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WEEKLY BULLETIN



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Volume 16

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 4, 1942

No. 31

Building Industry to Organize for Post-War Prosperity

Immediate mobilization of all component groups of the building industry for the conversion of the United States to a peacetime economy after the war is urged in a report of the Committee on Post-War Reconstruction of the American Institute of Architects, presented at the Institute's seventy-fourth annual meeting, in Detroit, June 24. The building industry, second only to agriculture in size and scope, today faces "its greatest opportunity in history," it is declared.

"We are living through a political, economic and social revolution, and to think of post-war reconstruction as a continuation of pre-war or pre-depression methods will not suffice," says the Committee, of which Dean Walter R. Mac-Cornack of the school of architecture of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is chairman. "Unless constructive and definite plans are made now for the period following this war, there will be unemployment and chaos in the building industry with the result that hastily devised public and private works programs, not based on sound principles, will be advocated and carried out.

"To profit best by the building needs which will be required after the war, architects and other groups in the building industry, including engineers, regional planners, producers, builders, labor, banking institutions, insurance companies, private investors, all types of owners, and government agencies subsidizing construction, should plan ahead by making an immediate and intelligent examination of all the factors involved, with a view to effective action.

"These groups should create an organization pledged to subordinate selfish interests for the common good; they must be free from the government but cooperating with it; they must support sound legislation and oppose unsound legislation.

"This would not be a planning body but an organized public opinion, coordinating sound ideas into a practical long-range program, encouraging the formation of state and regional planning boards properly financed and equipped

with well-trained personnel. The organization must be interested in extending private industry to the maximum, and in supporting government subsidy where necessary to abolish living conditions which are a menace to our form of government.

"Its interest should be restricted to problems common to all sections of the nation, and to legislation in Congress dealing with national problems. Through this group every community in the nation should be organized on the same general plan, but according to local needs, and the responsibility for action should be the duty of these local groups.

"The guiding principle of this work should be research, based on the scientific approach which seeks to find the facts and acts on the results of research. Such research should not be done by government nor by those motivated by selfish interests. Research being done in the field of aeronautics is a case in point where independence of action is based on the facts as they are revealed. Such a program should be initiated now and augmented as the war effort comes to an end. There is available ample technical skill to start it. All of the man-power of the profession of architecture might be mobilized to develop it.

"There is much discussion and advocacy of a plan for a federation of nations to bring about peace and better living conditions throughout the world. It is agreed by those who have given this matter thought that each nation will have to give up something to make such a plan successful. The reconstruction program we are considering depends upon the same principle of the willingness of organizations to unite and cooperate for post-war planning on the theory that what is good for the nation as a whole will be good for groups and individuals. And no one group is qualified to act alone."

The building industry will be left prostrate when defense construction is completed, probably early in 1943, the report says. "Since February 15 of this year, the architectural profession has depended almost entirely upon defense projects for its employment. The increase in public work and decrease in private work began with the depression of 1929-30.

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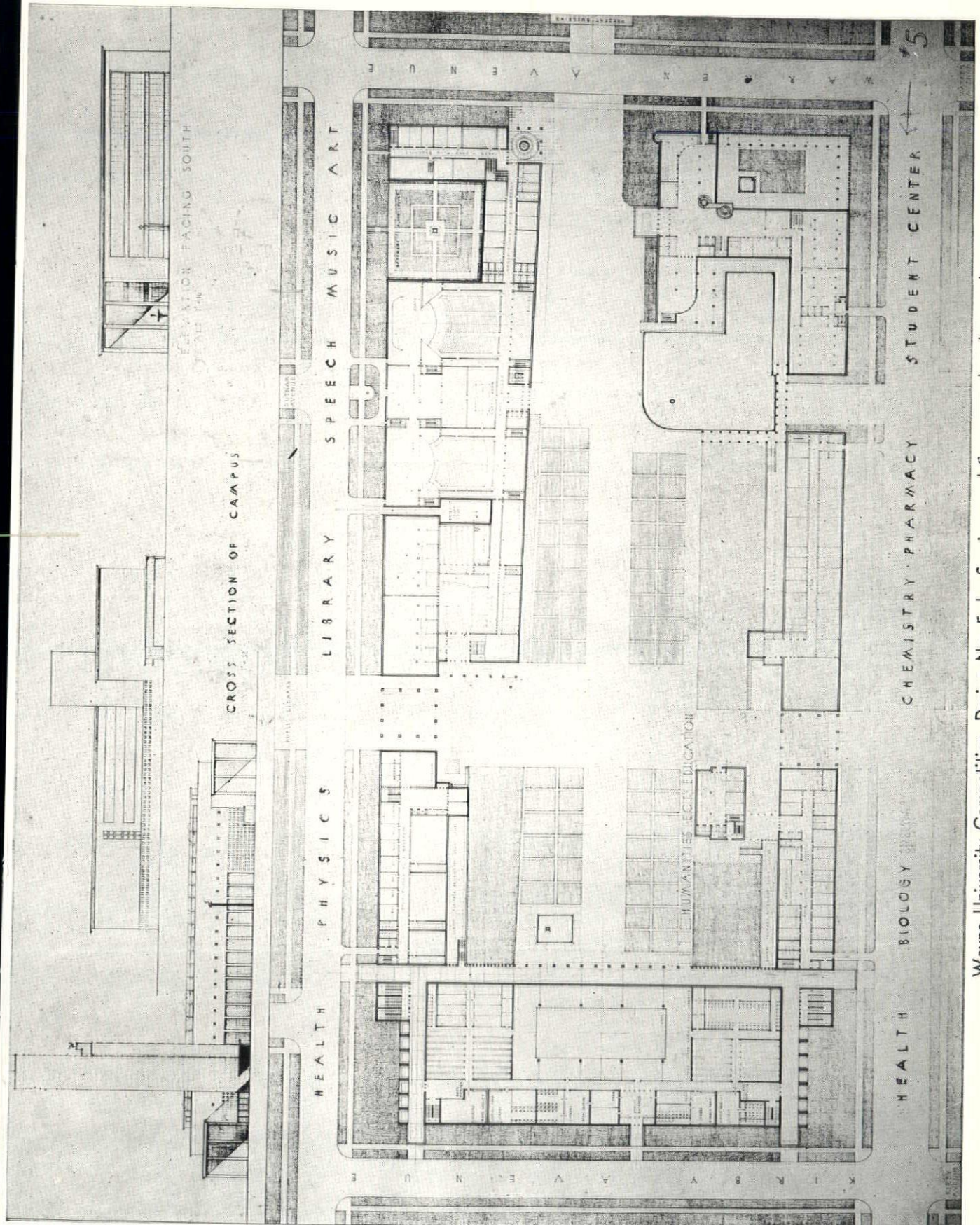
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Wayne University Competition, Design No. 5, by Saarinen and Swanson, placed second.

Wayne University Competition

A group plan and architectural scheme for a greater Wayne University campus integrated with the Art Center is shown in this drawing which won first prize in an architectural competition. It is the work of Suren Pilafian, 32-year-old Detroit architect, who was born in Turkey and brought to this country when a small child. It provides for eight major buildings adjoining the university's main building to the north, and contemplates the closing of Putnam and Merrick avenues to provide a three-block campus.

On page three is shown the design of Saarinen and Swanson, placed second, and on page 6 that of Malcolm R. Stirton, placed third.

The jury was composed of John H. Webster, president, Detroit Board of Education; Dr. David B. Henry, executive vice-president of Wayne University; Walter R. MacCornack, Dean, School of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Joseph Hudnut, head of the Harvard School of Architecture; and F. R. Walker, architect, of Cleveland. Branson V. Gamber, Detroit Architect, was professional advisor.

The report of the jury was published in last week's issue of the Weekly Bulletin.

