

Architects, Get Busy!

By Miles L. Colean, Chairman, A. I. A. Committee on Post-War Relations with Government

The war has struck the architectural profession about as drastic a blow as did the financial collapse of the early twenties. It has left it high and dry, empty-handed, with little hope of immediate relief. But there is at least one very important difference between the two catastrophes.

The depression not only disrupted the profession, it destroyed the profession's clients. In the almost complete coma into which the economic system had fallen, private initiative languished, private funds were dissipated or frozen in fear, private construction sank to an all-time low, local public works programs were ended, and the federal government was left as the only instrumentality with resources enough to set the wheels of industry again in motion.

In those confused and discouraging years, the architect, if he was able to obtain a job at all, was forced to look directly or indirectly to the government. He might be selected to design public works or public housing projects; he might take a job in a federal or local governmental agency for which his talents suited him; he might develop some project financed with federal funds or with the aid of federal mortgage insurance; he might twiddle his T-square in the hope for a better day; he might, at worst, go on relief. But usually his normal sources of employment were just not to be found.

The war, for all the present difficulties resulting from the prohibition of private work and the currently rapid cessation of public building, has restrained but not destroyed the architects' prospective clients. Back of the necessary restrictions of wartime are generally large numbers of houses, shops, schools, hospitals, and in many places office buildings, hotels, and factories—all waiting to be built.

It is helpful to recall that, when the war struck, construction was only beginning to show full recovery from the disastrous depression years. Housebuilding, with only three new dwellings built for each five new families (net) formed between 1930-1940, was still far behind the potential demand. The general real estate situation was just reaching the point where the need for commercial buildings of various sorts was making itself felt. Municipal improvements in many cases were still lagging.

The complete shutdown of these activities (except where they could pass the rigid requirements of war necessity) has served to increase the potentialities of demand. Cities have continued to grow, and existing structures have continued to depreciate. In fact the difficulties encountered in carrying on even normal

repair and maintenance has accelerated depreciation above normal rates.

But beyond the basic facts of increasing growth and depreciation, there is another, probably even more fundamental. There should be money available with which to build. In spite of taxes and mounting living costs, people have been able to save. The down payment problem should be at least somewhat lessened in the early postwar period and the more favorable income situation should relieve the almost hopeless situation we faced in meeting the relatively low income demand of the thirties. Cities also have been able to save. Tax collections have improved and municipal debt has declined. The means for improving and adding to municipal facilities should consequently be available. Many businesses, in order to adapt themselves to the postwar market will need new buildings, and will have, even after all wartime deductions, funds to proceed. Financial institutions will have ample resources to supplement equity investment. Interest rates in all probability will continue low.

The prospect is certainly a brighter one for architects to face in a time of inactivity than they had in the bleak days of the last decade. Good as it is, however, it should not provoke unalloyed cheerfulness, for in it there are several important ifs. If the transition from war to peacetime activity is bungled, if capital is not to be enabled to get rapidly to work, if unemployment should become serious, the pleasant prospect might very quickly fade. Then again we might be in the old cycle of relief and made-work, with construction, as usual, trailing in the recovery procession.

Whether the favorable prospect is realized or not will depend in no small measure on those in the construction industry. It is now being frequently said that construction should play an important part in postwar readjustments because construction can be more easily reconverted to normal operations than any other industry. This is true, but it is true only on a strictly mechanical plane, in that the labor and tools and management necessary for war construction are precisely the same as are needed for the works of peace. But the possibility of taking advantage of this convertibility depends on having ready the plans from which to build. Plans come first; and plans take time.

The architects, therefore, are at the very spearhead of a successful transition period. They must not only make the plans but they must sell to their prospective clients the idea that it is vital to have plans ready when the first break in the labor and material supply occurs.

Aside from the Bureau of Public Roads, no federal agency has at this time any funds for the preparation

of plans for public works. There is legislation pending in Congress, but it is likely to continue pending for several months, with a subsequent period of organization for action when and if the legislation is passed. After that may come more delays before funds are appropriated and allocations made for actual construction. Few of the states and cities have real planning under way. Private business, still preoccupied with the war effort, is apt to be either slow to recognize the necessity for prompt action when war demands decline or without the facilities and personnel to deal effectively with postwar problems.

Lack of plans made it impossible in the early thirties to get a useful economical public works program promptly inaugurated, with the result that a hastily improvised CWA became necessary. Lack of plans tomorrow may lead to a similar result. "Dreaming," as General Fleming reminds us, "is not planning," and plans are something more than "vague, generalized ideas." Plans are the hard stuff of working drawings and specifications, of soil tests and engineering details. They presuppose the acquisition of definite sites. They imply careful cost estimates, evidence of economic soundness, and financial arrangements. Such preparatory work will take months of work before the construction industry, easily convertible though it may be, can dip a shovel or lay a brick.

Architects know all this, but too often they are willing to wait for others who do not realize it so well to take the initiative. And then, out of fear of losing a job, they are too likely to minimize the time that should be allowed them for designing and other preparatory work. It will not be safe to make these errors in the period ahead.

It is proper for architects, individually and through their societies, to urge upon government—federal, state, and municipal—the advisability of making immediate provision for preparing plans and acquiring sites for useful public works. (Note General Fleming's admonitions in the August issues of the *Architectural Record*.) More important, however, is the work that architects might now be doing in stimulating action by their private clients.

