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Detroit, Mich.



# WEEKLY BULLETIN

## MICHIGAN SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

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DETROIT, MICH., MAY 16th, 1933

No. 20

## LOW COST HOUSING BILL FOR MICHIGAN

BY G. FRANK CORDNER

G. Frank Cordner, of the Detroit Chapter of the A. I. A. has been reappointed to membership on the Institute's Committee on Site Planning and Housing. The new chairman of this Committee is Eugene H. Klaber A. I. A. of Chicago.

This bill has now been printed and copies may be obtained by addressing the Clerk of the House, Mr. Myles F. Gray. It has had first and second reading and has been referred to the Committee on State Affairs of which Mr. Tracy Southworth is the Chairman. Address letters to him at Lansing.

State Representatives Wm. M. Donnelly, Joseph Murphy and Carl Bischoff, all of Wayne County, introduced in the House of Representatives at Lansing, Monday evening, May 1, the "LOW COST HOUSING BILL" which had been drafted and carefully gone over by a committee composed of representatives of the Detroit Chapter, American Institute of Architects; the Michigan Society of Architects; the Michigan Housing Association; the Associated Technical Societies and the Michigan Committee for Trade Recovery.

The immediate purpose of the bill is relief of unemployed in the building industry therefore, provisions have been made in it for the necessary legal machinery for making Michigan eligible for R. F. C. loans for this purpose. The eventual purpose of the bill, which is called House Bill No. 548, File 555, is to encourage the construction of low cost housing in cities and smaller communities and the rehabilitation of blighted. It might be summarized thusly;

### Architects' Luncheon

32nd Floor, Union Guardian Building

Private Dining Room,

South Vista

Tuesday, May 16th, 12:30 p. m.

#### A. STATE HOUSING COMMISSION

1. Created
2. Organization and personnel
3. Powers and duties

#### B. LIMITED DIVIDEND HOUSING CORPORATIONS

1. Authorization
2. Financial programs
3. Control of corporations by the Commission
4. Powers and limitations

#### C. APPROPRIATION AND FEES

1. Initial appropriation for establishing the Commission and getting it under way
2. Fees to be paid by L. D. H. Corporations to sustain the Commission and make it self supporting.

The Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932, states that corporations applying for loans shall be "regulated by State or Municipal law." In our Michigan bill a State Housing Commission consisting of seven men appointed by the Governor and serving without salary constitutes the regulating body. One of these men shall be a registered architect and another shall be a registered engineer with building experience. This Commission will elect its own chairman and other officers and appoint a Director who is familiar with Housing and City Planning. It may also hire temporary outside consultants and shall report to the Legislature once a year.

The Commission will exercise control over the incorporation of housing corporations; it will supervise and control rents, charges, capital structure, rate of return and the affairs generally of these corporations. It will study housing needs; plan for the correction of slum areas; collect and distribute information on housing; study means of lowering costs and in general do all it can to encourage low cost housing.

(Continued on page 4)



# WHEN IS ARCHITECTURE A BUILDING — AGAIN?

ASKS WILLIAM H. REID, JR.

*Editor's Note:—Bill Reid, who last year deserted the ranks of The M. S. A. and Detroit Chapter, has turned up in Billings, Montana. He herein presents a phantom picture of an architect going after a jag—in his stalking feet.*

In the spring a young man's pants must be fancy or was it something? Anywho with the starting of the tourist trek you can appreciate just how fancy, out here where the Bostonian family tree is just another clump of sage brush. Between pants, I have thought of you and the Michigan tribe frequently but not in the same light, nor the same pants, and I'm begging your pardon in the same pant.

We have just successfully concluded our modernizing campaign the staging of which brought back recollections of the Jackson and Detroit campaigns of last year. I am enclosing some of our literature which may or maynot be of inspiration as it is along the same general trend. However, I think we were somewhat original in combining the modern home with the Building Show idea, as you will notice in the sketch prepared cooperatively with Mr. C. C. Cohagen of McIver & Cohagen also local Architects. The central portion of the show was devoted to a modern home layout incorporating not only everything new in home equipment and modernizing but the actual installation in the typical home. It was necessary, consequently to double up on the baths and kitchens in order to cover the field but a nice feature in this type of show as the modernizing of one home would not permit the expansion. The booths down the sides and across the ends were sold to individual displays of the various crafts and trades and material interests, including of course an architectural exhibit; another point very much in favor of this type of show from the standpoint of the Architect.