Although Wayne University, one of the nation's largest educational institutions and probably the fastest growing American general college, is housed in an old high school building and a heterogeneous collection of homes, flats and churches spreading over several blocks, it is not likely to see a fine new campus until the war is over.

But, step by step, plans are being laid for the day when the university can be housed in the buildings it deserves and the center of instruction be integrated properly with the Public Library and the Institute of Arts in one vast cultural area in the heart of Detroit.

The most recent step in planning the post-war development of the university was the announcement last week of choice of a group plan and architectural scheme for the three-block area bounded by Cass, Warren, Second and Kirby avenues.

WINS TWO AWARDS

Suren Pilafian, 32-year-old Turkish-born Detroit architect, won first prize of \$2,000 in cash for the plan in a large competition and will be paid an additional \$2,275 as a down payment on the architectural fee for the student center, which is part of the three-block area but which was considered in a separate competition.

His plan provides for eight major buildings in the area immediate north of the present old main building, formerly Central High School. Additional campus space would be provided by the elimination of the present cross-streets, Putnam and Merrick avenues.

The Board of Education holds title to the main building and the block on which it stands, and recently acquired the block north by condemnation. Most of the buildings in the next two blocks north, as well as numerous other buildings in adjoining blocks, now are occupied by university departments. Officials estimate that the rental of these structures exceeds the cost of acquiring them through condemnation.

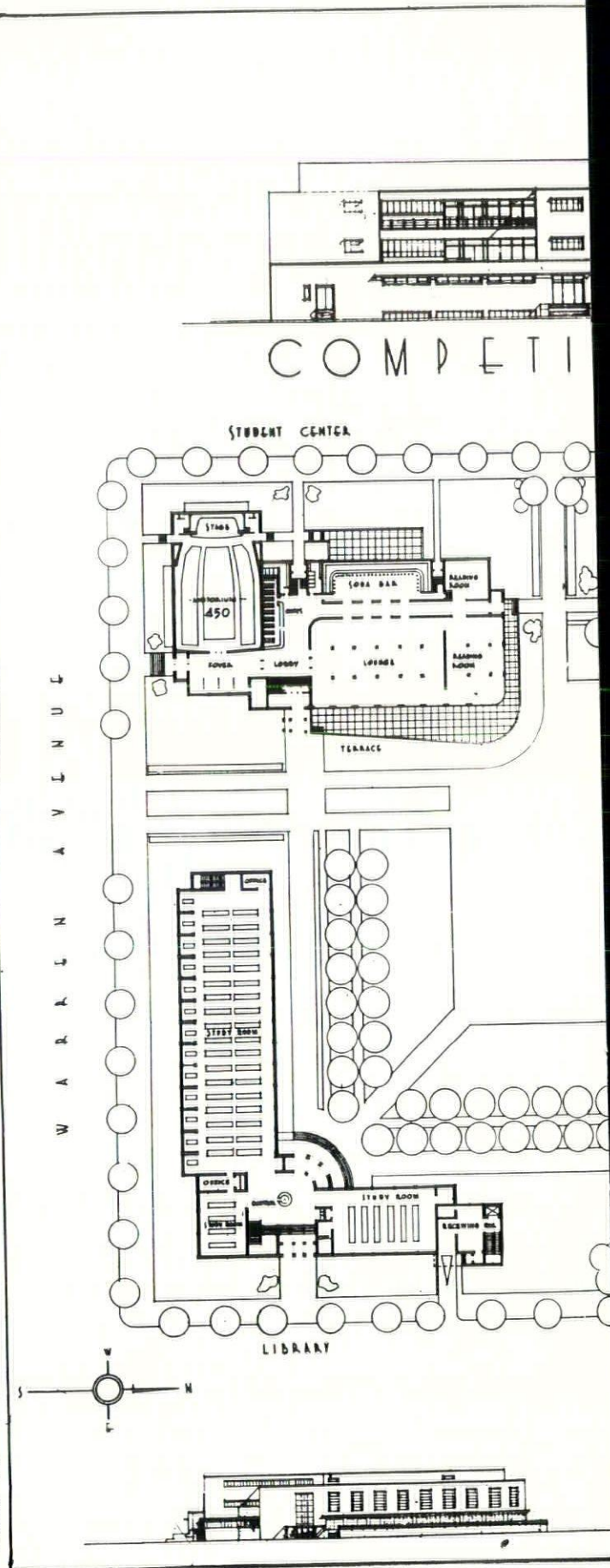
11 PLANS CONSIDERED

Eleven completed plans were considered by a judging committee of noted architects and designers.

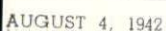
The eight buildings in the Pilafian plan are the student center; one housing the College of Education and the School of General Studies, one of physics, geography and geology; one for biology and psychology; one for chemistry and pharmacy; one for health education; one for music, speech, drama, art and radio, and a library.

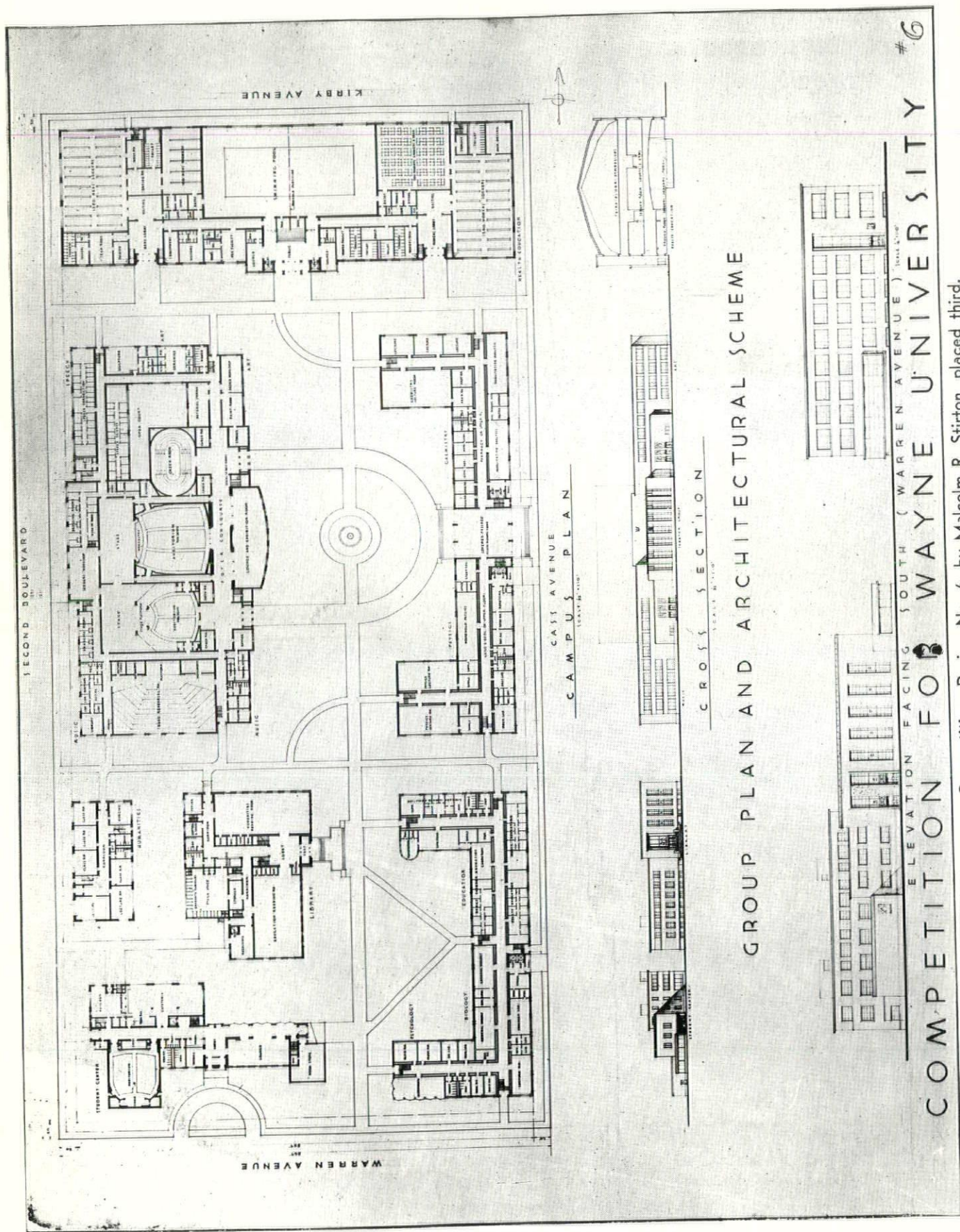
The jury especially commended the placing in the plan of the university art center opposite the Public Library to form a continuation of the Center group. The plan includes an auditorium seating 900 and another seating 450, a large sculpture court, classrooms, a band hall, choral and instrumental practice rooms, a library and offices.