Preparation for private work is important for several reasons. Private operations can be got under way much more rapidly than is possible with work carried on under the cumbersome procedures of government. They can bring into the picture a more varied group in the construction industry than can public projects. They can more quickly get a wide geographic spread. And, most vital of all, the extent to which private construction is ready will largely determine the amount of public work that will be necessary.

Every architect who can now persuade a client to authorize plans for a house to be built at the earliest feasible time is making a real contribution to the postwar world. Every architect who can now assist an operative builder in laying out his land and planning his dwellings to meet postwar needs is doing the same. And the same applies to the new apartments, shopping centers, theaters, commercial buildings, and important

alterations that await a slackening in the material situation.

Initiative in getting plans under way requires more than exhortation, although plenty of exhortation may be needed. The architect must bring to his client good knowledge of the building needs and the economic prospects of his community. This he can acquire through information obtainable from his local FHA office, from his bank, from special reports prepared by the Bureau of Census, the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and from such private organizations as the Committee for Economic Development, the local Chamber of Commerce and Real Estate Board. In reverse, he should be prepared to persuade the local FHA office (if it is involved) and the local lending institutions (which almost certainly will be) of the practicability of his projects.

The architect must also keep himself constantly current with the labor and materials situation. Labor for private construction work will not become available in all areas or in all trades at the same time, nor will all building materials be obtainable in normal quantities at once. Plans must be made in view of the fact that surpluses will appear more or less gradually and unevenly. The architect who, through exact knowledge and clever specifying, can take advantage of these surpluses as they appear and avoid serious demands on materials that may still be critically scarce will be the one who gets his projects started first. He should consequently keep in touch with WPB representatives, with contractors and materials dealers, who are in close touch with the materials market and regulations affecting it.

The architect will also have to keep informed about new materials and appliances. Sometimes he will be able to find a new product available in sufficient quantity to provide a practicable substitute for a scarce article. More often, unfortunately, he will have to be prepared to persuade his client that the ecstatic tales of the startling innovations to be had when the war is over are so much moonshine. Innovations there will be—in time—but few of them will be ready when construction is ready to start again, and most of them will filter into the market without any revolutionary effect on existing structures.

In preparing for future work, there is yet another activity that architects may helpfully engage in. The general programs that are discussed for the postwar era too often skip the period of transition and the problems involved in moving from a war to a peace footing. But before any nonwar building can take place there are first of all to be faced the grim realities of L-41 and other WPB and OPA restrictions. How are these orders to be successively modified so as to smooth out the difficulties of transition? to prevent unemployment in areas where war activity may slacken? to aid in the reestablishment of private construction enterprises? and to assure an equitable distribution of surplus materials?

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Architects have evidenced much interest in the new Professional Engineering Act, known as House Bill No. 279, which became a law on August 1, 1943. The Bulletin has advised them, from time to time, giving them any information available in regard to this Act.

The Act is for the purpose of registering qualified persons for the practice of Professional Engineering in the State of Illinois and states, as follows:

" 'Professional engineering' means any professional service such as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design, or supervision of construction or operation, in connection with any public or private utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, works, or projects, wherein the public welfare or the safeguarding of life, health or property is concerned or involved, when such professional service requires the application of engineering principles and data."

Counsel has been engaged and a taxpayers' suit instituted, enjoining the State from using public tax funds for the necessary expenses involved in the enforcement of the Act. This suit was presented and came up for a hearing last month. The hearing was postponed and a new hearing can be expected about October 1, 1943. The suit is in the Circuit Court at Springfield, Illinois, and is being heard by Judge

Hemphill. It is quite possible that at the hearing the validity of the Act may be tested.

Due to the filing of this suit, no applications are being received by the Department of Registration and Education until disposition has been made of this case.

The bombing of London has left the center of the city more beautiful this summer than the living will ever again see it, according to *New Statesman and Nation* (reprinted in *Time* of July, 19). The writer says: "I doubt if we shall ever again see the center of London as beautiful as it is this summer. Much that was ugly, as well as some that was irreplaceably lovely, has been destroyed. Bombs have created unexpected and delightful views; St. Paul's stands out as St. Peter's does in Rome, and one can see it to great advantage from distant open spaces . . . Many hideous buildings make quite respectable ruins. From the rubble purple willow herb grows luxuriantly, and in one place I know of bracken is sprouting out of sandbags . . . In Victoria Street a breed of ducklings has grown up comfortably from a nest in the rubble. Above all, for the first time in our lives, there is a sense of space and air in London, and these are the first essentials of all town planning. . ."

Federal Housing settlements erected in the last eight years represent an expenditure of billions of public money. The tenants, from the meager-income group, are better housed than they were before. Many slums have been swept out of existence. In isolated instances the ensemble is not unpleasing.

Generally speaking, private property facing such settlements instead of improving, sinks to a lower state of decrepitude or abandonment.

Why is this? When a quarter square mile is built up of two story row houses, all exactly alike including entrances, sans trees and grass, a mental depression is produced that may lead to murder.

Recently our attention was drawn to modern photographs of the Fuggerei in Augsburg, a housing project for 100 meager-income burgher families, built in 1519 and functioning today as dwellings.

From the photos, the Fuggerei has greater appeal than recent war workers' federal housing of fireproof construction. One wonders if 100 family units are not less appalling to the surrounding property than 834.

