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# *Empire State*

# ARCHITECT



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1942

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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

SYRACUSE COCA-COLA BOTTLING PLANT

PREFABRICATION

POST WAR WORK

WASHINGTON NEWS LETTER



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# Empire State Architect

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## WASHINGTON NEWS LETTER

### *Architect: Forgotten Man*

In our view, the situation which confronts the architect is so serious and so complicated by misunderstanding, prejudice and mental inertia that it is difficult to present the whole picture succinctly. What we are now saying is substantially the same as Mr. Purves has been saying, perhaps a little more gently, throughout the past year. You can do no better than to reread his excellent article on this subject in the May, 1942 OCTAGON.

*Cause:* We have spent a generation as individuals and as a professional society, fighting against parsimony and ignorance for recognition as designers of buildings. We have placed the emphasis on the need for beauty as a stimulus to morale, and on the architect's aesthetic training to meet that need; on the economic desirability of intelligent planning, of careful selection of suitable methods and materials and on the architect's special training for the *study* of such problems.

In the normal civilian field we have succeeded fairly well in this fight;—so well, in fact, that we have been accepted at what has appeared to the "lay" mind to be our self-evaluation. *We* have accepted as axiomatic, and probably have seldom mentioned, those many collateral qualities of the architect which should fit him to make an important contribution in the war effort, but which, since no one has talked about them, remain unrecognized. These include an unusually varied cultural and technical education and experience, imaginative analysis of many varied problems, the habit of directing the cooperative effort of technical specialists, the accustomed duty of assuming the burden or responsibility for large projects, the force to drive such projects through the many and complicated stages of development and construction, the ability and willingness to make decisions; not to speak, in due modesty, of a fairly general knowledge and experience in the practical, actual field supervision in many branches of the spheres usually claimed by engineers, civil, structural or mechanical. We have said the architect is "first of all an artist"—and that is as far as the "laity" have gone. They have not been taught to look on the architects as analyst, "business-man", coordinator, administrator, expeditor, or supervising engineer.

*Effect:* There will, "for the duration", probably be no more construction work in the normal civilian field. There will probably be no more "architectural" work of any kind. There will be no time for what we call "study". War construction projects will probably be almost wholly site-planning, utilities, roads, etc. and the adaptation to local conditions of "stock" plans for barracks, warehouses, housing, etc. (used for speed and because the lists of critical materials are already prepared, and priorities can be obtained quickly). In this field, we can still function (as the engineer can also) if we do not "high-hat" the idea, but you may be surprised to know how often this office has run into comment by officials that architects don't want anything but "architectural" work. The Services think this kind of thing is more logically the engineer's job; we must prove ourselves.

In addition to this, we must think of individual, personal employment. It is said that there is a definite shortage of all kinds of engineers in industry, but that both the Army and Navy engineering rolls are well filled, with plenty of applicants waiting. Expansion may change this picture, of course. There are undoubtedly many engineering and *other* special jobs of many varied kinds which architects can fill, if the "employer" and the *architect* can be taught to think along the right lines.

At this point, however, we generally find ourselves up a blind alley facing a sign "No architects wanted". To many "employers" in Washington, and perhaps in the industrial centers, we are half-baked engineers—artistic, impractical, unreliable, not a little bull-headed and over-bearing;— even "sissy" in comparison with the "tough" engineer; but probably very few of these men have more than a superficial knowledge of how an architect functions or of what he is really capable. You may feel indignant at this extensive misunderstanding, but it is a condition which we have helped to create by too great concentration on a few aspects of our profession. We now have it to face and to overcome.

*Cure:* We need to "re-educate" ourselves to think of ourselves in the broader aspects suggested above. We need to be imaginative in presenting our own qualifications and abilities to Government "clients" and to personnel interviewers. We need to remember that entirely aside from aesthetic and technical training and experience, many of us have outstanding executive capacities, adaptable to a wide range of endeavor. We must broaden our concept of architectural practice—for this war, and for the long reconstruction period to follow it.

In this task we need the united, enlightened effort of all members of the profession to "re-educate" the "laity", civilian and military, to think of us in broader terms. This office and the Officers and Board of The American Institute of Architects are active in this matter in a number of ways too diverse to describe here. These efforts have been reported in THE OCTAGON since November, 1941, and in many confidential Bulletins; we will continue to report them. We are making progress slowly, but it is "your party" too, and the minds to be opened are legion.

D. K. ESTE FISHER, JR., A.I.A.

It was a balmy October evening, the 30th, and from 6 P.M. to way past the announced hour of eight o'clock, Architects converged upon the League for a period of fizz and serious enjoyment. The spiritually uplifting clink of ice against glass blended with eager converse, to be stilled only at 8:15 P.M. when our Guest of the evening and our President, accompanied by Messrs. Strauss and Briggs seated themselves on the dais. After a moment, President Kideney arose and expressed his pleasure, shared by all, that we were present. He then outlined some of the problems Architects will have to solve if they are to enter the doors opening for them in this accelerated universe of values reweighed; for not only are new materials, and new uses of old materials, the conforming practice; but new ideas, new solutions and the revamping of formerly accepted thoughts are completely reorienting our world, into which only the united and the awakened, the informed and the alert, the visioned and the resourceful will enter.

## MAJOR IRVING RUIE

And then he glanced at his time and realized we had much to cover in the evening ahead; that we had a distinguished guest to portray another angle of this subject, so forthwith President Kideney introduced Major Irving V. A. Huie, Commissioner of Public Works, Major U.S.A., Engineer and all-around good fellow. Major Huie arose and said, Quote: Besides being a distinct Privilege and Honor, my appearance tonight, in response to your invitation, makes me as an engineer feel most humble. I trust I am not a "Daniel entering the Lions' Den." Existing chaos has forced upon the world at large, and we, as members of the two outstanding technical professions particularly, a deep sense of the frailty of all things that have been created by man, and a bewilderment which leads us to search not only for the answer to the large question, but particularly the lesser answer in so far as it affects our work and our profession.

Lewis Mumford in "Culture of Cities", I think states very clearly and concisely the whole problem—"While the tasks of building, co-operation and integration are never finished, *un*building may be completed in a few generations. The chief question now before the Western World today is whether disintegration must be completed before a fresh start is made."

Of course, neither you, nor I, nor the City Fathers are willing to admit that disintegration must be complete. We are, to the contrary, I am sure, of the opinion quite definitely that the work of upbuilding must go on in spite of the terrible conflict which is now engulfing the world. Granted that this upbuilding cannot proceed at the moment in a factual way, we must prepare and plan for it with the utmost of our thought, study and intensive work in creating actual plans for the future. It is quite significant that, in recent history, many of the advances in the municipalities of the world took place during the periods of so-called "hard times". I can cite our own city's experience—immediately after the great depression of 1930, and more specifically from 1934 on, we actually constructed more needed and beneficial public works than had been accomplished in any similar era of the city's history. Of course, it was greatly aided by financial assistance from the Federal Government, which was seeking to increase employment through public works. It is my considered opinion that had we been able to foresee and plan for this era of municipal construction and had our plans and contracts been ready, the total volume, appreciable though it was, might well have been very materially increased.

I think that we have learned our lesson, and we are now preparing to meet the inevitable conditions which will follow the War. May I quote from the Mayor's message to the City Planning Commission on September 15 last, where he said, "The country learned that it took from one year to a year and a half to obtain the benefits of a vast recovery building program which the Federal Government had provided in 1934 and 1935. New York City, finding itself better prepared with working plans, was able to obtain a larger share of federal grants in advance of most other communities in the country." It is true that we were better prepared than other communities, but we are determined to be fully prepared this time.

When planning is mentioned, the general public immediately limits their thoughts to public works. You and I know that this is only one phase of planning. There is one other major phase—the planning of private works—which is wholly within the jurisdiction of your profession and mine, for the guidance, the technical direction and the overall supervision, particularly as to the coordination of the broad scope of private enterprise. The opportunities in this phase of planning are so tremendous that I shall only suggest the thought to you to night. There is, however, one thought in this connection that I cannot help but present—the field for the architect and the engineer is no longer the immediate territory that we individually have confined ourselves to in the past and looked upon as our geographical scope of operations, but it will be the who'e wide world from this day right on. The younger members of our profession may well look forward to what is commonly called "foreign service" as the field of greatest opportunities in the immediate future.

## NEW YORK CITY POST-WAR PLANNING

The city of New York is planning for the future, and, I think, planning well. The 1942 capital budget was adopted last December and went into effect on January 1 last. Along in the Spring, after considerable thought, the 1942 capital budget, as amended, was adopted on June 25. The capital budget was amended for only one reason, and that was to provide for the actual design and the completion of specifications and contract documents of definitely approved projects which would be ready for construction on the day after this terrible war has ended. This is known as the Post War Works Program.

To make this design possible, the amendment merely reduced the monies which had been allocated for construction purposes and made monies available for the purpose of design, all within original budget.

Briefly, let me give you a functional breakdown of the budget to give an indication of the wide scope of the works which have been included.

### 680 MILLION

The amended budget contemplates public works, which it is estimated will cost approximately \$680,000,000. Of this, the Department of Marine and Aviation have \$15,000,000; The Board of Education—\$118,000,000; The Board of Higher Education—\$6,000,000; Museums and Institutions—\$10,000,000; The Park Department—\$41,000,000; The Board of Transportation—\$90,000,000; and The Department of Public Works and its client departments—\$217,000,000.