Winning Design



FOR WAYNE UNIVERSITY





Wayne University Competition, Design No. 6, by Malcolm R. Stirton, placed third.

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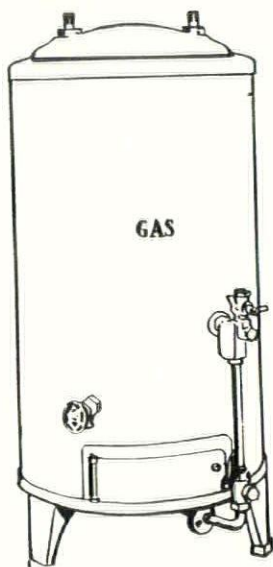
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Volume 16

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 11, 1942

No. 32

Education And The New Architecture

Address at Cranbrook, Michigan, on the occasion of The American Institute of Architects Convention--1942.

By CHARLES D. MAGINNIS, F.A.I.A.

Let me say in the beginning with what pleasure I find myself at Cranbrook. It will importantly qualify my remarks if I profess here my great admiration of this institution, whose attractive aspect is a symbol of the genial and liberal temper of its philosophy. A great architect presides at Cranbrook Academy.

Recent events have brought such exuberance to the new architectural thought that it is with a sense

of futility I bring my antiquated opinions to the present discussion. It seems a fitting preparation, however, for another experience that awaits me when I address the convention of American dentists, where the irony will consist in that, after a prolonged and painful experience with that profession, I have come at last to a stage where I find there is no longer any mutual interest. Just at the moment I seem to be the sport of the general perversity of things. This



Maginnis

afternoon I am expected to talk profitably on a subject on which reasonably I might be thought to have conviction, but which has now arrived at an inscrutability that baffles me. To speak to this topic one should clearly know what architecture is, and I no longer know this with certainty. I wish you to believe in the sincerity of this singular confession. Even the grounds of my perplexity, however, may be of interest since I can contribute nothing more. I have become gradually aware of something amusing in the Institute relationship to Education. The conferences devoted to

this concern have been held invariably in the atmosphere of its conventions where the matters are regulated that realistically affect our fortunes. We know how gravely it legislates on these occasions upon the discipline of its membership, the adequacy of architectural fees, the encroachment of bureaus, and a seething multitude of things. In earlier days this was a preoccupation which was only dimly aware that the mind of the profession was the momentous business of another room. Here the solicitude was focused upon affairs of the spirit. The philosophers were met over the problems of the young intellect. Whether the purity of architectural dogma was ever an Institute concern I have no idea, but faith in the classical concept was then too universal and profound for a suspicion of heresy. Time brought the bold questioning and then the actual challenge of the concept which now has culminated in revolution. I am quite satisfied at this moment that I am addressing an

audience mostly of revolutionists. What interests me then is the perception that the Institute is giving an equal hospitality and perhaps a benediction to this formidable schism without the vaguest acknowledgment of a *volte-face*. Strange gods are in the temple and I know not where to direct my feet.

The idea of architecture that I inherited had for me almost the authority of a moral principle so that the first manifestations of the new theory gave me no apprehension. I had confidence in the stability of our social order and, perhaps, even more in our national sense of humor. Besides, a new spirit had entered American architecture which was gradually weaning it from a dependence on European precedent, and our institutions were obviously taking on more and more significant expression. The triumph of the skyscraper had attested alike the capacity and the modern disposition of our profession. America was young. If fifteen Christian centuries were already ended before America came to conscious being, happily it had the less history to forget. In time it would find itself. For all its adolescence it had still some honorable conservatisms. The home had not yet offered itself to the scientific approach, protected as it was by a tradition which conceivably it was not the right of the architect to violate. I had thought we were familiar with all the implications of the new architecture on this venerable institution. I was mistaken. I had not yet taken full account of mechanical enterprise. From a source where thought is particularly chronological comes the assurance that our dwellings are to take on the property of motion, not as a concession to the nervous exigencies of war but as an additional amenity of the American way of life. It did not need the intrusion of this extraordinary idea to convince me that the domestic emotions are now destined for a distillation to the sentiment of tourist cabins.

It was never before believed to be the business of the architect to create civilizations, but only to render them. The new order, however, is to be imposed. Not sufficiently

See ARCHITECTURE—Page 3

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ARCHITECTURE—(Continued from Page 1)

confident of its visual ingratiations, it has built up an ingenious thesis which is become an extensive literature of apologetics—a propaganda that, I venture to say, is without precedent in the history of architecture. Such is the curiosity of its patterns that a new society has to be created to fit it. Even a new political system has reached the stage of the preliminary sketch. One wonders whence we derive so dynamic an authority. I think we can safely trace it to that intellectual disturbance which followed upon the discovery of certain acrobatic properties in steel and concrete. In action this exciting and thoroughly admirable medium was found to make for idiosyncracies which, as there was nothing else to do with them, were invested with a philosophical symbolism. Ferro-concrete, however, was acclaimed as the magical instrument by which we were to express the genius of the new age. Whether it has all the adequacy of this considerable idea may reasonably be questioned. There is less doubt that we have succeeded in expressing the genius of steel and concrete. Had the modern philosophy not elected to rest its case so exclusively on the engaging medium, but had left a modest place for the exercise of articulated masonry, all might still be well with us.

I find I must not belittle the nature of this accomplishment, for it may hold more significance than I suspected. Man, it is promised, is to experience a new and exalted sense of himself when he is privileged to look out upon a world of his mechanical creation.

One of his pupils once protested to Whistler, "I am endeavoring, sir, to paint Nature as I see it." "Young man," said the Sentimental One, "your tragedy will come upon you when you see Nature as you've painted it."

I have no illusions about our capacity or even about our disposition to resist the current of the radical thought. It is bound to run its course. The schools have completely capitulated and a new generation of architects will presently emerge with designs upon the American countenance. The eagerness of this youthful embrace has been held up to me as the sign of its infallibility when it might well have signified no more than a distaste for the traditional disciplines. I wanted more assurance than was given me that youth intelligently knew what it was deflecting from. I had remarked in the beginning that professors admitted little conviction about the merit of the movement, satisfied to watch the sprouting of the young idea. And boys were bound to be boys when professors ceased to profess. The curricula now indicate that the professor has finally caught up. One is appalled at the variety of the scientific efficiencies that are to constitute the endowment of the new architect. If these are all expected to reside under one hat, to be brought into veritable exercise, I suggest that the public is not entitled to this encyclopedic talent for six percent. Certain faculties of the spirit, it is true, are not in the equipment. These must languish till the time when the modern world tires of machinery and looks about illogical satisfactions.