Announcement is made that J. Howard Raftery, Chicago architect, lately of the firm of Frazier and Raftery, has been appointed Master Plan Director of the Chicago Plan Commission. Mr. Raftery succeeds H. Evert Kincaid in that office, Mr. Kincaid serving as Acting Executive Director of the Chicago Plan Commission in the absence of T. T. McCrosky, on leave to U. S. Naval Reserve.

The final windup of the Public Works Administration has become effective by executive order of the President which transfers functions and powers of PWA to Federal Works Agency, of which it was a unit. A few projects still are incomplete, including the Chicago subway. The total construction program under PWA amounted to about six billion dollars.

Chicago Chapter, Illinois Society, Producers Council Joint September Meeting

The joint meeting of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., Illinois Society of Architects, and Producers Council Club of Chicago fell on September 28 in the quarters of Art Center in the Oriental Theater Building, Chicago. It drew an attendance of 120 at dinner.

Strictly speaking, it was the Chapter's party. The Chapter had made the program, fixed the time, in fact completed all arrangements before the two other organizations were asked to participate. It was clever and successful Chapter strategy to have the meeting come on the fourth Tuesday of the month since that is the time-honored meeting time of the Society and about 50 per cent of the Society membership are members of the Chapter. The meeting was the first of the monthly meetings under new administrations elected in Chapter and Society last June.

Shortly after 5:30, a short business session in an adjoining room was held by the Society. President Ryan had Secretary Fuhrer read minutes of the June meeting. The President then introduced the subject of the Illinois Registered Engineering Act which was to go into effect on August 1, 1943, but did not. Secretary Fuhrer, having attended a meeting of interested elements in Springfield earlier this month, gave a verbal report. Nothing definite is promised until after the hearing in court in Springfield on or about October 1. Resolutions on a postwar plan were next discussed with reference to the architect and governmental relations. President Ryan referred to meetings with the Chapter president on this subject, their discussions of telegrams to senators and representatives and Chapter Chairman Yost's communication to Chapter members on this subject. The meeting directed President Ryan, in association with Chapter President Shaw, to formulate proper telegrams giving congressmen the information of what architects thought should be done. Herman Palmer and others spoke to this question. The business meeting adjourned to join others who had come to the joint meeting, in the cocktail room. Here conversation and good fellowship flowed, old acquaintances were renewed, and friendships deepened until seven o'clock when dinner was served.

After dinner, Chapter President Shaw announced that Chapter business would be deferred to the October meeting which will be called early in the month. Lieutenant Commander Clarkson, U. S. Navy, was introduced. He stated that the navy was in need of more officers, that the training of architects and engineers created good material for officer rank, and that college degrees were recognized for some navy officers. He asked for men to make applications for these vacancies. Also, he reminded the company that while the construction battalion had been pronounced full, they now found that it still needed commanding officers. Architects with liberal building superintendent's experience in the field were wanted in the C. B. offices.

Professor Louis Wirth of Chicago University Social Science Department, who had been a speaker last year before the Chapter, was present and introduced.

Then President Shaw introduced the guest speaker, a man very well known in Chicago and the Middle West. He has been a University of Chicago Professor since 1910, the Republican Party's candidate for Chicago's mayor in 1911, served on Chicago's Board of Aldermen for eight years, received honorary degrees from universities in many countries, and now he is Dean of the Social Science Department of the University of Chicago and Vice Chairman of the National Resources Planning Board. He is Doctor Charles E. Merriam. The Doctor spoke on planning during and after the war. He spoke informally without notes, introducing the subject by telling how D. H. Burnham I was opportuned by Frederick Delano and Mr. Elliott to take up the work of the Chicago plan and finally succumbed to their appeals. Coming down to the present, he stated that postwar work was already here since many of the fighting men, injured and sick, had been returned home and necessary work for

them was our problem now and would continue to be till some time after the war. True, industry had promised its men when they left for the armed forces that their jobs would be held open for them. But this could not be counted upon since the war had changed industrial plants and plans and in these shifts that promise could not necessarily be fulfilled. States and municipalities have plans and are making provisions through appropriations to carry out such plans for the returned veterans and private industry has promised much. The problem is a huge one and if local governments and industry cannot fulfill their obligations to these young men, it becomes inevitable for the federal government to step in with make-work plans.

He spoke of our condition when we entered the war, of our enormous military accomplishment since then, mistakes that we had made, and the inevitable huge waste. Now our thoughts and actions must be concentrated on how to take care of the men returning home after the war, some with new peacetime talents developed in mechanical fields. His closing thoughts were how to pay for it all. Space prevents this report from going into details here.

A sound film, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Tennessee Valley Authority, and other governmental agencies, called "The River" was now presented. This interesting picture story told of the Mississippi, from its source to its mouth, and of its tributaries. It showed the river in many moods from calm, peaceful contentment with luxuriant growth of timber to the flat lowlands and muddy banks, to the cotton pickers, and finally, in its terrible flood moods. The sound was ill-adjusted to soothe the eardrum and sensitive nerves.

Robert Moses, N. Y., Plans for Portland, Oregon

Robert Moses, commissioner of the Department of Parks of New York City has been engaged at a \$100,000 fee to plan a postwar construction and development program for the Portland, Ore., area.

Drafting of the program, a 60-day undertaking, began Sept. 1. Of the \$100,000 fee to Moses, \$14,000 will go to his staff, \$80,000 to eastern engineering firms and \$6,000 to a firm of New York attorneys.