I am also enclosing a pamphlet distributed at the show by the Billings Builders' Exchange which carries a rather potent little message to the layman perhaps in his own style. Please note that no man is forgotten: it's a new deal and a break for the "hired man."

I enjoy the weekly issue of the Bulletin very much, Tal. It brings back somewhat of a stir to the pulse to read about you all and brings memories of the days before 3.2. What is it they say? It's more fun to be fooled and know? I imagine that the sessions must be taking on added interest with Lance Sukert trying to figure out when is a building Architecture and securing such complete cooperation from all angles. Here's an angle that I think might appeal to some, "When is Architecture

a building—again?" Perhaps not quite so seriously as the previous remark comes the idea that in the true sense of the art no building is in itself quite the complete definition of Architecture. I would much rather say that a certain building has architectural distinction, when it satisfies the eye as well as the pocketbook; The eye belonging to the connoisseur and the pocketbook to the man who owns one. Such a definition, to my mind, is flexible enough to permit inoculation among the greater herd brood or school differences. In other hi-de-hi we might cautiously whisper it at the classicist or functionalist such as Wenzell, Sukert or Crosby or blatantly shout it into Bill Reid or Rod Allen and Will Rogers with about the same recognition: "pooh, pooh, such prattle!" High-ho, lack-a-day! What have we got to lose?" or "Hello, dark and Handsome. Why don't cha comupsum-time?"

Ever since the issue on the birthdays I have been listen' in for my ole pal Frank Wright on the radeeO. Pardon the pronounciation—the ounce is in prevention also as I heard a man from good old California—my old home town!—call a rodeo; a roday the other day and knowing what Al Smith does to radio you can hardly blame just an architect for coming prepared. Can one? or two if you want to! It's all canned to the polecatariat: he was so use to listening to the same box when they called it a 'victrollee.' Stop, look and listen before you cross the street. This is Uncle Frank looking for a bedtime story—just a silver voice from the golden tower of the Fisher Building. Tell Frank I'm just a little put out because he didn't include me on his list—manufacturer's catalogs and samples would be appreciated.

As for yourself Tal how are you gettin' along wid yer wurk? Pardun de stub, I'm tryin' to make a little go along ways these days. You know there

## CLASSIFIED BUILDING TRADES

### General Contractors

CORRICK BROTHERS, Inc., 1254 Michigan Theatre Bldg. RAndolph 2934.

E. F. EISERMAN & CO., 827 Farwell Bldg., CADillac 0611.

HENRY M. MARTENS CO., 2111 Woodward Ave. CADillac 7932.

JAMES A. MOYNES & CO., 921 Milwaukee Ave. W., MADison 3645.

PATTERSON ENGINEERING CO., 8044 Wheeler Ave. EUclid 2290.

### Roofing

ARROW ROOFING & SHEET METAL WORKS 5100 St. Jean Ave. WHittier 6900.

THE HOWIE CO., 9011 Central Ave. GARfield 4880.

### Common Brick

CLIPPERT BRICK CO., Wyoming & Southern Aves., Dearborn, Mich. OREGon 3000.

### Asphalt Shingle Mfgs.

BECKMAN-DAWSON ROOFING CO., 14261 Schaefer Highway, HOgarth 1606.

### Lumber & Millwork

GRACE HARBOR LUMBER CO.—Four Yards, HOgarth 4913.

HURD LUMBER CO., 6425 W. Vernor Highway, VINewood 1-4120.

C. W. KOTCHER LUMBER CO., 2137 Gratiot Ave., FLitzroy 3390 — Established 1864.

RESTRICK LUMBER CO., 1000 W. Grand Blvd. LAFayette 0500.

### Tile Contractors

DETROIT TILE & MOSAIC CO., 208 Waverly Ave., TOWNsend 6-5093.

### Painting & Decorating

MOYNES-KRUGER CO., 871-921 Milwaukee Ave. W., MADison 3645-6-7.

### General Floor Contractors

ALBERT GRAUER & CO., 1408-24 Seventeenth St., LAFayette 1950.

### Pipe Covering

C. STANLEY MORGAN, 455 West Larned St. CADillac 6446.

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was a time when they used to come back marked 'no funds' now they come back marked 'no bank' and therein is the whale of a difference the few cents made. As the wise old dog said, "No thanks, I just had one on the house." Best regards to one and all and drop me a line some time.

## MICHIGAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

Mr. Charles M. Ziegler, president of Michigan Engineering Society, and chairman of the Michigan Engineering Council, has directed that a meeting of the Council shall be called for Saturday, May 20, 1933, at 11:00 A. M. in the Hotel Olds, Lansing, Michigan.