The breakdown of monies functionally that have been allocated to the Department of Public Works is: Buildings, \$122,253,000; Bridges, \$11,500,000 and Sewage Treatment Works, \$84,000,000. For the completed plans, specifications and contract documents to provide for these works, the city has authorized a total of approximately \$22,000,000 and has appropriated over \$10,000,000 thus far for this purpose.

I will not attempt to go into greater detail on the Post-War Works Program, but will simply mention, at this time, that there is a brochure which has been prepared by the City Planning Commission, a copy of which I have here and will leave with your Chairman.

However, I do want to take this opportunity, as a member of the City Planning Commission, to tell you that this Post-War Works Program has been very carefully studied and considered before its adoption. We do not claim that it is a program of public works which will cure all of the evils of New York City for even the immediate future, it is only a program which supplies some of the immediate necessities by way of providing for: "present inadequacies; urgent demands for replacement of obsolete facilities; and normal repairs (already too long delayed) in the city's physical plant, as well as some new developments."

I also want to emphasize that no one in the city government expects that this entire Post-War Works Program can, or will even be attempted to be constructed in the first year following the war. Outside of the fact of the limitation of the construction industry to absorb more than a given amount of work at any one time, the progress of the construction of this program depends wholly upon the ability of the city and the attitude of the Federal Government, to provide the necessary finances.

The Department of Public Works, which I am sure I need not tell you is closest to my heart in my daily duties, is probably what you expected me to spend most of my time upon. I certainly am not going to overlook it, but I do feel that most of you gentlemen know the department, many intimately, and if I were to go into my usual exposition, it probably would become boring.

However, the Department has three main functions, bridges, sewage treatment and buildings. In each of these functions we design, we construct and we operate. You gentlemen are most interested in the buildings, and in that field we design many more buildings for various departments than we are called upon to operate. I refer to such departments as hospitals, health, police, fire and sanitation.

Again in this field, you gentlemen are interested in the design part of our jurisdiction, rather than the operation, and because of this I am going to limit myself to the Bureau of Architecture which has complete supervision over all of the design work for our public buildings, regardless of whether it is performed by our own forces or by a member of your profession retained by us.

**BUREAU OF ARCHITECTURE**

Our organization divides the Bureau of Architecture into functional groups, which are headed by supervising architects. These supervising architects report directly to the Director of the Bureau. These supervising architects also are the architectural consultants for the particular Client Department to which they have been assigned, and whose function is their specialty.

I am going to take the liberty of giving you the names of a few of these. The Directors of the Bureau of Architecture is Mr. A. Gordon Lorimer; the Supervising Architect for Hospitals is Mr. Isadore Rosenfield; for Health, Mr. J. B. Basil; for Sewage Disposal, Mr. Albert Bauer; for Police and Fire, Mr. F. W. McNamara; for Markets and Sanitation, Mr. A. H. Johnson; for Corrections, Mr. Walter Detmar and for Public Buildings, Mr. A. J. Daidone.

I am happy to report that this functional method of approaching our design problems has progressed to the extent that now it is the efficient tying link between the client and the architect or engineer. Prior to the creation of the Department of Public Works there had been no expert technical liaison between an architect or engineer retained by the city and the department itself. We have it now.

There is one question which has come up in the minds of many of you here tonight, and which has come to my attention many times during recent years. I am even going to risk the danger of repetition to bring it up again tonight.

**PRIVATE PRACTITIONER**

Question: When does the Department of Public Works employ outside architects? Gentlemen, when I entered city service four and a half years ago and the task of organizing the Department of Public Works confronted me, I had one major decision of policy to make—how was I going to accomplish the design? At that time I had inherited a certain number of technical men, both architects and engineers, from other departments who formed the new Department of Public Works which was born on January 1, 1938. Each of these men had certain qualifications. After a very careful survey and much study and thought on the part of my staff, a policy was enunciated and set forth in the latter part of 1938, which has been adhered to consistently as follows: the Department of Public Works will design such volume of work as the force which was in the Department in 1938, can efficiently and economically accomplish, any peak or specialty loads to be given to outside architects or engineers as the nature of the project might dictate. This, gentlemen, has been the policy since 1938 and I know of no exception to that policy. It will be the policy of the Department of Public Works as long as I am Commissioner—I can say no more.

We have a service in the Department of Public Works which has not received any publicity, but which can be of great value to you, especially those of you who are doing work for the city in your design work. I am speaking of the Materials Section headed by Mr. W. S. Elliott. This Section was formed over three years ago to coordinate and standardize our testing of materials, but it has broadened its scope in the past few years and we have samples of many new building materials together with their specifications, and a recommended specification for the erection of these materials. In the office of this Section, there have been actually erected samples of many materials which are used in the interior, so that our designers can have the advantage of actual observation. This Section, gentlemen, is at your service.

This leads me directly to another thought that I have had for the past several months, particularly during those days when we were discussing a Post-War Works Program and its design. I am sure that all of you gentlemen realize that when this War is over, you and I will have available for construction purposes many and many materials which we have never had available before. Some of them are brand new materials, in so far as their use in construction is concerned. Others are materials that we used in a very limited way in construction, but because of the tremendous increase in facilities for production of these materials for war purposes, there will be a sufficient supply for ordinary construction use. Then, there is a third class of materials which the designer has been driven to use which we did not think of using in normal design; for instance, laminated wood sections, the plastics, etc. Gentlemen, all of these materials are factors which you and I must keep well to the front in our studies for the design of any structure which cannot be built until after the War is over.

Finally, I should like to say a few words about the Citizen's Defense Corps, and limit those few words to the Public Works Emergency Division. As Chief of this Division, it has been my privilege to have the full cooperation, not only of the technical professions so vitally interested in this emergency work, but of all the construction industry, all of the utilities and of organized labor. There are still opportunities for men who have the time to help us in this most necessary work. Let me cite just one instance—we are using as incident officers in our various Boroughs, architects and engineers and some highly qualified construction men. There are some sections of the city, principally the business or industrial sections, where we do not have a full complement of qualified men. If any of you gentlemen are interested and can give us the time that is necessary, I should be glad to have you contact Mr. Adolph Klein, the Executive Officer of the Division, who is located in my office.

In closing, let me thank you for the opportunity of appearing here before you tonight to give you very frankly a few thoughts that I know you and I are both vitally interested in. End Quote.

The Major was entitled to more applause than the Chair had time to allow, so President Kideny called for questions. There were many interesting ones, and precise answers by the Major. I would give them in detail, but my space like our time last Friday evening is limited. Suffice to say they are covered in principle in the Major's talk and in the minutes (following) of the Board of Directors on Saturday.

Around midnight, the Chair reluctantly announced, "Adjourned". But there were many of the two hundred plus present who did not depart and so they foregathered for a final glass or two and lots more congenial converse. It is reported and creditably, that some stayed right through for the Director's Meeting Saturday morning.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

On Saturday morning, October 31st, the Directors and their guests assembled at 10:30 A.M. President Kideny banged the old gavel and a roll call showed Messrs. Boehm, Booth, Briggs, Chas. Butler, Cantor, Cavaliere, Ellis, Goldberg, Granger, Green, Kaelber, Koch, Naters, Platt, Rich, Rumschik, Strauss, Weinstein present. Remarkable how bright-eyed they all were. The Chair read Treasurer Del Gaudio's report, which was accepted with thanks. Our Treasurer was recuperating from an operation. We missed him and registered it affectionately and also our earnest wishes for safe recovery.

These are difficult times for all professional Associations to carry on. So many members are on distant war duties and so many others, in the press of related war work, find little time to devote to our volunteer activities, including the collecting and forwarding of dues to the Treasurer. Our bank balance is getting thin. Those of you who have not attended to this matter, please do so. Your Association must have funds to serve you.

**LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Your Legislative Committee, Mr. Del Gaudio, Chairman, was active, as you gentlemen know who read and digested the Report sent bi-weekly during the session. The activities of Mr. Cantor and those of Mr. Briggs, were restricted because of the condition of our treasury, but this handicap was not injurious to the Association's interests because the situation created by the War precluded the passage of much legislation. Nevertheless, our combined results were: S.I. 44, the Phelps Bill prohibiting architects from doing state work was successfully contested and the bill was defeated; the proposed revision to Industrial Code Rule #7 relative to fire resistive construction was studied by the committee and recommendations made to the Board of Standards and Appeals of the Labor Department. Such recommendations accepted and the Code rules are now in effect: S.I. 216, permitting 3-family occupancy in two-family dwellings. Passed by Legislature, vetoed by Governor: S.I. 583, terming architectural draftsmen "workmen". Killed in Committee: S.I. 762, requiring ratproofing in multiple dwellings. Killed in Assembly Rules Committee: S.I. 1407, fire retarding of lodging houses. Killed in Assembly Rules Committee: S.I. 1408, providing self-closing doors in all old law tenements. Killed in Assembly Rules Committee: S.I. 1452, providing services and facilities in connection with housing projects. Signed by Governor: S.I. 1575, increasing amount of light required for halls and stairs in multiple dwellings. Killed in Assembly Rules Committee: S.I. 1736, permitting increase in height of basement above ground, six story fireproof multiple dwellings. Signed by Governor: S.I. 1854, allowing washing of cars in garages accessory to multiple dwellings. Signed by Governor: A.I. 272, permitting corporations consisting of registered architects to practice. This bill was opposed by the Committee on the ground that a non-registered architect could be a member of the firm. After the bill had been amended, it was decided by a majority vote not to oppose the bill in its amended form. Signed by Governor: A.I. 1539, requiring hall man in buildings having automatic

*Continued on Next Page*

## THE SECRETARY SPEAKS (Continued from Page 5)

elevator. Signed by Governor: A.I. 2075, creating post-war planning reserve. Recommended for approval. Signed by Governor. We did not press the introduction of bill reducing cost of buildings or volume thereof, where architects would be required, believing that the efforts at this time would be expensive and inopportune. However, it is intended to resume efforts to have such legislation enacted very soon. Since the entire country has embarked on an all-out "win the war" program, it is recommended that we devote all our energy to this very important work, and only support or oppose such new legislation as it may be introduced by others, without attempting to sponsor legislation of our own, except as noted.