Mr. Moses will consider development of an arterial highway system through the Portland district; unification and modernization of rail terminals, truck, bus and air transport facilities; and improvement of port and dock facilities including turning basins, dry-docks, repair and wharfage accommodations.

Air Conditioning — Artillery Fire

The accurate gun fire of America's fighting ships in the Far East and the devastating effects of American artillery in North Africa are due in large measure to the utilization of modern air conditioning equipment in the plant of Bausch & Lomb, optical manufacturers of Rochester, New York.

Recently, Betlam Heating Company, Rochester, dealer for Carrier Corporation, completed the third installation of air conditioning equipment in the binocular assembly room of the optical manufacturer. Air conditioned rooms are required for the preparation of optical parts of binoculars because dirt cuts the light gathering properties of the prisms and lenses. In cementing the lens element, the room air must be scrupulously clean in order that the Canada balsam shall not be contaminated. Also, the temperature must be held within close limits both for applying the balsam and for drying.

Air conditioning is also being called on at Bausch & Lomb to aid in high precision work in the manufacture of range finders and height finders, essential components of modern warfare. In space where these products are manufactured, assembled and tested, Carrier equipment reduces heat that is generated by motors and people, eliminating danger of expansion or contraction of delicate metal parts by maintaining constant temperature. Likewise it controls humidity to prevent corrosion caused by perspiration on the fingers of workmen.

—H. P. and A. C. Bulletin

Impressions — The A. I. A. Cincinnati Meeting

The 2¼ page editorial in the July *Federal Architect* on the recent annual meetings of the American Institute of Architects and the Producers' Council at Cincinnati gives the editor's impressions of what he saw and heard in the meetings of both organizations.

Of the Institute and the architects' profession, he says: "Their speakers did not speak of size of the postwar program. They did not speak of how to stimulate it or to control it in a quantitative way. Their reasoning was qualitative. How, rather than how much, was their approach.

"It was the professional point of view. At times a bit Quixotic, possibly, keeping the hem of the garment just a little too carefully out of the dust. But in the deep ethical tradition.

"They dwelt upon the things which were their inspirational purpose in being architects. There is something heroic about the architectural profession. Architects meet at times when the world has not been kind to them, and they carefully refrain from mentioning the things or laying out plans which will bring them incomes. They speak rather of means of better planning, of being more useful to the community, of bending their efforts toward more useful and more beautiful cities.

"One doesn't always approve of that. It sometimes seems, as we say, too Quixotic. But it does ennoble the profession. It makes the architect unselfish, altruistic."

Primitive Dwellings in the Hebrides

Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser in her book "A Life of Song" (Oxford University Press, 1929) tells of the construction of these primitive dwellings shared by man and his cattle on the outer or western Hebrides, Iona, Barra, and Benbecula.

No trained mechanics exist, hence the prospective dweller builds his own home, proceeding as follows: On a boulder a cone of dried peats is erected, fired and left to smolder overnight. Next day buckets of cold sea water, brought from the shore, are splashed against the rock splitting it into irregular fragments. The fragments are built into a rough wall and enclose an oval-shaped area. The wall from three to four feet in height is five to eight feet thick. Half way through its thickness this dry-stane-dyke is interlined with a layer of turf. Since no trees exist on the islands, driftwood from across the Atlantic gathered on the shores serves as rafters and woodpoles that rest on the middle of the granite wall leaving two to three feet exposed which serves as a terrace walk. Roof frame covered with turf and fern and bent grass is fastened down with homemade ropes of heather weighted by big stones.

The wall projection beyond the roof serves, first, protection of the roof from the wind. The more violent the wind the more firmly the roof settles into place. Second, the wall is a useful platform.

The peat fire burns within on the middle of the rock floor. It is kept burning day and night. Smoke from the burning peat is allowed to penetrate the roof thatch converting it into precious manure. This smoke-laden thatch must be removed at regular intervals and replaced by fresh turf.

In 1911 hamlets of these strange yet cozy and picturesque dwellings abounded in Kentangaval and Borge in Barra.

L. Morgan Yost, architect, (Chicago Chapter A.I.A.) writes in the July 10 issue of the *American Lumberman* on "300 years of American Homes." He covers his subject comprehensively beginning with the bark-covered English wigwams built by the first settlers in Massachusetts and closes with houses built today.

Professor Provine of the Committee on Registration and the Practice of Architecture in Illinois, in commenting on the four-day examination, stated that twenty-one states now have the four-day examination and that candidates passing the new Illinois examination will be eligible for licensing in those states without further examination.

Early Portland Cement Concrete in Chicago

October 9, 1943 marks the 72nd anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire. It was in 1873, seventy years ago now, that the first Portland Cement was used in Chicago and its environs. It was used to construct a three story concrete house on the estate of John V. Farwell in Lake Forest. Whether this Portland Cement was imported from England or Germany or was a native product is not stated.

Portland Cement was patented on December 15, 1824 by Joseph Aspdin in England and called Portland Cement because of its color resemblance to stone from the Isle of Portland. Aspdin's son, William, carried on the manufacture as did Isaac C. Johnson, also in England, and a little later Charles W. Pasley. Pasley, with his plant on the Thames not far from Aspdin's, was ignorant of Aspdin's work until shown in the London Exposition of 1851.

France and Belgium and Germany began making this product in the 1840's and 1850's. The first American made Portland Cement was shipped from its Coplay, Pa., plant in 1871.