Officers and members of all technical groups in Michigan are cordially invited to be present.

Technical men not affiliated with any organization are welcome to attend.

There will be reports and discussions on the following topics: drainage; engineering education; engineering research; legislation; metropolitan district legislation; oil and gas legislation and regulation; state registration; transportation; and, under water supply and sewage disposal, Mr. Milton P. Adams will report some very interesting data prepared for the U. S. Public Health Service which seems to indicate that the Federal Administration is about to inaugurate a National public works program of a magnitude which we hope will include the necessary but delayed projects in Michigan.

## WOMENS ARCHITECTURAL CLUB INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION INFORMATION

PLACE — Group P, section 1 of General Exhibits Building, second floor, Industrial Engineering Group — The Century of Progress.

DEADLINE for exhibition material — May 20. Send all material to the Architects Club 1801 Prairie Ave., Chicago, Ill. plainly marked with exhibitor's name and Women's Architectural Club Exhibit. All charges prepaid. Each place of material to be labeled on the back with exhibitor's name, title of picture, as it is to appear in the catalog, and return address. Send a complete list of materials entered to the chairman, Mrs. Margaret Jones, 332 N. Taylor Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

Patrons to be listed in the catalog and posted in the exhibition room at a charge of \$10.00 to be sent to Miss Catherine Furlong, 1637 Pratt Ave., Chicago, Ill. with name of patron as it is to appear in the catalog — not later than May 25.

Material to be hung in the Century of Progress room will be selected by a jury of three men architects and material not selected by them will be exhibited in a suitable place not on the Fair Grounds.

## OUR CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

*By E. B. Phillips*

The recent discussion in the Bulletin on the question "What is Architecture?" is quite interesting.

To give a categorical reply to this question, is to my mind, not possible.

Ask a lawyer "What is Law?" and he will reply instantly, "Law is a rule of action." And he will further state that law is of two kinds or divisions, viz. Lex Scripta and Lex non-Scripta.

The definition of Architecture is not so simple.

Thru the ages there have been many buildings erected upon which we may look and safely say "This represents the thought and needs of the

times in which it was built and, for that time at least, was Architecture"; especially if the structure was pleasing to the average eye, yet none of these would be considered Architecture if erected in this day and country.

The Architecture of yesterday is not that of today and that of today will not be the Architecture of tomorrow.

As an illustration of what I wish to make clear will say that there is in a large southern city a building designed by Stanford White more than forty years since.

In that day it was a fine example of Architectural design, but today you would not build it on any site in America, for under modern conditions it would be very poor architecture indeed.

There are forms and lines of grace and beauty which will forever be pleasing to the human eye, and it is the function of the architect to so combine his materials as to emphasize these and cause them to express the best thought of the times in which the structure is built, as to beauty and utility.

A great scientist once said "Science is the most we know at any given time", therefore I would say that "Architecture is the most we know of the art of so combining materials in a building as best to express the beauty and usefulness of the structure."

Architecture will never change, but our conceptions of Architectural forms and their applicability to our times and needs will change with the changing years.

## ANNOUNCEMENT!

Architects — B & T. Golf  
Wed., May 17, 1933 — Glen Oaks Golf Club  
Northwestern Highway to 13mi rd., then three  
quarters of a mile west.  
Golf, dinner and prizes \$1.75

### PUNCH and JUDY THEATRE

KERCHEVAL AT FISHER ROAD NI. 3898

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, MAY 17, 18, 19,  
Boots Mallory 'Humanity' and Mae Clarke 'Parole Girl'

SATURDAY, MAY 20,  
James Dunn, Sally Eilers 'Sailor's Luck'

SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, MAY 21, 22, 23,  
George Arliss, Dick Powell 'The King's Vacation'

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## VAS YOU DARE?

At the weekly luncheon. If not you miss a lot of good information, and a lot of good fun too. You should see the kind of cards Branson Gamber is passing out, and from Clair Ditchy you would learn that one should never allow relations with the architect to become strained. Many jokes and other unclaimed freight.

And in this issue, E. B. Phillips comments on the question raised by Bill Palmer, that was heard 'round the world. Bill brought with him Mr. Paul R. Marshall, secretary of the Producers' Club of Michigan and Paul promises to have his members meet with us once a month. And maybe the city planners will join in this meeting too.