### E. S. A.

Our publication, the Empire State Architect has done nicely in these times. Publisher Julian Kahle reports a \$500.00 balance for eleven months. At their next session, the Directors will have to review this contract. To assist them, will you write us; what items do you think would interest architects at this time; have you enjoyed the Empire State Architect; do you find the publication serviceable; what advertising policy would you prefer. . . and, speaking of advertising, the Directors believe a classified list of new materials and substitute materials would increase the Empire State Architect reader interest. Do you agree? Write to the Secretary.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION\*

The next item was the Hughes report. This is Progress Report of the Committee on Public Information, AIA, Talmage C. Hughes, Chairman. You should study the complete report. It is so long I must give a few quotes. "Instead of the Octagon being an item of expense, it would become the source of considerable revenue, a means of increasing membership and the instrument of a real public relations program, not only self-supporting but providing funds for other activities." Gradually building up until: "in due time, it could finance radio publicity, such as other professions have. The National Broadcasting Company has already agreed to give the time for such a series, provided the Institute would pay the costs incidental to production." . . . "By reason of its being a National weekly, owned by the Institute, it would be unique in its field and could be considered as being in competition with any existing publication." Now, say some, is not the time. "Every successful program has anticipated conditions. Advertising men do not wait until their clients are faced with making sales immediately or going out of business. Such a program at this time would be more effective, because the public knows that at present we have nothing to sell. To help defray costs we see no valid reason for not carrying producers' advertising, like the Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Hygiea for the medical profession. The bugaboo of advertising in a publication owned by the architectural profession fades in the light of value received. If advertisers do not receive dollar-for-dollar value it is wrong and the advertising should not be accepted. If they do, there is no problem." After a discussion, the Directors favored in principle, the Report. Our Association AIA Director was so notified.

### POST-WAR PLANNING

New York has a ten member Temporary State Commission for Post-War Public Works Planning. Elections may change the complexion of some of these ten men, but a State program will be operative. To explore its possibilities for architects, President Kideney appointed Adolph Goldberg, Chairman, Matthew Del Gaudio, Sidney L. Strauss and John T. Briggs to study and to report to him.

New York City also has a post-war program, which brought to mind the Mayor's Panel of Architects. While the item is local, nevertheless, on behalf of younger men and some of the others, the Directors suggest that the jury of three evolve a method for qualifying these men where they have not been the author of some substantial building under their own name. The Chair appointed Messrs. Rich, Cantor and Boehm a committee for this work.

Yes, our appetites were sharpening, but one more resolution before lunch, authorizing the Treasurer to pay expenses of the October 30 and 31 meetings. Finally, at 1:30 P.M. we recessed for liquids and beef. But promptly at 2:20 P.M. we reconvened, revived, and then,

Public Works Planning, legislative program, and fees were discussed. Fees should include ALL services done under the architect's control and where a percentage fee is used, 1939 costs are the basis.

No matter how interesting the shop discussions, trains do not delay their appointed starting. With surprise President Kideney's eye and his watch face met and his 3 P.M. exclamation brought termination. Our distant Directors must homeward trek to be on deck Monday morning with minds crystal clear, after the velocity and pith of our discussion which left some of the local boys I know, a little hazy.

And now for another Meeting report, on December 5th, the Directors met in New York, at 115 East 40 Street, at 10:30 A.M. The gavel sounded and President Kideney called the meeting to order. The poll by the Secretary showed the following men present: Messrs. Kideney, President; Briggs, Secretary; Horsey; Rumschik; Weinstein; Winslow; Koch; Ellis; Booth; Boehm; Goldberg; Strauss; Cantor; Rich; Tichman; Vedder; Del Gaudio.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

President Kideney stated that the Buffalo Architects have been active in civilian defense and also that the Buffalo Convention Bureau was looking forward after the war to our holding our next Convention there.

The President then had the Secretary read Publisher Julian Kahle's report wherein the publisher exercises his option of the contract in force between the Association and himself to publish on the present every other month basis for next year, providing the war effort does not make this impossible. The Directors accepted his decision with the understanding that no change will be made in publication dates without prior approval by the Board. His report also included a balance sheet which shows a slight profit.

President Kideney now called for the report of the Committee of Three, consisting of Vice-President Ellis, Treasurer Del Gaudio and Secretary Briggs. Mr. Briggs reported for the Committee on the interview at Albany on December 4 with Mr. Holden A. Evans, Jr., Executive Secretary and John T. Carroll of the staff. Perhaps a little review here will be in order.

On May 5, 1942, the Governor approved an Act (Chapter 660) creating a temporary State Commission for Postwar Works Planning in order to direct the preparation of plans and specifications for certain State projects and making an appropriation therefor. This Commission shall continue until July 1, 1943.

Now the State of New York, Temporary State Commission for Postwar Planning, consists of: J. Buckley Bryan, Chairman, Director of the State Budget; Senator Arthur H. Wicks, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee; Capt. Arthur W. Brandt, State Superintendent of Public Works; Robert Moses, Chairman, State Council of Parks; Edward Weinfeld, State Commissioner of Housing; Maurice F. Neufeld, Director, State Bureau of Planning; Assemblyman Abbot Low Moffat, Vice-Chairman, Chairman, Assembly Ways and Means Committee; Assemblyman Irving M. Ives, Chairman, New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions; Senator Jacob J. Schwartzwald, Vice Chairman, New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions; William B. Groat, Jr., Counsel, New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions; of which Mr. Maurice F. Neufeld is now in the Army and Mr. Jacob J. Schwartzwald is now a Judge. There will be other changes by the Governor, Dewey, after January 1, 1943.

The sum of \$450,000, of which not more than \$50,000 may be applied to administrative expenses, was appropriated for Postwar Planning and capital reserve fund or the preparation of plans and specifications for State institutions, buildings and other incidental structures and other State projects to be constructed after the War. Plans and specifications for railroad grade crossing eliminations, highways and low-cost public housing projects are otherwise provided for . . . plans and specifications ordered by the Commission may be prepared by the Department of Public Works or by private architects or engineering firms selected at its discretion for the Temporary State Commission for Postwar Public Works Planning.

The conference with Mr. Evans was for 3 P.M. and lasted about an hour and a half and throughout the most friendly and cooperative spirit prevailed on both sides. We stressed that the Architects on their part were increasingly conscious of their civic duties and were applying their experience and knowledge to the public welfare within the spheres where they are experts. On the public's part there is an increasing recognition of the service which the Architect does render to the community and to the individual welfare of the people through well-planned functionally operative projects.

Mr. Evans assured us that careful consideration is being given to the Architects' answers to his questionnaire and may I say, that it is surprising how many Architects have neglected this important preliminary. We urge you to submit yours at once if you are interested in State work.

The projects to be done by private architects are small in dollar amounts. Four have been allocated to date, one almost in the contract stage. This last is one of the larger projects, about \$360,000. The fees to be paid by the Commission will be in proportion to the amount of work required by the project, which fee includes engineering services. In the more complicated ones, the fee is 4% of the cost based on 1940 estimates, of which 1% will be paid for the preliminaries. The Architect's work consists of complete working drawings and specifications for later building contract purposes and details where required. His fee is payable upon the completion of his work. If later the estimated costs are more or less than the

(Continued on Page 12)



MELVIN L. and HARRY A. KING, Architects

## SYRACUSE COCA-COLA BOTTLING PLANT

by HARRY A. KING

In the design of this building, as in any building for the manufacture or processing of a product, the first essential was to provide a compact and efficient plan for the bottling of Coca-Cola, storage of empty and filled cases, ease of loading and unloading of trucks; to provide storage and repair space for trucks, and accommodations for offices and the other appurtenances of such a building.

Before preliminary sketches were made, the Owner set forth several points which were necessary for a proper solution and which must be made a part of any scheme. Among these was the desirability of locating the Bottling Room at the front of the building with as large a glass area as possible so that a good, unobstructed view of the bottling machinery could be had from the street.

The architects kept this latter point constantly in mind in the development of preliminary studies. As these studies progressed the usual flat or straight type of front was eliminated and the plan finally adopted projected the Bottling Room as a glass enclosed bay, making this room the main point of interest both from the standpoint of plan as well as in elevation.

The glass bay has no obstructing piers or columns nor are there columns in the Bottling Room proper. This was accomplished by placing the large girders within the roof construction and hanging the floor construction over the Bottling Room from these girders. Likewise the steel supporting members over the bay are cantilevered from the second floor construction.