I once asked the dean of a great architectural school what likely principle would make for the adoption of the new design. "Economy" he said. It was almost prophetic. The fates have been kind to the cult of the arid, for war has now dramatically carried to it a plausibility for which it might have waited long. Even the traditionalist has been forced in the extremity to take shelter in the camp of his enemies. Whenever I speculate, as I occasionally do, on the strain which might be involved in my own conversion to its principles, I am troubled that I cannot with confidence identify what the modernists themselves agree is a valid modernism. It is a little disconcerting to hear them speak of one another under intimate circumstances as consummately as if they were talking about a traditionalist. The variety of them particularly confuses me. There is the extreme modernist with the conscience of a Trappist monk who will make no sinful compromise with beauty. He comes easily to the eyes because his works are religiously cubical. In this respect he is an annoyance to another and particularly vivid modernist because his buildings cannot endure a pitched roof without ridicule. If, as I can well believe, the situation holds a corresponding scorn for the

visible roof as an historical hangover, a coquetry unworthy of the great movement where, in the face of this squabble among the elect, am I to look for light and leading? Should something not be done to keep modernism in its place so we can detect the true from the false. Once legitimacy is conceded to the sloping roof, and I can see it insidiously spreading, who is to say what flambouyances may not follow? Before we know it, imagination will have crept back into architecture and then there will be the devil to pay. The danger of relapse into decadent ways should be perceived as a moral problem that may not be completely overlooked.

In the past I have said pointed and no doubt pointless things about modernism. Much of what, from my curious perspective, I acknowledge to be modern I admire enormously. I concede freely the large beneficencies of the movement. I was never unconscious of the stultifying conditions that provoked it, for my earliest public discourses forty years ago was a satire on our architectural wistfulness with a plea for patience till the coming of conviction. The developing world, even at that time, no longer held the promise of a national vernacular but we were unprepared for a system which denied as completely as it satisfied the implications of geography. Simplicity might well have been its largest gift, but it comes to us, a by-product of its biting logic, not as a gracious excellence but as a harsh and defiant emptiness. Superbly adequate to our topicalities, it lacks the eloquence that carries across the generations. By the inexorability of its mathematics, its motions are too invariable to provide matter enough for cosmic entertainment. It is too immediate,—fit mostly for the things that end tomorrow. It has no language for our dreams, for those higher flights of the spirit that are the signs of our eternal striving. Architecture has been freed from the tyranny of history to find another tyranny in the passing hour.

Marine Engineers and Naval Architects Sought Through Lowered Requirements

To speed its shipbuilding program for war, the Federal government needs additional naval architects and marine engineers. The United States Civil Service Commission has modified requirements for these positions in order to meet demands from the Navy Department and the Maritime Commission.

Salaries for Naval Architects and Marine Engineers range from \$2,600 to \$5,600 a year. Most positions will be filled in the \$2,600 and \$3,200 grades, and requirements for these, as well as for the \$3,800 positions, have been lowered. There are no age limits.

Applicants for all foregoing grades must either have completed a 4-year course in engineering or naval architecture at a recognized college, or had 4 years of comparable experience. In addition, for the \$2,600 naval architect positions, 1 year of professional naval architectural experience, or of engineering experience including at least 6 months of naval architectural experience, is required. For the \$2,600 marine engineering positions, 1 year of professional engineering experience including at least 6 months of marine engineering experience is necessary. Additional appropriate experience is required for the higher positions.

No experience is required for Junior Engineers in Naval Architecture or Marine Engineering, \$2,000 a year. A degree in naval architecture or marine engineering may qualify, as will a degree in engineering or architecture combined with 10 semester hours' in naval architecture or marine engineering, or the equivalent in War Training courses.

Application blanks, obtainable at first and second-class post offices, must be filled with the Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

Wayne U. Competition Drawings at Art Institute

The eleven entries in the Wayne University Architectural Competition are being shown at the Detroit Institute of Arts thru August 23rd. The three premiated designs will be published in the next issue of Pencil Points.

Washington Pentagon

Cost of the war department's new Pentagon building headquarters in Washington will be around \$35 million, but it will save the government \$4 million a year now being paid for rent in 17 or more Washington buildings . . . The building foundations are some 40,000 piles . . . It will have over 15,000 windows. . . . At peak employment, 13,000 workmen were on the job . . . Three construction firms shared the contract for building . . . The floor space will be over 4 million square feet, 2.6 million of it for office space, the rest accessories . . . U. S. Corps of Engineers is bossing the job . . . Architect was George Edwin Bergstrom of Los Angeles . . . To get earth for fills in landscaping, Potomac river was widened 150 feet in front of the building, so that George Washington or Walter Johnson wouldn't be able to sling a dollar across it now. —Ironwood, Mich. Globe.

Recommendations of the National Committee on the Housing Emergency is a 30-page booklet just issued by that Committee, as a Program for Housing Workers in War Industries. Copies may be obtained for ten cents, from Mrs. Samuel I. Rosenman, chairman of the Committee, 215 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The shortage of housing in war production centers is resulting in actual loss of available man-hours and in the loss of productive capacity by workers who can not find suitable accommodations within a reasonable distance of their work. These conditions slow up the production of war materials on which the life of the nation depends.

It is in the hope of making the problem more generally understood that the Committee has issued its latest RECOMMENDATIONS, and we believe that architects and affiliated groups will find much of interest in this publication.

In pointing out the great initial advantage of the communities that have assembled valuable data and prepared plans, the report adds that many such plans are only fragmentary, or were prepared at a time when it was not possible to anticipate the expansion resulting from war industries, nor other forces which have brought about market changes in city structures and growth during recent years.

"It is not necessary to sacrifice quality and livability in

housing in order to attain speed and economy," the report states. "No one who believes that the primary concern of the nation is the winning of the war would insist on quality of this meant delay. Just as superlatively good industrial plants are being built in record time, so good housing can be produced with speed. Whatever limitations may be imposed by the shortage of critical materials, there should be adherence to minimum standards of space, ventilation and arrangement."

The wide variety of details covered is illustrated by the statement that business as usual cannot continue in the building industry any more than in the automobile industry. The building of war housing should be allocated to private enterprise only where it can do the job as speedily as can government, and only where there is permanent use for the required war housing, is the committee's conclusion.

Concerning private building money the committee states, "Large fiduciary institutions have such funds and have experience in building, finance and management. But in most states, fiduciary institutions are not permitted to engage in equity operations. If these large reservoirs of capital are to be utilized, legislation is needed in order to make it legal for these institutions to build and operate war housing. Federal legislation should be enacted permitting FHA to insure the entire investment, both mortgage and equity, in large-scale rental housing projects by institutional, fiduciary and other substantial investors."

The importance of planning skill is emphasized in a discussion of the design of such housing, and of site planning. Listed essentials are appropriateness, livability and economy," which cannot be achieved by a mere multiplication of experiences gained in designing individual houses.

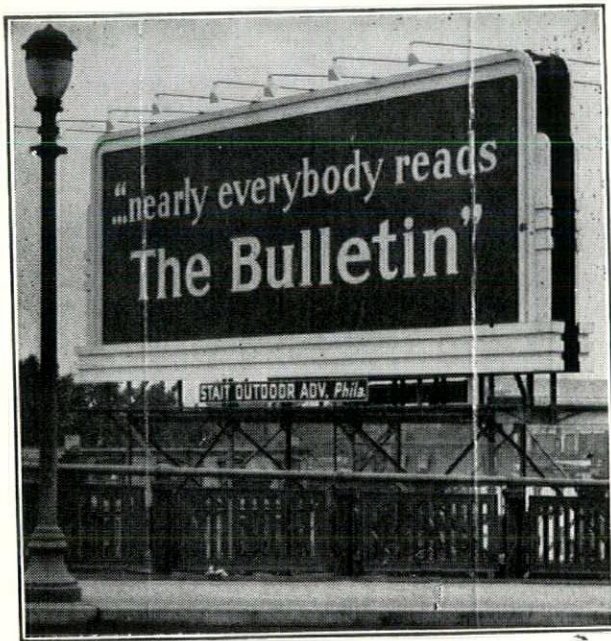
"For these important functions of site selection and site planning the National Housing Agency should set up a panel of qualified men residing in different sections of the country. Those men most familiar with the localities in question should be employed as consultants in the selection of sites. They should be retained to work with local architects in preparing the site plan whenever the local architect has not had the requisite experience in the design of large-scale housing developments.