About 1873 John V. Farwell built his wholesale dry goods warehouse building in Chicago on Monroe between Franklin and Market Streets using Portland Cement concrete for exterior walls. About 1912 in cutting a door and window opening in the street wall, it was discovered that wood blocks, which had served for downtown street pavements and had lost from one to two inches of their top surfaces by the Chicago fire traveling over the pavement, were used as filling between outer and inner concrete to save material. The blocks were thrown into the forms as the concrete was poured as was evidenced by the impressions on the inner surfaces of the confining concrete. The architect called by the builder to inspect this construction in 1912 was Richard E. Schmidt of Chicago.

The Farwell dry goods warehouse no longer stands having been wrecked in 1932.

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The solution of these very practical problems is the first step in an overall postwar construction program. And the time to begin thinking about it is at hand. Architects, through their societies, should work with engineering, builder, and real estate groups to answer these questions and to advise in respect to them with the federal authorities. A procedure for transition must be thoroughly worked out before transition can begin. And none of us knows how soon this beginning may properly occur.

The activities suggested here should in no way detract from a vigorous prosecution of the war. The contribution of the architect, as such, to the war effort is largely over. His time, his effort, and his imagination are available for the next step, and he is doing his country no disservice in making use of them to that end. On the contrary, the architect can and should, if properly engaged, be able to relieve those of his clients who are still busy with war work of much of their concern with the tasks that lie ahead. He should expect to undertake much of the work of investigation and of site and financial negotiation that, under normal circumstance, the client might do for himself. Without pressing any move that would in the slightest way disrupt our present concentration on war production, he can be prepared to press with the utmost vigor when such disruption is no longer a danger. Benefiting from his present inactivity he can make himself the vital link with the future. In peace as well as in war, "the readiness is all."

No Cash — Land was Paid for Texas' Capitol

Two books, recently published, have called attention to the fact that the State of Texas paid for its Capitol, built in the City of Austin, with a vast acreage of land and that one of the earliest of fenced ranches was established on a part of this land by the builders.

The State grew rapidly in production and, everything expanding, the old State House was not large enough to hold its employees. A bill was passed in 1879 favoring the construction of a new Capitol building on a portion of the State land, located adjacent to New Mexico and known as the Pan Handle. It is doubtful if any one of the legislators had seen this land, known as Capitol land, of which 3,000,000 acres were earmarked for a proposed State House, and 50,000 acres for surveying.

In 1881 the Committee, appointed by the Legislature, decided upon a competition for a "design." Governor O. M. Roberts appointed Napoleon E. LeBrun, architect of New York to assist the Board of Commissioners in the selection of a plan. Eleven had been submitted. LeBrun reported in favor of the design submitted by E. E. Myers, Architect, Detroit, Michigan, and in May 1881 his plan was adopted by the Board, with several minor changes suggested by Mr. LeBrun.

The fact that the Capitol Board selected an able and experienced architect to judge the competitive drawing and appointed the author of the plan LeBrun ranked as the best plan and design, the winner and architect, is ample evidence that the award was not on a basis of favoritism or politics.

Thereupon Myers was employed to prepare and arrange working details for the sum of \$12,000.00.

Notwithstanding that the Secretary of State has had this typed from an old volume called "Reports of Capitol Building Commission, 1883-1889," it is inconceivable that Myers did not receive a greater fee, inasmuch as this sum is less than 1 per cent of the estimated cost of \$1,500,000, and only about $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of 1 per cent of the actual cost, namely, \$3,744,630.00. Obviously, he could not have maintained an office and entered other competitions had there not been other payments.

Myers was a well known and prominent architect in the seventies and eighties, who seemed to look entirely for public work. He had made the plans for the State Capitol of Michigan at Lansing. George Mason, the dean of architects of Detroit says that Myers' office was one of the finest and largest in the best office building in Detroit, and that he employed a goodly number of good draftsmen.

In 1877 Myers entered the competition for the State Capitol of Indiana. Mason was then in Myers' office and helped in the preparation of the drawing; he says they were $\frac{1}{8}$ th scale drawings as good as working drawings, inked, colored, mounted on cloth on wooden frames, twelve or thirteen, about 40 by 70 inches. It was common knowledge in the office at the time that they cost Myers \$13,000.00.

Only two proposals were filed pursuant to an advertisement inviting contractors to bid on the Texas Capitol—Mathias Schnell of Rock Island, Illinois, and A. A. Burck of Rockdale, Texas. The entire cost of the building was to be paid in lands.

The contract was awarded to Schnell on January 1st, 1882, upon the filing of a bond in the sum of \$250,000.00. A new and amended contract was signed January 18, 1882, made necessary because of changes in the plans suggested by Myers.

On February 11th, 1882, Mr. Schnell assigned a three-fourths interest in the contract to Abner Taylor, Amos C. Babcock, John V. Farwell and Charles B. Farwell, the Farwell's being both Chicagoans, and on the 9th of May 1882 he transferred his entire remaining interest to the same four men composing the firm of Taylor, Babcock & Company. The Governor and Commissioners consented to the transfer upon the advice of the heads of departments.

Seven weeks later Taylor, Babcock & Company assigned their interests to Mr. Abner Taylor who assumed all the responsibilities and obligations of Schnell as contractor; again the consideration was 3,000,000 acres of state land in certain West Texas counties.