To add further interest to the exterior and to include a background for the electric sign, a large panel of glass blocks was placed over the first story bay. This panel sets back of the bay and has curved ends and the sign, in the trade marked script letters, is placed over the glass blocks and supported from vertical tee iron sections which are covered on the exterior with satin finish aluminum.

The sign is fastened to these tee irons from the back and no supports are visible from the exterior. The background sections of the script letters are box type in red enamel color approximately 6" in depth with the width varying in accordance with the script. Over the face of these letters is placed a channel type script letter in stainless steel, set 1" away from the face of the red box letters. In back of the stainless steel script letters are two white neon tubes which are not visible from the outside thereby affording protection from the weather, and giving greater life to the tubes. The sign provides a very legible daytime sign and when lighted at night, the stainless steel center script is silhouetted by a bright red script line on each side made from the reflection of the neon tubes on the red enamel background.

To further add to the night time interest of the building, the glass block bay is lighted from the interior with an overall soft green light and the interior of the Bottling Room is likewise lighted from concealed lighting. This color can be changed from time to time.

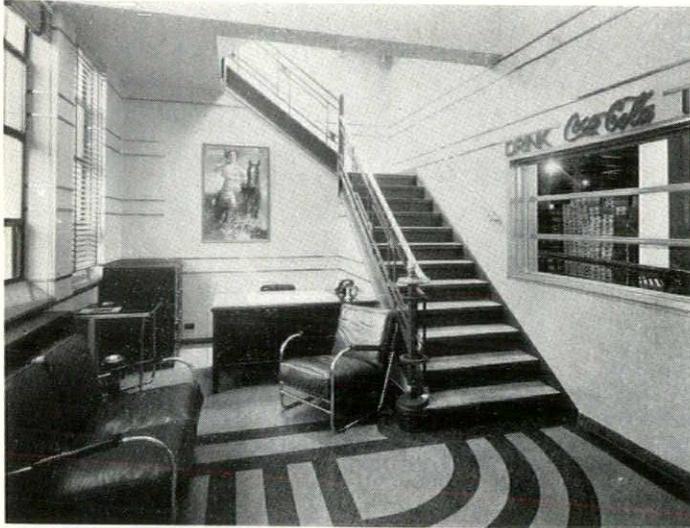
*Continued on Next Page*

# SYRACUSE COCA-COLA BOTTLING PLANT

*Continued from Page 7*

The exterior of the building in the front, two storey section is faced with matt glazed architectural terra cotta in a light buff color with trim in a contrasting reddish brown color. The rear section of the building is faced on the exterior with a smooth, hard burned face brick harmonizing in color with the terra cotta.

All windows in garage and storage sections are of glass blocks set flush with face or brick work. Other windows are



MAIN ENTRANCE LOBBY

of heavy projected type steel. The store front settings, main entrance doors, marquee and similar trim is satin finish alumilited aluminum.

The building contains a garage and repair section in the Basement with a driveway entrance at grade from a side street.

The main entrance is adjacent to the Bottling Room and opens into an attractive lobby and reception space from which a stairway leads to the second floor. At one side of this lobby

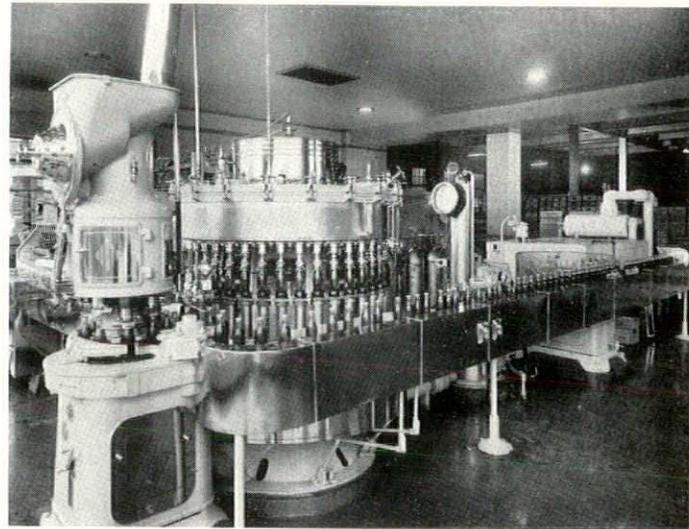


PRIVATE OFFICE

there is a plate glass window affording a view of the Bottling Room.

In addition to the Bottling Room the first storey contains storage space for empty and filled cases, garage space for trucks, drivers' cash-up office, toilets, etc. There is a freight elevator centrally located which serves the Basement, first and second storeys.

In the second storey there are private and general offices storage space for dispensing coolers, etc., and a Syrup Room and Laboratory which is directly over the Bottling Room. Syrup barrels and crowns for bottle tops are stored on the second floor and are conveyed directly to the bottling machinery in the first floor by means of stainless steel pipes and chutes.



BOTTLING ROOM

The private offices are completely air conditioned and decorated with flush wood panelling in various types of figured walnut.

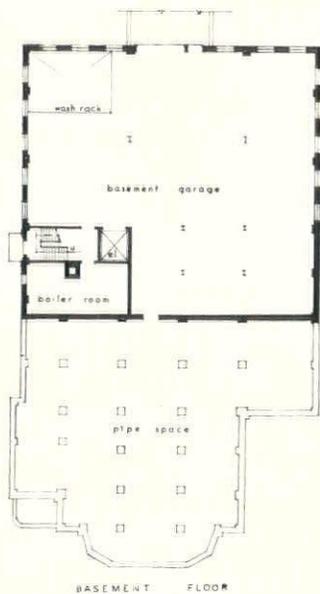
The floors in all garage and storage space are of smooth, hardened cement finish. Floors in Bottling Room, stair halls, etc., are of Terrazzo while those in offices are of asphalt tile.

Interior of exterior walls in garage and storage spaces, drivers' cash-up room and employees toilet rooms, service stairs, etc., are of smooth, hard burned, dark red structural clay tile in units 5" x 12" on the face and which form part of the structural exterior walls and at the same time provide a relatively smooth wall surface easily cleaned and maintained. Interior partitions within these same areas are likewise made of similar units.

The Bottling Room walls are finished with 8" x 16" matt glazed architectural terra cotta in colors similar to those used on the exterior.

Wall surfaces in general offices, main stair hall, lobby and similar areas are of painted plaster.

In making a choice of materials for all interior and exterior surfaces, a low maintenance cost and ease of cleaning was the prime consideration.

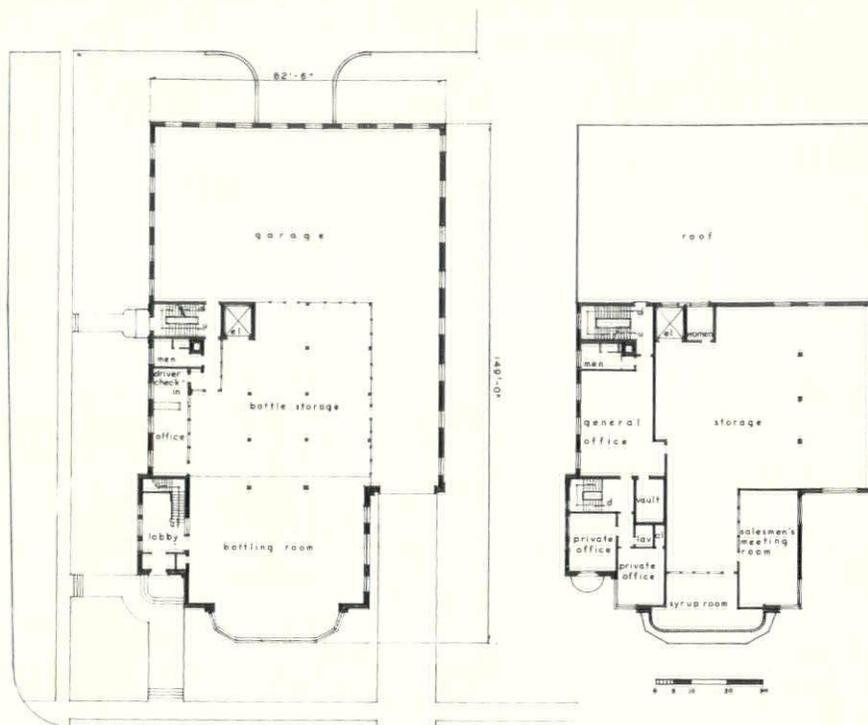


GENERAL CONTRACTOR

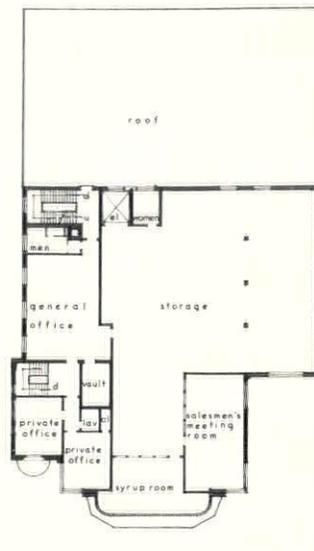
DAWSON BROS. CONST. CO., INC.

Union Bldg.

Syracuse, N. Y.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

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# PREFABRICATION

## A New Stimulus to Organization in the Building Industry

by ARTHUR C. HOLDEN

While the title of the address which I am about to make is "Prefabrication," and while prefabrication is a subject in which my associates and I are deeply interested, prefabrication is not the subject to which this address is devoted.