"House of good architectural design cost no more to build than poorly designed houses. Often they cost less. Architects employed to design the houses should be persons with demonstrated ability to combine attractiveness with utility."

In these days when the prosecution of the war demands full concentration on this immediate task, persons who are thinking of post-war problems are often called escapists. It is true that unless the war is won, there will be no future which anyone can bear to contemplate. It is no less true that when peace comes, problems as gigantic as those of war will confront the nation. Then it will be too late to plan with careful thought.

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 18, 1942

No. 33

PLANNERS UNPREPARED FOR URBAN REBUILDING

by Charles W. Killam, F.A.I.A.

What part can the building industry perform in post-war reconstruction? Anything which would increase building construction would have a great influence upon the employment and production situation because of the very wide range of the materials which are needed in the industry. When peace comes there will be many powerful groups in Washington clamoring for Federal billions for their particular interests, some of them ready and anxious to spend public money to increase their profits and others claiming an altruistic desire to raise the living standards of the whole world and to free the world from fear of want, also by use of public money. Advisers of the Administration look upon a continuation of gigantic borrowing with equanimity if not with enthusiasm. Rebuilding of cities is advocated by many because of the great loss in values in general due to decentralization and the growing decay resulting in blighted districts and slums. Before any large building program is started, however, we should consider whether we have developed a well tested program for rebuilding. The important fact is that the planning professions have not yet decided what constitutes a good city plan. We shall, therefore, be handicapped when we join the post-war crowd at Washington in clamoring for Federal expenditures for our industry. Other groups will be powerful and will have such more definite programs and, therefore, a better chance. We need to do a good deal more than merely to lobby now for an appropriation to pay us for drawings for Public Works Reserve projects.

The present discussion is particularly concerned with the rebuilding of medium and large size cities, not with cities of a few thousands. It is also assumed that cities are not to be deserted and that no nation-wide analysis now is going to change the location or essential functioning of long established cities. It is too late now to look

over our harbors, rivers and railroad systems and pick out new locations for cities and then to specify the kind of activities which each of these cities should encourage. A condition, not a theory confronts us.

Numerous writers have told us that our troubles are due in large part to unplanned growth. They urge us to rebuild only in accord with master plans, national, regional and municipal, and to develop cities with properly balanced land use, arranged in neighborhoods, more light and air, less traffic congestion and more amenities. As far as can be discovered, however, nobody has been definite enough to tell us just what this means, what kind of people, what kind of occupancies, what kind of buildings and what kind of traffic ways they would actually advise in different parts of a city. Idealistic generalities which do not crystallize and which disregard national, state and municipal costs, do not help much. There must be some basic principles which can be accepted and these should be published as definitely and concisely as possible. We need to know what principles are applicable in general to all cities so that local study can be concentrated upon local details.

We have many reports covering existing conditions in particular cities or particular neighborhoods. We have developed techniques for gathering and publishing the results of such surveys. As to methods of carrying out rebuilding programs, a few states have passed statutes to help private enterprise to rebuild on an adequate scale and other states are considering such legislation. Has anybody done anything more than make reports? No appropriating committee is ever going to read a hundred local reports and look at a thousand spot maps. "Our Cities," a report of the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Planning Board in 1937, states that local urban planning needs

See—PLANNERS, Page 3

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PLANNERS (Continued from Page 1)

fundamental over-all guidance based upon planning and research by government on higher levels. "Housing — The Continuing Problem," issued by the National Resources Planning Board in 1940, states that there is yet little agreement as to what pattern of residential development combines in the best proportions attractiveness and livability with economy of management and public utility servicing. The "National Resources Development Report for 1942" of the National Resources Planning Board states: "Before we undertake large-scale rebuilding, certain basic policies must be established nationally and regionally: directives must be given broadly so that the city's officials and its citizens can see in the large their place in the state, the region, the Nation. We must have, first, some picture of the most distribution of the population nationally." Is it not still more important and practically useful to establish basic principles as to the most desirable distribution in a region, a state or a city? It is easy to deny this and to say that each metropolitan district, each city and each neighborhood is a separate and distinct problem on which we can get no help from established basic principles or the experience of other cities. In all other activities, however, political, business, professional or cultural, we try to establish tested basic principles.

We must have some agreement before we can expect the Federal government to spend billions on rebuilding cities and we must be ready with an agreed upon program at the end of the war. We must have something shorter and more definite than reports and spot maps, something more than assertions of our ability to lead.

The National Association of Real Estate Boards estimates that there are 40 billion dollars' worth of blighted urban areas. Some writers urge that, after serious amendments of laws, parts of these blighted areas should be acquired by local governmental units with money advanced by the Federal government; the areas then to be used for public purposes or be leased to private developers. Familiarity with some of these near-in blighted and slum areas raised doubts as to the practicability of turning any significant part of these areas into public uses or open spaces. Open spaces are more needed in residential districts than in or near business districts. If such areas are to be built up by private developers what sort of activities and what sort of buildings should be provided for? Do we need to provide low-rent housing on near-in land, costing \$2.00 and up a square foot, because it is assumed that low-wage mid-town employees must walk to their work? As a matter of fact, how many do walk to their work? If they insist that they shall be housed within walking distance of their work in business centers they must continue to live in sub-standard buildings on this high-valued land. They have no right to expect to live on this near-in high-value land in new 3-story apartments with 25 per cent coverage and with playgrounds, neighborhood social rooms, wading pools and other amenities which self-supporting apartment houses on land further out cannot afford. Subsidized housing on the USHA basis is no solution for these areas. Hansen and Greer, in "Urban Redevelopment and Housing," published by the Urban Land Institute in December, 1941, state that 17 million town and city families and about 5 million farm families are unable to afford for themselves dwellings and costly as the USHA program has provided, and in one way or another these families will have to pay a large part of the cost of better housing for a small percentage near the bottom of the income scale than they can afford for themselves. The Government cannot keep that up. If this near-in land is not thus to be allocated to the low-wage walk-to-work population how should it be developed? A boarding house district is generally spoken of disrespectfully as a blighted district. There are millions of lodgers to be accommodated. Where?

The proposal for neighborhood units might be considered an example of definite planning. This means the division of a city into neighborhoods each large enough to support an elementary school and each delimited to some extent by important traffic ways, railroads, water, parks or some

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other physical element if practicable. The theory is that most people want to take part in neighborhood activities and that such activities are socially valuable and important. In a city of 100,000 population there might be, say, 20 elementary schools each the nucleus of a neighborhood. Some advocates of the neighborhood scheme have argued that each neighborhood should be limited to people of the same social and economic character but the National Resources Development Report for 1942" of the National Resources Planning Board urges the importance of rebuilding so as to develop neighborhoods and further states: "One other principle should serve as a guiding idea in our large-scale rebuilding: we must avoid a pattern of stratification, whether by incomes, occupations or otherwise, which will produce self-contained colonies either of manual laborers or intellectuals or enterprisers, which will perpetuate areas marked as the exclusive preserve of persons of one language group or national origin. The challenge of our city rebuilders is to provide the opportunity for free mingling of all groups in our democratic society . . ." The report criticizes an apartment project which provides no room of any sort in which groups of residents can meet to discuss common problems. As usual when idealists follow their hobbies regardless, the report does not prove that people dislike stratification and it does not describe what kind of buildings in what kind of locations such a mixture of people would require. Nor does the report prove that more than a relatively small number of people want to get together for neighborhood discussions nor does it explain why school buildings cannot be used for the purpose. Any proposal to house the well-to-do in the same neighborhood with the poor, the illiterate or the immigrants, is an example of wishful thinking about the control of somebody else but people will still insist upon living and associating with their own kind. Much is made of the fact that some of the occupants of subsidized housing projects have formed neighborhood clubs but it does not follow that the more independent members of the population are equally anxious to club together. It is a question whether neighborhood association, with their tendency to work selfishly for the interests of their own districts, are as useful to the city as the large number of city-wide organizations in which people in all walks of life can find many different ways for social companionship and for social, civic and religious activities. And many people in all strata of society are not interested in clubs anyway. The building industry has enough challenges to face without challenging the habits of the people.

