable law of life, the mediaeval pride was humbled in its turn, and the world took to ways of larger promise, the change was neither wholly gain nor wholly loss.

Out of such events some excellence usually survived, some gift to add to the sum of human achievement, often enough a living principle which may serve the world again. And so, in this attitude of reserve, we may welcome the stimulation of the new movement with all the challenge of its bitter rationality. That there is refreshment in it we have already noted in the clarity, vitality and independence it has brought to all design, even as we remark that, unlike Europe, we have not as yet yielded to its complete implications. Whether it holds the gift of completely alienating the past still remains to be proven. We have not yet seen the convincing evidence and it is always to be remembered that an artistic philosophy must propitiate the eye no less than the reason.

This may take a little time. The human spirit has a way of finding its own satisfactions and logic does not figure too largely in the matter. It may well be that the modern thesis is overbold. For instance, it comes to one that, of the new materials with which its philosophy is identified, it is perhaps the single weakness of steel that, with all its thrilling capacities, it cannot make for interesting ruins. It is a point not to be overlooked, for even ruins have their eloquent and venerable importance. Always it has been architecture which has given us testimony of the ages. Some one has said—"Show me the buildings of a people, and I will tell you its history."

If we are content to render our own civilization in an architecture dependent upon steel, a reasonably remote posterity can have no visual knowledge of us, which might be a pity. In this there may be hint that the historic principle of structure is not quite discredited and that walls will still be built against which our posterity may bark its shins. For it is worthy of remark that it is the walls and not the space which have so intelligently survived. Perhaps it may not be too hazardous a prediction that the great and significant buildings of the generations will be built in the future, as they have been always built, in terms of articulated and enduring masonry.

—From President Maginnis' Address before the 70th A. I. A. Convention.

MacMonnies' Columbian Fountain to Live Again

Prompted by a resolution offered in the U. S. Congress to reproduce in marble the Columbian fountain of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, in order to perpetuate for future generations the "spirit of triumphant America," the A. I. A. Convention at New Orleans passed a resolution endorsing the resolution before Congress that this great work of MacMonnies be perpetuated.

German technicians report success in creating a heat-proof wool out of quartz.

The swastika design is found in metal-work in royal tombs of 2000 B. C. in Turkey.

The force of gravity varies in different parts of the world, increasing in general towards the poles.

Architect Complains to Chicago Daily News

Thirty years of architectural practice lead me to the conclusion that high (?) costs are due primarily (and largely) to the uneconomic processes of labor and uses of materials forced on us by building code restrictions and by the edicts of labor unions.

Today's issue of the News carries an item on the four chapters of the new code that are to be submitted to the council tomorrow and brings the shocking news that uses of new materials and new forms of old materials are to be ruthlessly ruled out.

This ruling out of good materials is of course due solely to politics, as no one of the council committee is competent to render judgment on a technical matter. These materials and forms have been and are now being used in many other localities that are just as anxious to assure their citizens of good, economic construction as is the Chicago council.

The output of labor is rigidly controlled by those unions whose members handle the more expensive units of construction and, of course, this restrictive action slows up the following trades and increases overhead.

This restriction of materials keeps out of the Chicago market many manufactured items that cannot be duplicated in Chicago because of patents and that are not permitted to be handled by union labor because they are made by nonunion men.

The architectural press studiously avoids these phases of high costs in their discussions of building cost and never have I seen in print any discussion of the situation in Chicago or elsewhere. The facts, however, are known to all those in the architectural profession. I admit the subject is hot and that is why I know my small voice cannot help the situation one bit, but on the other hand, if I should press discussion on the phase of costs it is certain that I would have difficulty on work under construction.

I do know, however, that adequate proof of these statements of mine can be adduced by the state's attorney should he care to stick his neck out.

The practice of architecture can be quite disheartening under the heavy hands of all those, from Mr. Big on down, who like to say how and where and when a building dollar may be spent so they may profit most, rather than the owner of the funds used to pay the bills.