Why Schnell withdrew from the project could not be learned, he may have found it impossible to finance it or that building labor was not plentiful in Texas. He was an experienced builder, having erected upwards of one hundred churches and hospitals, including Peoria R. C. Cathedral and St. Anthony's Hospital, Rock Island.

Soon after the withdrawal of Schnell another builder appeared in the person of Gustav Wilke, a resident of Chicago.

Apparently active construction began in 1883, the corner stone was laid March 1st, 1885, and the contract was substantially completed on the first day of January 1888.

It appears that the contract required that the Capitol must be built of Texas stone; some persons say that a sand or limestone was specified but that the Governor wished it to be of Texas granite and agreed to have a quarry developed at the expense of the State.

Miss Louise Wilke, Gustav Wilke's daughter, has a photograph of a large force of prison labor with a mound or granite dome in the background and several officers and her father in the foreground.

The quarry is at Granite Mountain Falls, Llano River, Texas, 15 miles from a railroad and thence by rail forty miles to Austin.

It is related that the five or six-ton corner stone was hauled from the quarry to the building by oxen, also that the Farwell Brothers and again the contractor or the State laid rails from the quarry to Austin or to the railroad.

Few, if any, granite cutters could be found and Taylor, Babcock & Company sent to Scotland for experienced men but soon found themselves in the U. S. courts charged with importing contract labor.

Gustav Wilke undoubtedly had excellent training in building construction in one of the building training schools of Germany, also in building construction in Chicago, that enabled him to conduct the quarrying of the stone and the construction of the Capitol, as a contractor or as an officer or employee of Taylor, Babcock & Company.

He was not 30 years of age when he came to Austin to begin the construction of a building 566½ feet long by 288 feet 10 inches and 311 feet from ground to tip of a figure on the dome, then second in size only to the National Capitol at Washington.

John V. Farwell and Charles B. Farwell of Chicago, wholesale drygoods dealers had the largest interest of Taylor, Babcock & Company. They sent John Van Osdel, a Chicago architect, to Texas to estimate the cost of building the Capitol designed by Myers. Van Osdel estimated the cost at \$1,500,000; however, the eventual cost was \$3,744,630, of which Farwell Brothers bore \$3,224,593.45.

At the time the contract was signed, there were only a few settlers and no large ranches in the Pan Handle; 55½ cents was the highest bid per acre.

Manifestly, the Farwell Brothers must have had imagination to foresee that a large cattle ranch established on their holding would make their contract a profitable undertaking.

Pursuant thereto they interested English capital and organized the XIT Ranch under British Law. To raise capital for the establishment of the ranch and to build the State House, 1,000,000 acres were set aside for the ranch, the company stocked it with imported short horn cattle, the shares became very valuable and everyone concerned in the venture did well in the deal.

The ranch was liquidated in 1911 and the Farwell Estate still owns about 300,000 acres.

Apparently Gustav Wilke was not paid in land unless a final payment may be so considered which consisted of land and building that has a frontage of sixty feet on Monroe near Franklin Street in Chicago.

Mr. J. V. Farwell, Jr., a graduate and Trustee of Yale University, bought 4,000 shares of the XIT Ranch of a dissatisfied British shareholder for \$10,000.00 and later presented them to his alma mater which has realized \$100,000 on these shares.

The Legislature of Texas expressed its entire satisfaction with the performance of the contract by the Farwells in a resolution signed by all of the members, commending them for their efficiency and honesty, and expressing the desire of the members to have Mr. John V. Farwell, Jr., and his wife visit Austin so that the members might have the pleasure of meeting them and thanking them in person.

The transaction is unique in the annals of capitol building. There is a simplicity and directness in the way the Legislature, the Farwells, the architect and contractors approached their task and pressed it to completion that sprang from the time and the faith that all of them had in the future greatness of Texas.

It is a record of imagination and courage.

—Richard E. Schmidt, I. S. A. - F. A. I. A.

The Architectural Center

In twenty-four pages of plans, perspectives, details, diagrams, photographs, and small type text in the July *New Pencil Points*, architects A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne present their scheme for an Architectural Center. A diagram shows the Center with five groups of tentacles springing from the Center and ending in satellite centers which are named, respectively, Public Relations, Research Laboratories, Industry, Architectural and Technical Schools, and Architects and Engineers in Private Practice. The ultimate object is to have the Center plan for the building client, employ the architects and engineers, let the contracts, and sublet, where deemed wise, to architects and engineers in private practice for the smaller work. Also, to sublet contracts for some trades that form a part of the general contract.

In the preamble to the twenty-four pages, the reader is told that the Center proposes to investigate the psychological, social, economic, and technical aspects of building; to find basic solutions to diverse problems in architecture and building; to better adjust the framework of living to physical and spiritual needs; to draw upon and contribute to research institutions beyond the Center; to cooperate with industry in fabrication processes in developing new materials and types of construction; to guide schools of architecture and engineering to reorient their teaching; to obtain public support for the Center's program. In the twenty-four pages all the above items are explained in extenso.

The whole scheme reads like a New Deal plan inspired by Soviet Russia.

Dream Houses

The magazine *California Arts and Architecture* has announced its prize winners in the magazine's competition for "Designs for Postwar Living" to be Eero Saarinen and Oliver Lundquist, both now attachés of the Office of Strategic Services in Washington. They worked the project together. Their prize is \$1,000.