The very common statement that a great majority of the people prefer to own their own homes and to live in a single house should be checked by a Gallup poll among urban dwellers and should also be checked against the income and job security conditions of a majority of the population. People are likely to distribute themselves on the basis of the desires and possibility thus shown anyway. There are a very large number of people who prefer a car to a house, who hate to work in a garden and who want to reach their work, their shopping centers and their amusements with a minimum of time and effort. Millions of them are un-

married or, if married, have no children or who have children who have grown up. They do not demand open spaces or playgrounds. A reasonable development of near-in-blighted or slum districts would seem to be apartment houses for this part of the population. But in large cities such development of high-value land, even for well-to-do people cannot be on the extravagant basis of height and coverage of the USHA projects. Opposition to apartment house development in general is non-realistic.

Another very important question which is unsettled is the best location for industry. Should industries and their employees be located in the city, just outside the city or in rural areas? The "National Resources Development Report for 1942" of the National Resources Planning Board asks: "Would it profit a town famous as a center of learning or as a haven for health seekers to attract manufacturing, if it thereby lose its soul? Is the indiscriminate attraction of industry—any industry—by any means—tax exemption and bonuses—wise?" In this connection, thoughtless boosters who think that every addition of industries or workers to a city is an unmixed advantage should study the "Report on the Income and Cost Survey of the City of Boston, 1935, and other similar surveys. The "National Resources Development Report for 1942" of the National Resources Planning Board states: "Prior to the war, manufacturing was tending to become increasingly suburbanized. This trend has continued, for even under emergency conditions, the aim of many private concerns in locating a plant has still been to get close enough to a city to tap its metropolitan labor market and share its transportation facilities and privileges, and yet remain far enough on the outskirts to have cheap land and lower taxes. The pre-war trends toward the suburbanization of manufacturing and the industrialization of certain new areas were accompanied by the establishment of industrial plants here and there in places apart from the main centers of industrial growth. To some degree this tendency toward dispersion has been continued during the emergency period." The discussion of industrial towns in "Urban Planning and Land Policies", Vol. 2 of the Supplementary Report of the Urbanian Committee of the National Resources Planning Board, should be brought up to date and amplified to include facts as to the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization of industry, remembering always that there are three elements to be considered, the employers, the employees and the municipalities. Must workers in industries live at inconvenient distances from the plants to reduce danger of bombs in residential districts in time of war or shall we assume peace to be the normal condition?

We need more information as to comparative costs of municipal services to compact and to scattered developments. The advocates of more open spaces, lower buildings and low percentage of land coverage in zoning codes should tell us the comparative costs of compact and sparse development, not only to the municipality but to the people who must travel longer or shorter distances to work, shopping centers and amusements.

Can we reduce municipal expenses by abandoning some of the existing streets leaving access to some houses only by paths as in many recent housing projects or would such street closings make it impracticable to deliver fuel to individually owned houses? Could such abandoned streets be turned into playgrounds for small children?

Should we work for laws which will allow a municipality to find the final cost of a land taking before committing itself?

The effect of the incidence of taxation on real estate has not been thoroughly investigated in relation to its effect on city planning and rebuilding. For instance, how have graded taxes on land and improvements worked? Some cities have a single tax on land only and others have a smaller tax on improvements than on land, Pittsburgh, for instance, at half as much on improvements as on land. Such a tax shifts a large part of the tax burden to vacant land. Does it tend to lower land prices but still maintain land values because of the kind of development which it encourages? Does it encourage a continuously graded intensity of land coverage from skyscrapers in the business center

to single houses in the outskirts? What kind of buildings are built in different zones in cities where improvements are partially or wholly exempt from taxation as in many cities in Australia, New Zealand, So. Africa and a few in western Canada? Have such taxes led to congestion in business districts in order to make the improvements pay the high taxes on the land? How have such taxes affected the values of near-in blighted or slum districts? Have they led to a compact development of urban land from the center outward thus leaving no vacant lots by which streets and other services must be wastefully carried or have they led to the erection of cheap one-story taxpayer developments on lots which would otherwise have been left vacant? How have they affected single house building for the well-to-do? For the low-income group? These and other questions cannot be satisfactorily answered by municipal assessors alone—real estate men, city planners, architects, engineers, merchants and industrialists must all be consulted as to results.

The demand of real estate interests for a tax limit on real estate should be accompanied by succinct and well publicized information as to how such limitations have worked, whether they have increased investments or profits in real estate, whether they have resulted in reduced municipal services, whether they have been accompanied by sales taxes and whether the sales taxes have cost the low-income families more or less than the tax reduction due to the limits.

If real estate were taxed on the basis of income instead of on capital value would it put a premium on holding land idle in anticipation of a speculative rise in value? Are there any other objections to such a basis?

Architects should do their part toward encouraging private enterprise to undertake building development as far as practicable in place of Government building by subsidies. Insurance companies, banks, trusts and foundations have billions of money invested in Government securities paying low rates of interest and in real estate mortgages. Can laws and customs be changed so that these institutions can be persuaded to invest directly in large scale rental housing for different income groups? It has been suggested that the Federal government might help this effort by guaranteeing a minimum return plus the whole of the principal. Should FHA legislation be amended so as to aid in rehabilitation of blighted districts? Should institutional lenders be urged to cooperate in blighted districts so that there will be general neighborhood rehabilitation instead of spotty individual residence repairs?

The building code situation is unsatisfactory. If great sums are to be spent in building construction codes should be brought up to date, standardized as far as practicable and unfair and uneconomical provisions eliminated. What is more fundamental, the political and legal limitations which now make it difficult to write a good code, difficult to enforce it and, above all, difficult to keep it up to date, should be changed. For instance, the "Plumbing Manual" and the "Recommended Building Code Requirements for New Building Construction" issued by the Federal government cannot be generally adopted because many provisions are covered by references to ASTM or Federal standards instead of being printed in full. In some jurisdictions at least such reference to standards is not allowed. As far as practicable building codes should be written and amended by committees of experienced technical men, not by politicians.

There is of course every reason for the architect to be a good citizen and, particularly at present, that means study of all of the problems of these changing times. He needs to know something of the character and costs of municipal services as affected by real estate development, something about taxation. He needs to have a detached, informed and fair point of view as to the best way to spend public money. He should not be too much influenced by reformers and "better world" advocates who do not care where the money comes from. An illiterate and civically inexperienced architect is not likely to be very effective as a leader in bringing forth a better society by mere assertion of his importance.

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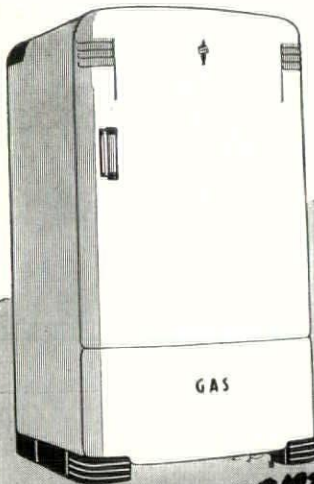
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Volume 16

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 25, 1942

No. 34

DEAN OF MICHIGAN ARCHITECTS, GEORGE D. MASON HAS SEEN GREAT DEVELOPMENT

*From Town Talk, Column of George W. Stark, in The
Detroit News, July 12, 1942*

On the Fourth of July last, George D. Mason, the dean of the architects of Michigan, was 86 useful years old and Town Talk broadcast that very vital statistic over WWJ-The Detroit News, including some of the salubrious implications growing out of it.