Not long ago, the President and Secretary of the Producers' Research Council came to see me. They concealed their purpose in coming. They talked to me about the building industry and its position after the war—they talked about the importance of postwar reconstruction. They talked about the need for adequate planning. We spoke of the discredit brought upon the word "planning" by attaching it to so many "crackpot" notions. They led me into the remark that there are altogether too many words which have been used with misapprehension of their significance—for example, "Prefabrication." I pointed out that prefabrication did not mean houses served up in mysterious ready-made packages, but that prefabrication was a step in the movement toward the better organization of the building industry.

I was asked to speak about the significant changes in the building industry, and it was suggested that I use the movement toward prefabrication to explain the significance of these changes. I think all of us remember being told by our professors at college that Latin was included in the curriculum, not for the purpose of teaching us to speak Latin, but for the purpose of giving us cultural training. I can recommend the study of prefabrication to members of the Producers' Research Council, and particularly to my brother architects, and can state with almost professorial assurance that I recommend it, not because I expect everyone suddenly to discover that prefabrication is the one and only method of construction, but because I think it is a most excellent cultural training.

Don't let me scare anyone away when I use the word "culture." If you want to develop an athlete, start putting up low hurdles and gradually increase the height of the hurdles until he can run the race taking the hurdles in his stride, with an appearance of unconcern. Prefabrication begins by setting up some hurdles which we have to learn how to take. Prefabrication teaches us that if we can understand some of the hurdles which we have mistaken for fences and divisions between the parts of the construction industry, we can acquire a facility which will allow us to get into a stride of which we did not believe ourselves capable.

Do not let us make our definition of prefabrication too narrow. I was told one day by one of the so-called government experts, that the system of prefabrication for which my associates and I have served as advisers was really not prefabrication at all, since the sections were not completely finished inside and out, so as merely to require locking together at the job for erection, and unlocking for demounting. Prefabrication, according to my definition, means organization. It means organization where design is co-ordinated with production in such a way that parts and sections of the work may be designed and fabricated as sections which fit together in a way that is practically, economically, and esthetically satisfying. This does not mean that sections have to be finished in any particular way, nor does it mean that the use of nails is taboo in fitting sections together.

I do not want to confine my remarks to any particular system of prefabrication, but I think it is fair to say that prefabrication per se imposes limitations upon design. The man who builds from a pattern has distinct limitations put upon him. The pattern may be a design for the whole, or the house may be an assembly of patterns. A traditionally built house may be of any desired dimensions. In this case the pattern is the design for the whole house, which is put together with thousands of parts that are cut and fitted on the job. To design a house to be erected by prefabricated method, the designer must agree in advance to hold the dimensions to pre-established modules. Of course, at the outset this seems a handicap, but it is a handicap which, like a hurdle, trains the man who learns how to take it to greater agility.

Some of the hurdles imposed by prefabrication make men think about important phases of the construction industry to which they have previously given scant attention. Let us begin with the important function of distribution. Prefabricated sections are not of much use to people who don't know how to put them together. Hence, an erecting diagram or a carefully worked out plan is essential. Nobody can get very far with prefabricated sections by just starting out blindly. Hence the man who buys a prefabricated house gets his plan as a part of the service of furnishing materials. He simply has to have it, and the

prefabricator could not sell his standard parts without the plan. Any old plan won't do. It has to be a good plan. Since the parts must be standardized, the purchaser is assured of a certain quality. So, from the consumer's point of view, there is assurance of a known standard of quality and design on which the prefabricator has established his reputation. The man who buys an automobile of a standard manufacture knows that it is going to work, or that the manufacturer will make it good. The same applies to the prefabricated house. The producer must guarantee not only that the parts are sound, but the erection job must be intelligent and satisfactory. That is the reason the leading prefabricators have limited their erectors to approved experienced firms who are bound by contracts to the prefabricators in such a way as to assure satisfactory performance.

The erector on his part must insist on intelligent performance by the manufacturer of the basic parts. The erector does not wish to receive parts which are almost certain to be marred in shipment, nor does he want parts that are difficult to handle, nor does he wish to pay excessive transportation charges.

Experience has taught some of the older prefabricators to be wary of the earlier sales shiboleths about prefabrication. Of course, it was fascinating to let the imagination go and to write attractive sales copy about prefabrication. The public reacts immediately to attractive promises even though immediate fulfillment is impossible, and the public is very forgiving so the risk of overstatement is not great. The public has long been ready, or at least thought it was ready, to "cut the Gordian knot," to get rid of the uncertainties of a system of construction which the public does not understand, and enjoy the delights of a new system of prefabrication that will permit every man to order a "package" delivered to him in finished parts, which only have to be locked together to produce the house.

It is a beautiful idea to think that house parts can be skilfully fashioned by trained artisans in an efficient factory, thus obviating the delays, confusions, and inefficiencies that have been attributed to construction in the field. It is a fly in the ointment of a beautiful dream, however, to think that the loading and unloading of beautifully finished parts, or the jolting of the speeding truck may effect damage that the field erection crew is not equipped to remedy. But such things have to be guarded against, as is evidenced by the swing away from the attempt to deliver over-sized or highly finished parts.

Furthermore, freight charges—whether by rail or truck—are a condition to be reckoned with. There are economic limits to practical shipping distances. It does not pay to ship parts which will not stack compactly. The loading of the truck, the piling of the parts upon unloading, are problems of the organization which is essential to effective prefabrication.

There has been considerable argument about the advantage of job prefabrication over shop prefabrication, but if a truck must be loaded, it is possible to calculate comparative time costs between light loadings which consume 15 minutes and require frequent short runs, and heavier loadings that take almost three times as long but which reduce the number of required trips. Once efficient loadings have been made, however, the difference between a quarter mile run and a 40-mile run is not more than two hours in time for truck and driver. Certainly as prefabrication progresses, new divisions will be made between parts assigned to shop or job assembly.

The value of prefabrication lies in the fact that it has made designers more conscious of materials, as well as of ways of putting material together, and of ways of transport. Let it not be assumed that prefabrication destroys the need for the architect. It aids the architect. It classifies his task by separating the design of the home "chassis" from its exterior finish and permitting the coordination of the exterior of the houses in a group to form one general pattern or design.

It is too early yet to say how large a proportion of the house may be effectively assembled in the shop. Comparatively little as yet has been done with regard to mechanical installations such as heating, plumbing, and electrical wiring. A small field fabricating shop for supply, vent, and soil pipe assemblies has done the most effective work which I personally have experienced. Certain portions of the carpentry work which require adjustments at the job can best be done at the job. These include porches and garages where flexibility in roof lines are required to take advantage of grade conditions.

There is every reason to expect that some form of mobile prefabrication will probably evolve out of the present system of widely distributed fabricating shops. Shop prefabricating experience, however, has been responsible for developing the overall organization that has been so sorely needed in the building industry. It is this experience that has confirmed the need for greater freedom in methods of assembly and for reduced restriction through building codes.

Chapters might be written about the resistances to progress, both conscious and unconscious. A code which states specifically how openings of certain sizes are to be framed is obviously a handicap to a system of construction which makes openings an integral part of wall panel construction. Obviously, if a wall or window panel is to be shipped and is to stand the handling necessary, without wracking, it must be substantially braced. Many of the old code requirements become academic because the rigidity desired is obtained by methods not contemplated when the majority of existing building codes were written.

The questions raised by prefabrication, in connection with code revisions alone, have been worth the entire experiment as a liberalizing force long needed by the construction industry.

Governmental contracting officers, charged with the duty of purchasing prefabricated houses, both of the demountable and the non-demountable type, have been required to follow the usual governmental procedure. They must demand complete routine drawings on the assumption that everything must be shown, so that the inspecting officer, who is separated from the contracting officer, will have documentary authority on which to base orders for compliance with the contract. This completely ignores the fact that the purpose of drawings in prefabrication is far different from the purpose of drawings made for the construction of a house according to traditional methods. For prefabrication, show drawings are necessary for the making of specific sections on the jig table. After this, a section designation number is sufficient for a repeat of the order. The materials needed for a house may be supplied by a list of reference numbers, designating the sections to be used. What the architect needs in advance is knowledge of the masses to be produced by the assembly of the sections which he designates. He must be able to visualize the "chassis" of a house. This he can best control by the use of small-scale models. The men in the field need erection diagrams rather than the pictures which were a necessity to the old-fashioned carpenter who had to evolve the average small house out of uncut lumber, often without the aid of more than the most sketchy sort of plans. Up to date there has been very little realization of the organizational change which prefabrication is aiding to bring about.

It was only a little over a year ago that I had personal experience with the undeviating plan-filing regulations of the F.H.A. Plans had to be drawn in full and filed individually, each in its respective docket. A project for 250 prefabricated houses, planned as a homogeneous group was approached by officialdom as if it were 250 separate individual houses built without system and without the organizational control which is an essential part of prefabrication. It did not take long for the men who occupied local official position to recognize the need for a change in procedure. It did take, and is still taking, a long while for changes to be authorized from Washington. Again, however, the liberalizing influence of prefabrication is apparent.