Bill Reid's letter when read aloud sounds worse than ever. Where the Ell is Billings, any way, and what right has he to suggest the character of our monthly mail? I'll bet when he comes back he will be just another one of those phony cow boys who walk up and down Woodward Avenue.

We were also treated to a vivid description of an architect doing a turn in jail, for something he knew nothing about. It finally came out that he passed a counterfeit five dollar bill. Better look out for them. There are about 2500 of them passed every day in Detroit, bills of various denominations.

A visit from F. Gordon Pickell, first president of the M.S.A., in 1914. That's why he always has that look of warding off a blow.

Tuesday afternoon at the office of George D. Mason & Co. Messrs. Williams, Keyes, Stanton, Cordner, Hyde, Palmer, Wenzell and Frank Wright judged the design problem of the last State Board Exam. The problem was a bus terminal and hotel for a small town. The program was written by Wirt Rowland.

## LOW COST HOUSING BILL FOR MICHIGAN

(Concluded from page 1)

No construction shall be undertaken by any limited dividend housing corporation without the approval of the Commission as to its financing plans, building plans and specifications, and general worthiness. If there be a City Plan Commission, its approval must also be had.

The Commission will fix the maximum rentals or payments to be charged for the accommodations. No definite prices have been set because of the fluctuating business conditions of our day. Where in other states they have been fixed definitely in the law, the tendency has been to produce housing to rent at those figures, forgetting the lower income groups.

In addition to acquiring its land by purchase, a limited dividend housing corporation after getting the approval of the Commission, may exercise the right of eminent domain or condemnation, subject to the State laws on that subject. In the past, the principal difficulty confronting those attempting the improvement of large tracts of land was the skyrocketing of prices as soon as it was learned that some interest wanted it. While New York State's housing law also provides eminent domain, it has never been used in court because its mere presence on the statute books has been enough to keep prices normal. Another provision makes it possible for a city or other political subdivision to sell unneeded land for housing. Delinquent-tax land returned to them would come under this heading.

A considerable portion of the bill is devoted to the processes of organizing and operating limited dividend housing corporations and to their control by the Commission. Any three persons may organize such a corporation whose aim is to serve a

public purpose. Returns on the investment are limited to not over 6% in any one year and dividends are made cumulative. Unless approved by the Commission no such corporation may incorporate, acquire lands, issue stock or debentures, mortgage the property, sell or assign property, enter into construction contracts, dissolve, or make any guaranty.

The bill also makes mortgages and mortgage bonds of these corporations legal investments for savings banks, life insurance companies, etc. because of the safety of State control. Speculation in the stock is prohibited. Upon dissolution of such a corporation any surplus reverts to the State.

City or other local housing boards are encouraged. The State Housing Commission in such cases would not interfere but would seek to help and supplement their efforts.

Once projects are begun, the Commission seeks to be self-sustaining by charging fees to housing corporations. For the general preliminary examinations, the scrutiny of the financing program and operating budgets, etc., examination of building plans and specifications and supervision, a fee of not over one percent of the cost of the project is asked. A yearly supervision fee of not over one tenth of one percent of the cost will be charged. To get the Commission and its work under way and to permit studies to be made, an initial appropriation of \$20,000 is asked. No tax exemptions on projects is requested.

An unusual feature of this bill is the inclusion of housing for sale. Heretofore, with the exception of California's assistance to its veterans in acquiring single dwellings, no state has attempted to cover anything more than rental quarters, because of the difficulty in controlling properties after they have been sold. It is difficult also to keep out speculators. A man's constitutional right to do as he pleases with anything he owns has been the stumbling block. In the proposed Michigan Act no particular methods have been set up for controlling them but the way has been left open for the development of satisfactory methods. The sale feature is expected to be of particular value in the smaller communities where concentrated housing is not needed or desired.

Under this Act, the State does not enter the housing business nor does it invest any money in it. All the capital comes from private sources or the Federal Government. The State merely lends encouragement and exercises control.

## A. T. S.

A meeting of the entire Organization Committee of the A.T.S., made up of the presidents or chairmen of all technical groups in Detroit and vicinity, will be held Friday, May 19, 1933, beginning with dinner at 6:30 P. M. at the Hotel Fort Shelby. Dinner 85c.

In addressing the officers of member organizations Mr. E. L. Brandt, Secretary says, "You have had time since the meeting of April 7th to study the Master and Transitional Plans which have been provided to you and it is hoped that you and other interested members of your group will attend the meeting on May 19th prepared to express your personal views, and those of your organization if the plans have been given consideration."