They say: From the kitchen the housewife will command full view of all the rooms; her electric stove will be of glass, mounted on casters for rolling into any room for cooking where fancy may dictate; housework will be done by machines operated as is an aeroplane; partitions will be movable and soundproof; walls and ceilings will be "dry"—no plastering; wall panels will be colored at the factory with "indestructible pigmentation" to remain perfect all the crack of doom.

Roofs flat with lower and upper sections permitting high up windows over lower roof for higher ceilinged rooms; no basement, the house built on a concrete slab set on the ground; slab houses heating and plumbing pipes, electric conduits and what have you; fireplaces will rest on a turntable to permit the hearth to face where you will; electric eye and sound controls, also insect-proof gardens.

The habitat shall be completely prefabricated and come from a factory assembly-line, erected where you will.

Well, hallucinations at \$1,000 per halluc are good business provided you can sell enough of them.

According to a recent government report there will be about 865 major airports in the United States by the end of 1943, exclusive of certain military airdromes. Most of them will have paved runways of sufficient length to handle the largest craft in use today. Less than 100 such fields existed in 1940. In addition to these, all major civilian airports belong to municipalities and other political subdivisions, which operate the fields as public facilities, except as their use is restricted by Army and Navy requirements.

—J. Gordon Carr in *"Architectural Record"*

Linemaster Charles Collins, conducting "A Line O' Type or Two" on the editorial page of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, invites lists of the ten most beautiful buildings in the United States.

Architects, send him your lists!

Corpus of American Architecture

During the functioning of the National Youth Administration (now terminated by act of Congress) the College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois, inaugurated what the College calls "Corpus of American Architecture." It is the hope of the inaugurators to have data on every American building, past and present, in the Corpus.

There are printed data sheets for each structure registering name of building, its style and phase, location, owner, (both original and present), date of construction (begun—completed), architect with birth and death, builder, materials, references, and remarks. The aim is to complete the record with a photograph, plans, and other illustrative material. These are mounted on eleven by fourteen inch mounts and filed in steel files accompanied by data cards.

Dean Rexford Newcomb of the College says: "You will be interested to know that a great many architects have contributed photographs and data on structures designed and erected by them. We hope in time to become the depository for all architects wishing to clear their files of photographs, plans and data on important structures. Particularly interested are we in having data on buildings that have disappeared, and on buildings which are the favorite structures of their architects." The Corpus is housed in Ricker Library of Architecture, Urbana, Illinois.

Definitions

A Coordinator is a man who brings organized chaos out of regimented confusion.

A Conference is a group of men, who, individually can do nothing, but as a group can meet and decide that nothing can be done.

A Statistician is a man who draws a mathematically precise line from an unwarranted assumption to a foregone conclusion.

A Professor is a man whose job it is to tell students how to solve the problems of life which he himself has tried to avoid by becoming a professor.

An Efficiency Expert is a man who knows less about your business than you do and gets paid more for telling you how to run it than you could possibly make out of it even if you ran it right instead of the way he told you to.

A Consultant is an ordinary guy who is a long way from home.

—Contributed by Kern Dodge, Link-Belt Director, Philadelphia.

—From *"The Federal Architect"*

A Modest Client to his Architect

Build us a house of quarried stones
With roof of slates—we hate asbestos—
Where we may sup on wine and scones
And sweetly rest us.

Or e'en a house of well-burned brick
With oaken beams, would amply please us,
So be it that the walls are thick,
For thin walls freeze us.

We loathe a house with too much glass,
And have scant love for plastic features
Or stools of chrome, for we, alas!
Are natural creatures.

And so we are constrained to state
That we reject, without misgiving,
Your cantilevered boiler plate
Machines for living.

—L.

The historian Ferrero tells about an interesting expedient adopted by Augustus Caesar's tax-gatherer to keep the money rolling in. The tax-gatherer was a liberated slave named Licinius. He was full of big and original ideas. He made the Gauls pay taxes every month, and when the exchequer ran low, he increased the number of months from 12 to 14. He called the last two Undecember and Duodecember. Let's keep this just between us—not a word of it to Randolph Paul or Henry Morgenthau.

—Nation's Business

British Building Industry

Wartime Construction Program. During the present war, the British building industry has undertaken an immense construction program, and carried it out successfully despite many difficulties. In the early months of the war, the industry was occupied with building new defense plants, housing for defense workers, air-raid shelters, defense installations, and a limited amount of civilian work. In the summer of 1940, greatly increased demands were suddenly made upon the industry, and soon the only civilian work which could be done was any essential repairing of property damaged by enemy bombing.

After Pearl Harbor, a new phase began—building for the American armed forces in Britain. For months before the arrival of the U. S. forces, the British began preparations to build camps, houses, hospitals and airfields throughout Britain. This work occupied two-thirds of the civil and military labor available for military works and services in the United Kingdom. The cost of this program, which was met by the British government as "reverse lend-lease," has already amounted to \$600,000,000.

Control of Building. Private enterprise still organizes Britain's building, but under close government control. All firms have to be registered with the Ministry of Works and a license is required before any building operations (except small repairs costing less than \$400) can be done.

Control of Labor. Labor shortage has been the main bottleneck in the building industry. By the early summer of 1941, 600,000 out of the pre-war total of 1,350,000 building workers had left the industry to join the armed forces or work in the defense plants. Further reductions of labor supply were prevented by the applications of the Essential Work Order to the industry in June, 1941. This prevented men from leaving their jobs or being dismissed (except for serious misconduct) without the permission of the National Service Officer, an official of the Ministry of Labor, and gave them a guaranteed wage, whether work was available or not. Through these provisions, building workers are today paid for wet days on which there is no work.