The attempt to work out a large project in prefabrication at once brings the designers and promoters into contact with all the miscellaneous complexities and obstructions with which the construction industry is encumbered. Where, for example, is the prefabricator to buy? Can he go to the producer direct and place his quantity orders, or must he be serviced through local jobbers because of territorial agreements previously entered into between producers and their distributors? What is going to be the attitude of labor? Can the prefabricators secure business adequate to keep their shop forces continually employed? If this can be done prefabrication may become a force for stabilizing employment. But this, in turn may depend upon the capacity of the prefabricators to carry reasonable sized inventories, or rather inventories large enough to provide a cushion against a shortage of materials on the one hand, and a lay-off of labor on the other. Again it may be the ability to handle parts economically which will set the ultimate standard.

I think I have given sufficient emphasis to the point that prefabrication should not be looked upon as a panacea, and that it should not be considered as a subject for exact definition. Prefabrication ought to be thought of as a cultural influence, or a stimulant to thinking in the building industry. I have tried to emphasize my conviction that prefabrication is nothing more nor less than a movement toward improvement in organization. I want to close by giving you an intimation of how widely the influence of this organization may reach.

Let us suppose for a moment that we here are producing prefabricators. Preeminently, we are interested in the quantity market. But we are interested in something more than just sales. Our production methods qualify us to do something effectively which heretofore has

not been done. It is our opportunity to design and build communities, perhaps even to redesign and rebuild blighted communities. We prefabricators by our co-ordination of design with production are equipped to carry out projects on a large scale more economically than has previously been possible. Furthermore, our modular system produces the homogeneity which so many communities lack. Through large-scale design we can make our variations harmonious. There is every reason to expect, too, that as we improve our organization we will be able to give a better product for a lower price. We can protect values by designing communities rather than houses.

Already, although we are only at the beginning, we have made ourselves felt. What do you think is the underlying significance of the agitation about demountable units? For myself, I believe that there is considerable fear on the part of those who have investments in existing houses, as to the effect upon these investments by new types of construction which are designed in such a way as to give desirable homes for less money, located in communities designed as communities and for this reason protected to a larger degree against the rapid obsolescence which has adversely affected so many real estate investments. I think this fear is felt by those who are equity owners of properties and hold them for rental incomes—as well as by investors in mortgages. We must remember that very large parts of the residential sections in a majority of our cities contain what have come to be known as blighted areas. In some cases blight has been due to congestion and the physical abuse of property—in some cases, to economic changes, with high proportions of vacancies and rapid physical depreciation. In other cases blight has been due to arrested development or to the inability of developers and their purchasing clients to carry properties on the economic bases for which they were designed.

In many of our cities where war production has become a major factor and an acute housing demand has resulted, there has been considerable difference of opinion as to how this housing demand should be met. Those who control some of the older properties, particularly the properties that have suffered from blight or arrested development, have felt that their properties should receive consideration and that they should be allowed to co-operate in meeting increased demand. Others have felt that the mistakes of the past should not be charged to war workers seeking housing in the present emergency. For this reason there is a group who are anxious to erect new satellite suburbs on land to be newly developed, where freedom of planning is possible and modern standards of individual house and group design can be applied. Hence, there has been a battle between the interests representing the older properties and those whose interests are served by the development of new properties.

A way out of the difficulty has been presented by the advance of the demountable prefabricated type. Both interests have joined in advocating a larger use of demountable units, upon the theory that these could be removed and hence would not create a problem after the return to normal conditions following the war. Of course, there is a question as to whether we do or do not know what "normal conditions" may be. Pressure has been put upon Congress, and Congress has recognized that less antagonism is aroused where demountable houses are promised. On the one hand, there is the possibility that the demountable houses may be removed and used elsewhere. A vague hope has been extended that possibly many of the demountable units may be used after the war for the betterment of rural and farm housing conditions. There is also the argument that standards lower than the recognized standards of room sizes may be utilized in the case of demountable houses, where removal is promised, because these do not threaten a permanent lowering of standards which the average housing reformer believes it his mission to establish.

I am only sketching a few of the cross-currents and questions which have been started by the advance of the prefabricated house. I think it is sufficiently plain that prefabrication does mean organization and that prefabrication is a stimulus to thinking. Prefabrication has been a God-send to us. In raising questions and demanding their early solution, prefabrication throws clearly into focus the backwardness of some of the related practices which have served to retard the development of the building industry and have held it in a strait-jacket.

I want to call upon those who are interested in the building industry—on the production side, the construction side, and the design side—to take their places in working on and advancing the solution of the problems which we meet. Those who have been working specifically at prefabrication have made great advances. They cannot go on alone. There is need for better understanding and better practices in the use to which land is put and in the methods of finance which are used. Real estate, building, and finance are all closely tied together. We must realize this inter-relationship and develop more harmonious relations in order that we may better serve the public.

agreed upon between the Commission and the Architect, the fee of the architects will remain unchanged. If after the contract is let, the architect is retained for supervision, a contract for supervision will then be entered into either lump sum or per diem.

We also discussed a method whereby Architects who had not done public work to the extent of \$200,000 per project could be qualified for buildings within their experience. This part of the discussion was tentative and no conclusions were reached but after our next interview, I will be able to report to you what method will be adopted.

I might add before I close, what I consider Part I of this Report, that: Wherever practical, the Architect practicing in the community where the project is located will be employed, and further, the Commission has available for plans and specifications \$335,000 for private architects' fees. \$50,000 has been allotted for administrative expenses of the Commission; \$65,000 to the State Bureau of Public Works, which as you see, totals \$450,000.

Now for Part II of this Report.

The leaders of both parties, (R & D) have agreed that this work is of vital importance to the people of the State, and so will have introduced in the next session of the Legislature a bill containing additional appropriations for plans and specifications, and it appears to us that this will be an extensive, small-projects program, in which political subdivisions and the State will each pay half the total cost. New York City already has a seventy-two million dollar list on file.

We offered our services on your behalf in the drafting of this bill and have reason to believe that they will be accepted. In the discussion which followed among the Directors, Mr. Ellis and Mr. Briggs answered questions and Mr. Kideny brought out that in the past, Architects selected by municipalities to do certain work were not acceptable to the awarding agency and suggested to this Committee, that this be discussed at the Committee's next interview. Also professional fees were discussed and it was the consensus of opinion that 4% was ample for the work required.

Secretary Briggs reported for the State Labor Committee. They recommend that the present personnel and officers be retained at 80 Centre Street for the transaction of down state business within the jurisdiction of the State Labor Department. Their recommendations were approved and the Secretary was directed to effectuate it.

President Kideny next presented a telegram from the California State Association of Architects calling attention to an article in the comic section of the Saturday Evening Post of November 28th, page 30, lambasting the Architect. The Directors felt we should reply in kind and the matter was referred to Chairman Goldberg of the Professional Practice Committee with power to act.

The President next presented an article by William Stanley Parker, titled, "Act Now on Local Planning". The Directors ordered this published in the January-February Empire State Architect.

Chairman Boehm of the Committee to contact the Jury of Three, whose duty it is to select Architects for the New York City panel, stated that they had accomplished their work but the Directors felt they should continue to function until after the Jury of Three had acted. At this point, Mr. Cantor resigned from the above Committee as he is one of the Jury of Three. The other two are Briggs and Lescaze.

The next question was a new State Commissioner of Housing. The Directors felt that this post should be filled by a sympathetic architect of experience and ability.

It now being one o'clock, we recessed for lunch and cocktails but promptly at 2:30, President Kideny called the meeting to order, at which time Treasurer Del Gaudio presented his report, which, after analysis, was accepted with thanks. For your information, we have a balance of about some \$500.00.

Treasurer Del Gaudio had also prepared a tentative budget for 1943, which after discussion was adopted as a guide.

While he was on his feet, he reported as Chairman of the Legislative Committee of 1942 and made recommendations for 1943, which recommendations are contained heretofore.

The Chair was notified that Alfred A. Lama has been elected to the Assembly from Brooklyn. The Secretary was directed to send him a letter of congratulations.

We next had a report of Chairman Boehm for the Nominating Committee. The Chair then announced that it would receive nominations from the floor, the pleasant result of which were that the Directors had several people from which to choose for each office. After the voting was completed, the Chair announced that the following men had been elected to serve you for 1943: President: Charles R. Ellis; Vice-Presidents: William G. Kaelber; Louis Booth; George B. Hall and Lorimer Rich. Secretary: John T. Briggs; Treasurer: Maxwell A. Cantor.

After congratulations to the elected candidates, the Directors spread on the Minutes, resolution thanking all officers and committee chair-

(Continued on Page 14)

## LETTERS

To The Editor, THE EMPIRE STATE ARCHITECT,

Altho I am one of the many whose private practice has been ordered stopped, and am at present serving the War Department, U.S. Engineer Office, as a Resident Engineer on camouflage projects, I expect to be an architect again after the present global mess is cleaned up. So I still think like an architect, when on my own time, and even occasionally attend meetings of the profession to hear what the rest of us are doing and planning.

So, last week I attended the general meeting of the State Association in New York. The speaker, Commissioner Huie, seemed to be somewhat on the defensive as to the relations of the city administration and the profession, but spoke with encouragement and good humor, as well as frankness, on the work of the Department of Public Works. But the thing I really enjoyed was the general discussion that followed, both in relation to his talk and on other subjects of general interest. A great deal was said, and a great deal left hanging in air, as usual. I would like to make a further comment on one subject in particular, which I feel was left unfinished.