No person has had a greater influence on the physical development of Our Town and, by the same token, its spiritual growth. For deep underneath the outward manifestation of architectural design lie the inward meanings. The dean's long career has been a constant search for beauty and what a profound satisfaction it must be to him in the calm evening of his life to see all around him the lovely evidence of his own handiwork and the enduring results of his own genius.

His influence is by no means confined to his own hand, for he is the father of all the architects in this area and at least 30 of them came under the influence of his example and instruction. It is a source of great pride to him that many years ago Albert Kahn began his own brilliant career as the dean's office boy.

What I started to say was that Town Talk was thrilled no end when the dean called at The News office to express in person his appreciation of what was said of him on his birthday broadcast. He came in here in the fullness of his 86 years and under his own power, too. He had a scrap book of generous dimensions under his arm and this turned out to be a pictorial record of his architectural achievements in Detroit and Michigan. If every person who had a hand in the building of old Detroit had been as meticulous with records as the dean, the historian's job would be a pleasure instead of a pain.

It would take volumes to tell what the scrap book contains. Town Talk can only touch upon the highlights, which carry back to a time young folks would regard as ancient and dim. The throwback is from brilliant electric illumination to candlelight, which is mellow and serves memory's purpose best of all.

It is amazing to think the dean has kept his office on Griswold street for a matter of 72 years. He was for 49 years in the Old Bank Chambers, where the Union Guard-



Mr. Mason

ian now is. And his working hours, wherein he dreamed out so much that was useful and beautiful in Our Town, have been spanned by three brief blocks.

* * *

Well, children, take a look in the scrap book and see the evidence of our early culture and our early industry: Go back to the middle '70's and gaze proudly on the Public Library, the Central Market across from the City Hall and with the Russell House near by, the D. M. Ferry seed warehouse, burned in the great fire of January 1, 1886.

Of spacious gracious homes, surrounded by spreading lawns and stalwart elms, there is no lack. In the '80's and the '90's, our architect designed the John Burt home on Woodward avenue, the Frank Preston home at Cass and Canfield, the William J. Fowler home at Cass and Peterboro, the George L'Honnemiedieu home on Peterboro, the David Carter home at Woodward and Warren, the S. J. Ingals home on Stimson, the Gilbert W. Lee home at Ferry and John R., the Charles A. Ducharme home on Jefferson, the William V. Moore home on Woodward, the James E. Scripps and George G. Booth residences on Trumbull, the James H. McMillan mansion on Jefferson, the Newell C. Avery home on Eliot street.

Our people were beginning to investigate Grosse Pointe as an interesting suburban development for the location of lake shore estates. So our architect built the first mansion out there, for Joseph H. Berry, of Berry Brothers, in 1882. It stood until February of this year, when, like many of the ancient and the holy things, it fell before the ruthless ax of the wrecker.

There are pictures other than of homes: Stately monuments in cemeteries, many downtown buildings, the old YMCA, at Griswold and Grand River, the Detroit Business University, police stations scattered over the town and even on Belle Isle, firehouses. There is the never-to-be-forgotten Hotel Pontchartrain, where the infant automobile industry was cradled in a haze of tobacco smoke and christened in endless rounds of drinks.

* * *

The dean built magnificent churches: Notably the First Presbyterian at Woodward avenue and Edmund place and the Trinity Episcopal at Trumbull and Grand River. Trinity was built at the instance of James E. Scripps and it is cited as the purest example of Fourteenth Century Gothic architecture in all America. He built the old Masonic Temple and the new, that stately shrine where dignity and beauty are so closely wed.

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Position Open

The Parks Division of the Michigan Conservation Department has for the last two or three years employed architects and architectural draftsmen for the preparation of building plans for State Park development. Recently, Mr. Carl Rudine, one of our architects, received a commission with the U. S. Navy and took military leave for the duration. I believe Mr. Rudine was a member of the Michigan Society of Architects.

Since Mr. Rudine left, we have been attempting to fill his position. As you no doubt know, all State positions are filled through Civil Service. We made a request to Civil Service for names from the eligible register, but we have been advised by them that their register is vacant and we are authorized to fill the vacancy by provisional appointment until an examination can be held to establish a new register. The Civil Service classification for the vacancy that exists in this office is Architectural Engineer II with an entrance salary of \$200.00 per month. Any individual in this position is entitled to one day per month of annual leave with pay and one day per month of sick leave with pay. This leave may be accumulated to 24 days. The Civil Service specifications for the position are as follows:

Either (1) two years of experience of ordinary professional difficulty and responsibility in the design and construction of buildings and structures involving both the architectural and the engineering features of such work, and graduation from a recognized college of architecture, or (2) five years of such experience and completion of the twelfth school grade supplemented by acceptable reading or study in architectural and structural engineering, or (3) any other equivalent combination of experience and training. Certificate of registration as a professional architect may be required at the time of appointment. Age not under 23 on date of appointment.

The nature of the work is designing and planning of State Park buildings such as bath houses, shelter buildings, toilet buildings, and various other types of public service buildings. The nature of the buildings range from ordinary wood frame buildings, log buildings, brick buildings, combination of brick and log or stone and log, and lately we have built one or two buildings of reinforced concrete. We would like to get someone for this position who not only has design ability from the standpoint of composition of the building but a person qualified to make the necessary engineering computations for the development of working drawings.

We are writing and giving you this information thinking that possibly through your association with the Michigan Society of Architects that you might know of someone in the profession looking for work or that you might have some means of getting the information to the profession in general of this vacancy on our staff. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, we would be glad to have you let us know of his name and address. Any way that you might assist us in filling this position would be greatly appreciated.

The person who would be employed to fill this position would be working under the supervision of a registered architect, Mr. Ernest Hartwick, who is now in our employ and supervises the architectural work for this office.

In addition to the above vacancy, we have two vacancies under the classification of Architectural Draftsman A-1 which has an entrance salary of \$145.00 per month. We would be glad to know of anyone who might be interested in this position. The work in either of these classifications would be at least for a year and possibly in the Architectural Engineer II classification the duration of employment might be until the return of Carl Rudine from military duty. Of course, as mentioned at the beginning of the letter, the filling of these positions now is by provisional appointment and the person who would be employed now would be required to pass a competitive Civil Service examination at some later date to keep their position.

W. J. Kingscott, Acting Chief Parks Division
by John I. Rogers, Assistant Chief
400 Bauch Bldg., Lansing

Dear President Lorch:

As you may have noted in the July number of THE OCTAGON, the 1942 annual meeting of the Institute, at its closing session, adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The seventy-fourth annual meeting of The American Institute of Architects, held under the difficult conditions of war, has proved to be a notable gathering of the architectural profession; and

WHEREAS, The success of this meeting has so largely resulted from the thoughtful cooperation and the individual work of the members of the Detroit Chapter of The Institute and of the Michigan Society of Architects; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this annual meeting expresses its cordial appreciation of the perfect hospitality it has enjoyed in Detroit, hospitality which has been so generously extended on so many occasions and in such gracious manner.

It would be appreciated if you would advise the Detroit Chapter concerning this resolution, adding to it the very deep appreciation of the Officers and Directors of The Institute.

I am sending a similar letter to Mr. C. William Palmer, President of the Michigan Society of Architects.