Payments by Results. A system of incentive wage payments has been introduced for a great many trade operations in the building industry. For all work and above a fixed hourly output, a bonus is paid, in addition to the normal time rate of pay. Basic outputs and the amounts of the bonuses are fixed by the Ministry of Works with the assistance of a Joint Advisory Panel representing management and labor in the industry. The bonus, which is paid weekly, is calculated for the whole "gang" (not for individuals) and is then divided among the members of the "gang" in proportions laid down by the Ministry.

Welfare Conditions. Before the Essential Work Order is applied to any firm, the government must be satisfied that wages and working conditions are up to the standard fixed for the industry by collective bargaining or arbitration, and that there is satisfactory provision for the welfare of the workers. In this way, only those firms whose working conditions are up to standard can have their labor "frozen."

It is interesting to note that the labor-management production committees, which have spread throughout industry, have also been established on building sites. In this case, one of their main functions is to deal with absenteeism. The tradition of "casual" work in building has meant that special attention has to be given to keep building workers on the job without let-up, and the committees (containing usually two or three members from labor and the same number from management) have been very effective.

Building After the War. In a White Paper issued in February, 1943, the government outlined a program for the training of building workers for the immense building job to be done when the war is won. The plans estimate that there will be a construction program lasting ten or twelve years, requiring a labor force rising to 1,250,000 men. To cover the deficiency of skilled men, up to 200,000 men will have to be trained during the first three or four years of the program. In order to attract young men into the industry, conditions of work will have to be established which will eliminate the casual character of working in the industry. But the government will not itself lay down the nature and scope of any guaranteed payments: this must be decided by the industry itself through the existing negotiating machinery. A program for training

young workers has been outlined, and a Building Industry Advisory Panel has been set up to consider all relevant labor questions arising out of the building program.

At the present time, more than 5,000,000 British civilians are living in different places than before the war. This vast movement of population was possible because, between the two wars, about 4,000,000 new houses were built. The suspension of this building (which was producing well over 300,000 houses yearly) will leave a large accumulated deficiency. To this must be added the destruction caused by air raids, which destroyed or damaged more than one out of every five British houses. Britain is determined to avoid the difficulties encountered after the last war when the shortage of workers and the disorganized supply of materials so handicapped the building industry that, out of 32,000 houses contracted for in 1919, only 265 had been built by 1920.

The training scheme mentioned above is designed to insure an adequate supply of trained labor, and the government has set up a "Central Housing Advisory Committee" to help it formulate plans to enable the building industry to carry out its postwar assignments with the greatest possible efficiency.

—*British Information Services, July 1943*

The Federal Government has secured to the Old Custom House in Philadelphia a bronze tablet whose inscription reads as follows:

National Historic Site

OLD CUSTOM HOUSE

A notable example of Greek Revival Architecture, this building follows in many regards Latrobe's design of 1818. It was erected 1819—1824 by his pupil, Strickland, as the Second Bank of the United States. The first of modern adaptations of the Parthenon at Athens, it was the center of the bitter financial and political struggles in which the Bank's head, Nicholas Biddle, and his ally, Henry Clay, contended with President Jackson for control of the Nation's Monetary System. Jackson prevented the rechartering of the Bank in 1836, and from 1845 to 1934 its former home served as the Philadelphia Custom House.

National Park Service
UNITED STATES

Department of the Interior

Clarence Hatzfeld, Chicago architect, died in Washington, D. C., August 25, age 70. Mr. Hatzfeld was born and educated in Chicago. His architectural training was largely in the office of the late Julius Huber. Later in his own practice, he was associated with others in designing some of the smaller bank buildings and Masonic temples. For the past two years he was Recreational Technician for FWA in Washington, D. C. He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects.

Eben Ezra Roberts, Oak Park and Chicago architect, died in Muskegon, Michigan, August 4, age 77. Mr. Roberts was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and after training by his father in mechanical and free hand drawing and detailing, attended Tilton Seminary in New Hampshire for further architectural studies. Next came practical work in a factory making pianos and organs.

He came to Chicago in 1889, becoming clerk of works on buildings under construction for architect S. S. Beman. In 1893 he established his own practice in Oak Park, Chicago suburb, beginning with frame residences. He was architect of Forest Park Amusement Park located at Des Plaines Avenue and the Metropolitan Elevated road. For Borden Dairy Company he was architect through years planning and supervising their commercial and industrial buildings. He was architect for Masonic temples in Oak Park, Austin and Waukegan; architect for Oak Park Municipal Building and Methodist Church. He planned the remodeling of the Hamilton Club in Dearborn Street, downtown Chicago. He was architect for Quadrangle apartment building (a group of three in Oak Park). In 1923 he formed a partnership with his son, Elmer C. Roberts, who continues the practice of the firm. Roberts & Roberts were architects for Oak Park Baptist Community Center, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Elmhurst, Oak Park Junior High School, South Branch Oak Park Public Library, River Forest Country Club and others. E. E. Roberts' activity ended with an illness in 1926 causing partial retirement. He became a member of the Illinois Society of Architects in 1906 and in recent years was made an emeritus member of the Society.