In discussing proposed legislation which would remove the minimum \$10,000 or 30,000 cubic feet, now applied to buildings which must be filed by an R. A. or P. E. in this state, it was stated that such a change has been, and still would be, opposed by the up-state farmers. This is probably correct, but should not be accepted as permanent or inevitable. I gathered that the emphasis by our Albany committees had been to try and persuade the legislators representing the farm sections to vote against the wishes of their majority constituents. This will never work, and in true democracy it should not work that way. I believe that some means of publicity must be devised and promoted by our profession which will appeal to the farmers directly, individually and collectively, to prove to them that they will benefit from our services rather than merely being forced to employ them; and such benefits must be shown to be in better buildings—more efficient and economical buildings—and (a bad fourth place) even in handsomer buildings. If this could be proven to the farmers' satisfaction,—and publicity men must know the technique of such proof,—the opposition of the farmers to our desire to make ourselves indispensable on *all* building would soon weaken and finally disappear.

Moreover, I also believe the wish of the farmer to stay away from the architect is partly a matter of reciprocity. The architects in general have not made themselves expert in the farmer's needs, and have not sought him out as a client except when other clients were not available. At the meeting mentioned above, several members spoke in deprecating tones about barns and outhouses, etc., as if they were beneath the dignity of our profession, and not desirable or profitable work anyway. I think both these concepts are wrong. All buildings are worth building well—all grouped buildings are the proper subject of functional planning as a group—and nearly all buildings can be planned a little better than their common prototypes. And as for profitable business, I believe that if the architect keeps his office procedure simple and modest, drives his small car himself, and gets up early in the morning, he can derive pleasure and profit from rural work, and will in time be regarded as a community benefactor instead of "that fellow who just wants to put his seal on every little plan". My own practice has not been entirely pastoral either, but the further it takes me into the hills, the better I like it, and I hope to become at least partly a farmers' architect after we stop saying "C'est la guerre."

In closing I would like to ask for information on another subject. Several months ago I read of a committee that was working to unify the organized bodies of the profession. The State Ass'n was to be more closely integrated to the A.I.A., perhaps even to become a direct unit in the A.I.A. The local Societies were to merge with the local A.I.A. Chapters. Dues were to become somewhat lower than previous A.I.A. dues, tho still perhaps higher than Society dues. Unity and Democracy were to prevail thruout the profession. My question is: what is happening to this worthy endeavour? This would be the time to consummate this unification. Many of us have been non-joiners or half-hearted members of various groups before, feeling there was too much competition and friction between the several groups, and that little was accomplished. I, for one, would reform and become an active worker in an organization I felt was representative of all architects and was working for the benefit of all. I think many agree with me in this.

If this letter, or any parts of it, appear to have any general interest for the magazine, I will be glad to have you use it.

Very truly yours,

GERSON T. HIRSCH.

# POST WAR WORK

The Bureaus and The Private Firms

BY EDGAR I. WILLIAMS,  
President N. Y. Chapter, A.I.A.

In administering the physical properties of our national, State and municipal commonwealth, bureau and departments are necessary. The normal care of buildings, in which we architects are interested, could be attended to in no other way. Normal care, of course, includes repairs and changes. These in turn lead to additions and new work. It is a logical sequence. The Supervising Architect's Office of the Treasury Department went through this process in the 1930's. Larger contracts formerly were given out to private architects but many a small town was furnished with a good building design by the Department, whereas a poor building might have been the case had the work been given out to some local firm.

The GOOD OLD DEPRESSION years from 1930 on—good by comparison with to-day—brought on another logical step. This was a great expansion of the Supervising Architect's Office to make speed. Speed was essential to fulfill the need of putting men to work during the emergency. Other departments and many state and municipal governments fell in line with this idea. Bureaus geared to function under central control exercised their paternal and protective influence.

Achievement of distinction have resulted among the vast amount of work done. Greater efficiency resulted from the carrying out of the work directly by the central bureaus rather than by parcelling it out to the clamoring hungry private offices, efficiency of speed but not necessarily of cost. Whether or not the architecture of a democracy is better or worse because of this process WAS beside the point. Speed was essential. Speed was achieved.

The excellence of our architecture IS NOT beside the point in normal times. In planning for the future it IS of utmost importance. Strong arguments can be made for the policy of employing private practitioners as compared to the policy of doing public work exclusively in the bureaus. Selection by competition has been shown by documentary evidence to have produced many of our finest buildings. Finding the best man for the job is the important point if excellence is to be the result. Proof is by no means conclusive that the system through which our public architecture is done by bureaus produces the best buildings.

Granted that the bureaus have done good work, it can not be denied that their growth has been the result of a drift toward centralization of power deemed wise by our democratic will in the emergency of the depression years and now in war time.

But how is this idea related to post-war planning? At the present moment there is no construction other than for the war effort. Architecture is for the future. The basic reasons for the expanded architectural bureaus do not at this time exist. We have, in fact, a completely opposite situation. For whereas during the depression years there was wide unemployment in the building industry and in the architectural profession, now there is lack of man power in all industry. And whereas there was plenty of material needing only distribution, now there are only priorities and scarcity. And whereas the young unestablished architect could turn only to a paternal government for employment, and only the established firm could survive the depression, now the young man is needed for the war effort and the older established firms in their turn are without work.

To sum up: 1. Bureaus are indispensable for over-all control of public work and planning but not of necessity for actual production of the plans and specifications for new work. 2. For the immediate setting up of post-war work, there is available a greater reservoir of private technical ability now unused and apparently not wanted for the war effort. 3. This reservoir under guidance and control of the bureaus can produce, certainly with equal economy to the commonwealth, as fine an architecture. 4. The method is that of a democracy.

As a post script, the matter of compensation for this work may be reasonably injected here. To assure careful technical study, not large profits to engineers and architects, compensation should be based upon the requirements of each project. These can be ascertained in various ways, one of which is by reference to costs of such work in the bureaus. Rumors suggest that compensation for New York State post-war work is to be offered at too low a rate to insure adequate study. Economy must prevail but in making possible good plans let us hope that a false idea of economy will not sabotage the effort. We, as architects, can with fairness ask that we be called upon to help determine fair compensation for the work, and can ask it without rancor or suspicion from those Federal, State, or Municipal officials whose high abilities, devotion to their duties and sense of fairness are no greater than those of the private architects.

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# WAR OPENS A NEW DAY IN INTERIOR WALL STRUCTURE

By A. E. CALVER

The influence of war, making itself felt through government housing operations, has within a few months accelerated the revolution in certain phases of home construction more than had taken place in peace-time, private construction in twenty-five years. The time is not far off when the country is going to hear more about pre-fabrication and various significant moves in that direction.

One of the great difficulties today is that the full story of government housing for defense purposes cannot be told. It will not be told until after the war. Manufacturers of housing materials know considerable about the experiments and the gains in experience, but they cannot tell the story. And those organizations that have made real gains in the field of pre-fabrication are not yet ready to tell their story.

But there are certain significant points in government construction that may be discussed. Construction of homes for the Army and Navy in various parts of this country was carried on invariably under the speed compulsion of extraordinary time limits. Housing units had to be built, many and swiftly. One of the first results of this pressure for speed in completion was the tossing overboard of the practice of using wet plaster for interior wall covering. Uncle Sam had no time to wait even for one coat of plaster to dry, especially in view of the fact that construction had to be carried on at times under conditions of extreme cold. Uncle Sam found, too, that it was possible to forget precedents and building habits and obtain first-class interior wall surfaces by using a dry-wall material, not as a substitute but as a structural material having many advantages heretofore undreamed of.

The wall structural material which came into its own in war-time housing at the hands of government architects and engineers, may mean a new day in human housing. Enough is known about the results of government experience along this line to say that one of the leading wall materials whose use was developed in government housing—perhaps the most successful one—was the fibre-content material made by The Upson Company at Lockport, New York.

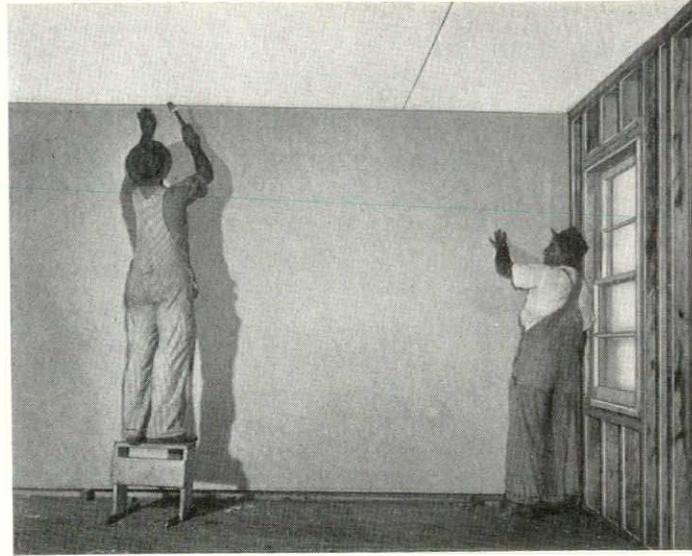
This company furnished millions of feet of its product to the government during World War I. It is one of the few companies that has been in the same building materials field and under the same management uninterrupted since World War I, with an accompanying pressure through all the years since that time placed on research and product improvement.