Editor's Note: The writer of this letter is a man of high standing in Chicago building circles and is in a position to know whereof he speaks. His name is signed to his letter, with some other courteous personal comments we omit, but to publish his identity would ruin his own business without doing any good to the public. It is tragic that this country is in such a state that men of established position do not dare speak their minds publicly, but this, as Grover Cleveland said, is a condition and not a theory.

Readers may be assured that the letter is genuine and from a responsible source.

—Royal F. Munger, *Financial Editor.*

Radicals Like Modern Art

Modern composers and modern painting are liked by persons who think well of themselves, Dr. A. H. Maslow of Brooklyn College holds. Such persons, with self-confidence and self-esteem, differ from those with more self-consciousness, shyness, and feeling of inferiority in many other way, he said.

The high-ego persons are rebels and radicals, Dr. Maslow discovered from a personality survey. They have no religious feeling. They are likely to lack sex morality and romantic love. The more diffident low-ego individuals are more likely to be religious, conventional, conservative, polite, good humored, and romantic rather than sexual.

The high-ego person can make friends easily and is socially well poised, but some prefer their own company. The low-ego person appears to lack sense of humor, but that is only because their humor is whimsical and fantastic and delicate rather than lusty.

The high-ego person has a free personality. The low-ego person is strongly socialized and tends to be strongly inhibited and tense.

Public Housing

The May "Architectural Forum" in discussing Public Housing says "the housing show has just begun." It traces its evolution in this country from a Philadelphia poorhouse of 1773 through New York state's 1926 limited dividend housing law with twenty year tax exemption. In 1931 came President Hoover's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, recommending public participation. In 1932 RFC was authorized by law to lend money to limited dividend corporations under state boards.

In 1933 in the Roosevelt administration the NIRA entered the building field to create employment and ease credit. After this came PWA housing.

With the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act becoming law in September 1937, PWA Housing Division died and the U. S. Housing Authority was born to continue housing under the new law.

Two hundred million a year is what the USHA is spending. We are told two billion a year is what we should spend. Boldly stated, the government sees a need to rehouse five million families, and of these one million in the next twenty years.

The Forum writer concludes: "Meanwhile, if present standards of USHA housing continue, approximately four million of the needy ten million families will not be able to afford the minimum rents unless subsidies go way up or costs way down."

Building Cost Comparisons: 1926 - 1938

Like the Illinois Society of Architects in conjunction with the University of Chicago's School of Business, the Building Construction Employers' Association has begun a study of the cost of building construction today to find out where the building dollar goes. The Employers' Association has now completed a comparative study of the cost of typical, modest dwelling houses in frame and brick, the former to cost \$5000, the latter \$6000 in the year 1926, compared with the same houses built as of May 1, 1938.

They find that in the Chicago area the increased cost today over 1926 is 7.57% for frame and 8.69% for brick. Material costs are 12.5% and 10.8% less today than in 1926, overhead slightly higher, the increase attributed to higher labor costs and increased taxation. Overhead is responsible for an increase of 9%, labor 49%-47%, and taxation 42%-44%.

While material prices at this time are below those of 1926 due to sharp competition owing to lack of business, it must be realized that material dealers assumed the extra burdens of taxation and wage increases in processing and distribution without adding these, or at least adding only a part of them to their sales cost. With more active times, material prices would naturally go up and these overhead charges added onto the cost that the consumer pays.

The labor situation is different. Wage scales are not a question of supply and demand but of collective bargaining, with little hope of reduction. The present tendency to shorten hours can mean only an increase of wages to compensate for the differential.

The Bulletin will take occasion in future issues to comment further on cost analyses by the Building Construction Employers' Association and by others making a competent study.

Farmers in California are being taught by agricultural extension workers how to make simple air cooling equipment for their homes.

A nail is less apt to crack plaster if the nail is heated before driving it.

So-called "cheese wool" is fiber made from casein.

John W. Mallinger, architect, of Chicago, member of the Illinois Society of Architects since November 1915, died in Chicago on February 24, 1938.