Sincerely yours,

Chas. T. Ingham, Secretary

* * *

For some time I have been wanting to write to express my thanks and appreciation of the "Weekly Bulletin." It is one of the most interesting booklets of its kind, and I always enjoy reading it.

Sincerely

Ralph Walker

* * *

Please insert in your next issue of the Weekly Bulletin the following announcement:

The firm of Redstone & Abrams, Archts. & Engrs. has been dissolved as of June 15, 1942, and will continue under the name of Louis G. Redstone, Archt. in the same offices.

Very truly yours,

Louis G. Redstone

* * *

Thanks "right much" for the enclosed clippings. The old Union Guardian has certainly fallen into the desuetude of army routine and I would be curious to know if they will use the main banking room for a parade ground with a band marching up and down it.

I peruse the Bulletin more or less cursorily. Earl Pellerin was here the week end and was through the base by kindness of Ed Tuttle and he can report on what he saw of the stuff that I've had to do with.

We are doing wooden buildings now and some of the men point out "how the mighty have fallen" when they see me sawing away on various latrines and other similar convenient structures—and—doing my own lettering—a fearsome exhibition! It's all work and I am still getting paid for it!

We have had a succession of very hot humid weather and are now having our rainy season when one wades snow deep from curb to curb and in one case knee deep at which time I caught my foot and fell face forward in it.

Nevertheless I still like it here, rise at 5:30 to get effective transportation, I trust this finds you and your family in good health and busy, and with regards to them.

Sincerely

Wirt C. Rowland

A display of books on Nazi aims of world enslavement are now being featured at the War Information Centers at the Main and Downtown Libraries.

These two War Information Centers have the latest information available on enlistment requirements for the various branches of the armed forces, selective service, training courses for war jobs, civilian defense volunteer work, rationing, rent control, and price ceilings.

In response to popular demand, compiled lists of eyesight requirements for the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guards have been made available. Another much used compilation is the listing of sources of information about Detroit day nurseries which will take care of the children of war workers.

The two War Information Centers are open evenings. The telephone number is COLUMBIA 4365.

Ten Years Ago

From Malcolm W. Bingay's Column, "Good Morning,"
Detroit Free Press, July 16, 1942

The fate of our world depends on how long the Russian Reds can stem the Nazi horde.

In this maddest of all mad worlds the Pariah among Nations stands as our only hope.

We must go back a brief decade to get the perspective.

* * *

The very name Russia was anathema to the so-called civilized world. Even the Fascist-Nazi doctrine was accepted and condoned in preference to the Soviet system.

As late as 1938 the Chamberlain Government at Munich sought to appease Hitler by throwing Czechoslovakia to the dogs with the ill disguised hope that the ravenous gang would next turn on Russia and devour it until its blood lust was satiated.

Russia pleaded for an alliance with France and Britain and even the United States against Germany and was scorned. The Hoover Administration refused to recognize the Soviet Government.

Hitler proclaimed himself the enemy of the Communists and the democracies were content. Let them fight it out unto the death and all would be well with us.

But not all Americans thought down the line of that blind alley which has led us into the present impasse. In fact, two of Detroit's most famous citizens had different views. I sat at dinner the other evening with one of them and he told me the story. The speaker was Albert Kahn, America's most distinguished architect.

* * *

This quiet, modest gentleman had been commissioned by the Soviet Government in 1929 to plan their great factories, the products of which — behind the Ural Mountains — are now holding the Nazis at bay. I remember what he said when he came back from Moscow in 1932, just ten years ago. He said then: "There is little communism in Russia today and no one can tell what Sovietism will stand for ten years from now."

The ten years being up, I reminded him of that remark and asked him if he suspected then what might happen. The thing that had fascinated him was the spirited of the people, their evangelical zeal for a cause.

"My brother Moritz and I suspected something," he said, "because of their insistence upon heavier foundations than were needed. They merely smiled when we suggested lighter construction and said we did not understand their 'weather.' We agreed then that they were planning armament buildings. They were kind and considerate but revealed nothing of their purposes."

"I was frankly fearful of their success despite their tremendous enthusiasm and their willingness to sacrifice. We found the Russian engineer to be an excellent technician, Mathematician, scientist and laboratory man. But he lacked the 'know-how.'"

* * *

Now, it was a daring thing for Albert Kahn to accept that commission to Russia in the face of American public opinion, for very few Americans wanted their names asso-

ciated with those "awful people." But he immediately got moral support from a wholly unexpected source.

The day it was announced that he had signed his contract his largest customer in the designing of factories, Henry Ford, called him on the phone and asked him to see him before he sailed.

"Mr. Ford," said Mr. Kahn, "was just leaving with his wife for a trip to the Virginia colonial settlement at Williamsburg. 'I hear,' he said, 'that you have agreed to build factories for the Russian Government. I am very glad of it. I have been thinking that these people should be helped.'"

"I could hardly believe my ears, but Mr. Ford continued: 'I think the stabilization of Russia through industry is the hope of the world. The more industry we can create, the more men and women, the world over, can be made self sufficient — the more everybody will benefit. The Russian people have a right to their destiny and they can only find it through work. We are willing out here to help them all we can.'"

"So you can tell them for me that anything we have is theirs for the asking — free. They can have our designs, our work methods, our steel specifications — anything. We will send them our engineers to teach them and they can send their men into our plants to learn."

"I gave that story to a Free Press reporter that afternoon and it appeared in your evening edition. The Russian Commission called me from New York. They wanted to know if it were true. I assured them it was. They came to Dearborn and finished their negotiations. That broke the ice. They have been building ever since — have learned by their mistakes. If they are able to beat back the Nazis now one of the reasons will be because Mr. Ford played no small part in helping them."

* * *

And Albert Kahn played no small part either.

This is a belated acknowledgement of your courtesy in sending the Bulletin to me and I assure you that we do consider it a valuable addition to our architectural library. Several copies are now marked for the reserve shelf and are included as a part of the required reading for my beginning course in the significance of architecture.

I trust we may be favored with future copies for they will serve a good purpose in furthering student interest in our professional objectives.

Very truly yours,

E. T. Huddleston,
Head of department of architecture
University of New Hampshire

* * *

I am exceedingly sorry that I could not attend the Convention of the Institute at Detroit. After reading thoroughly the reports of the proceedings, I want to tell you that I think that the Detroit Chapter did a mighty fine piece of work, and I want to extend to them my hearty congratulations.

Proof that the profession is not languishing, at least in spirit, is the unexpectedly large attendance of delegates from all over the country, the inspiring speeches, and the broad gauge action taken.

You and I and the other members of the Institute Committee on Public Information have a difficult problem to solve in trying to put over this year an efficient program to let the public know that the architects are still very much on the map, and that particularly after the war we are going to be indispensable in trying to put affairs in shape again.

My best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours

William O. Ludlow

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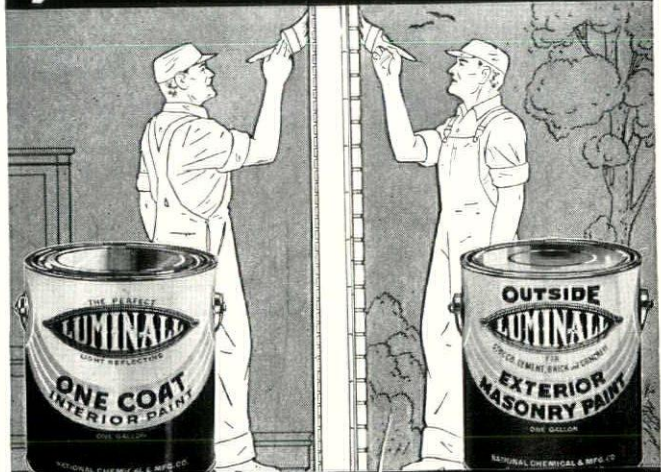
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