In order to meet defense housing needs, in private as well as public building, The Upson Company added another product development and construction technique to the idea of panelled walls, finished with its fibre panels in standard sizes. It moved forward to provide panels in one piece large enough for full-wall sizes in addition to the regular standard-size panels. In projects of 100 units or more, these panels may now be had from the factory, cut eight feet wide and the length of the room. That is, they are pre-cut to specific sizes and numbered so that they may be easily identified on the job and applied with a minimum of difficulty. Even for single housing units stock panels may be had eight feet wide and in various lengths up to sixteen feet. In fact, about the only limit on length is the problem of transportation. The usual standard size panels are still produced and sold in quantity.

This Upson wall material, marketed under the trade-name "Strong-Bilt," is 0.34 inch in thickness. Tests and actual experience prove that knocks and jars and bumps that ruin most wall and ceiling materials, including walls of wet plaster, have little or no effect on these fibre panels. Tests show that this material has six times the impact resistance of 3/8 inch plaster board. It is thick enough so it won't warp and yet it is sufficiently resilient so that it remains undamaged from bumps and thumps which will leave their marks on plaster or plaster board.

Weight of the material per square foot is 0.92 pounds. Tensile strength is 2,347 pounds per square inch the long way of the panel and 974 pounds per square inch the short way of the panel. The flexural strength the long way of the panel, that is, the breaking load, is 42 pounds. The corresponding figure for the short way of the panel is 24 pounds. The nail-holding strength is 145 pounds.

Inasmuch as the material is applied in single, room-length panels, there are no joints to be covered with tape or with batten strips. There is no face nailing of the panel material. Therefore there is no disfiguration of the walls from this cause and no nails or nail holes to be covered. The material can be applied in new construction much more quickly in the large, room-size panels than in the usual four-foot sizes.



Material is fastened to joists and studs by means of a floating fastener. This fastener is first nailed to the stud or joist at regular intervals. From the face of the fastener there project metal teeth slightly less than the thickness of the panel material. When the panel material is pressed against the fastener teeth, they enter it at the back and become self-clinching, holding it tightly in place. Despite the tightness of the hold, the fastener is so constructed that there may be sufficient lateral movement to allow for contraction and expansion and for any slight shifts of the building frame without disturbing the surface of the panel in any way. In other words, the nature of the panel itself and the method of applying it makes it, in effect, absolutely crack-proof. No shifting of the under-structure affects the panel. There can be no cracks as is likely under similar conditions with plaster walls.

Upson panel material is finished at the factory with a smooth, pebbled surface and as soon as the material is applied to the walls it is ready for paint. The surface is smooth, takes paint beautifully, and is absolutely fuzz-free despite the fact that the panels are of fibre. On almost all projects one coat of paint has been found to be sufficient to give a beautifully-finished surface, without the added cost of stippling.

With the panel material highly adaptable as to size and treatment, it seems to be the answer to the pre-fabricating experimenter's prayer as well as in regular construction. At least several of the organizations in this country, experimenting in pre-fabrication, are making liberal use of the Upson panels in their current production. Acceptance and widespread use in this field as well as in public and private housing prove that it has met the most rigid possible tests for use as interior wall material. No water need be brought into housing construction for interior wall purposes.

## THE SECRETARY SPEAKS (Continued from Page 12)

men and others for their work during the last year. The work of Chairman Boehm led him to thoughts of certain improvement in the machinery of our organization. His recommendations were referred to a Committee to be appointed by our new President and the necessary bank resolutions were passed as well as those taking care of expenses and any unfinished business of the retiring officers. There were other resolutions made necessary by the war effort regarding ventilation of district schools; developing the trade and vocational schools and the like, all to be referred to Committees appointed by our New President. Secretary Briggs stated the necessity for the name of every member to appear on the rolls of the Association under each and every Member Body wherein he is a member. This would not only simplify the machinery of our Association, but would be of benefit to the member in the Association's work with the public. The Directors did not feel that this was the time to make this change.

It was now six o'clock, and we were ready to adjourn, but before doing so, the Directors extended to every Architect their best wishes for the Christmas season and their earnest wish that the coming year will be a joyous one for all.

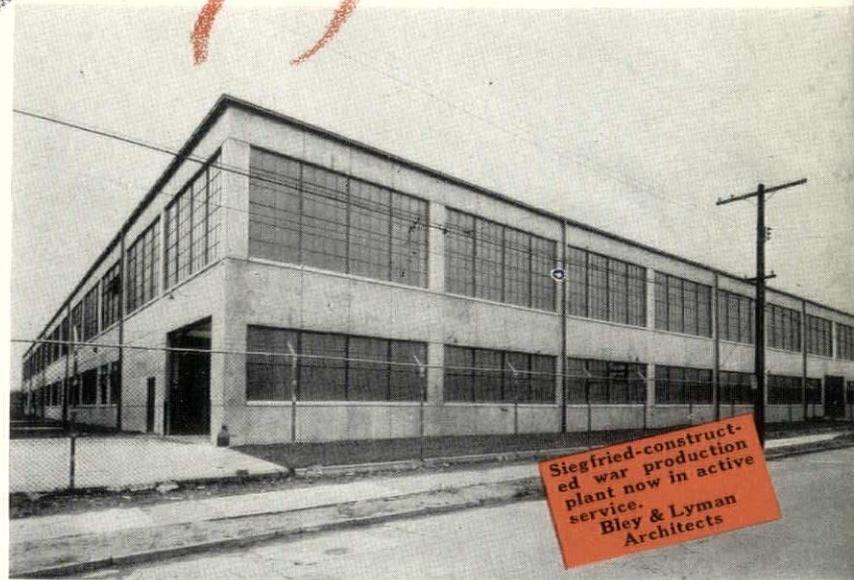
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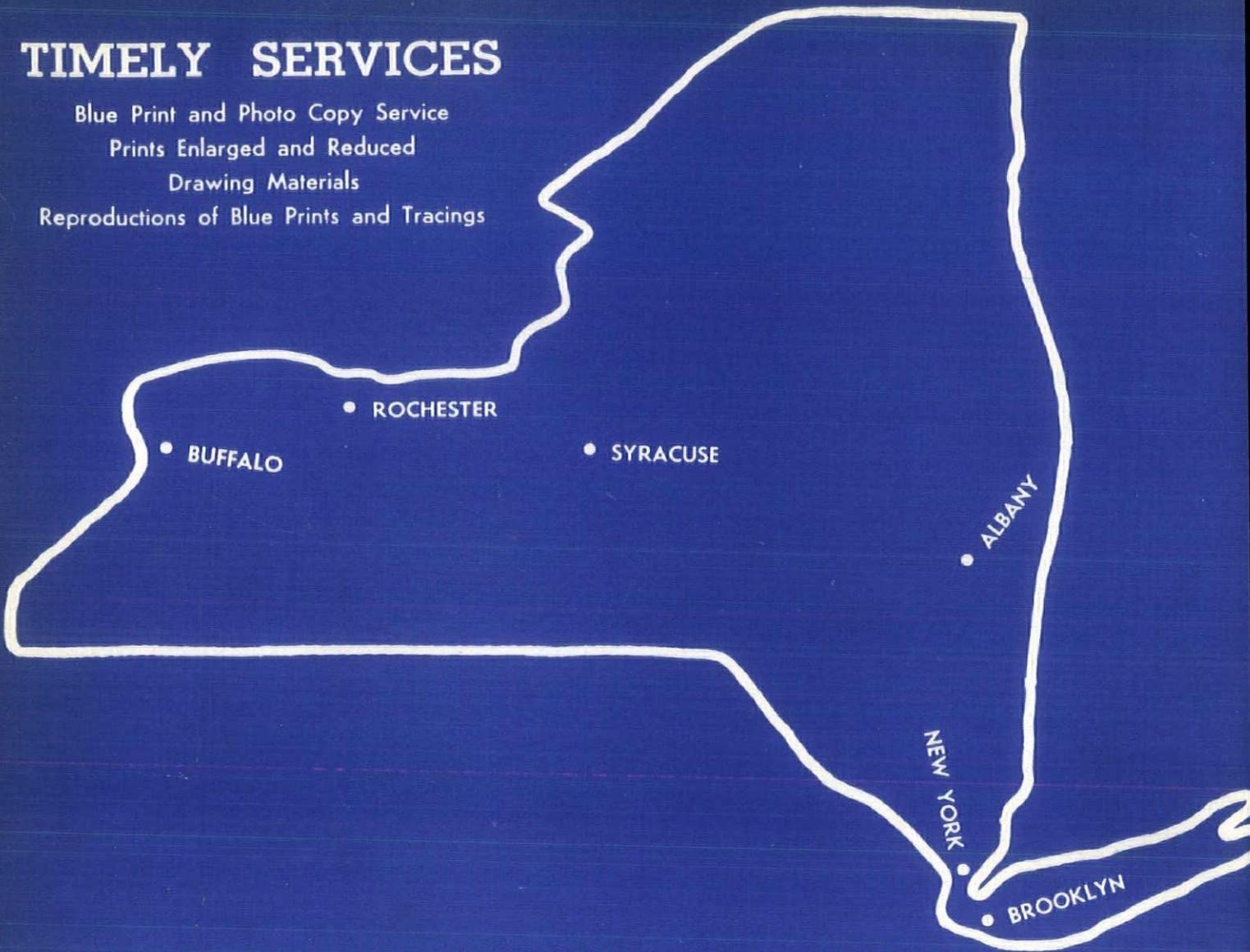
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