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# THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS — THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER A.I.A. AND THE PRODUCERS COUNCIL CLUB OF WISCONSIN

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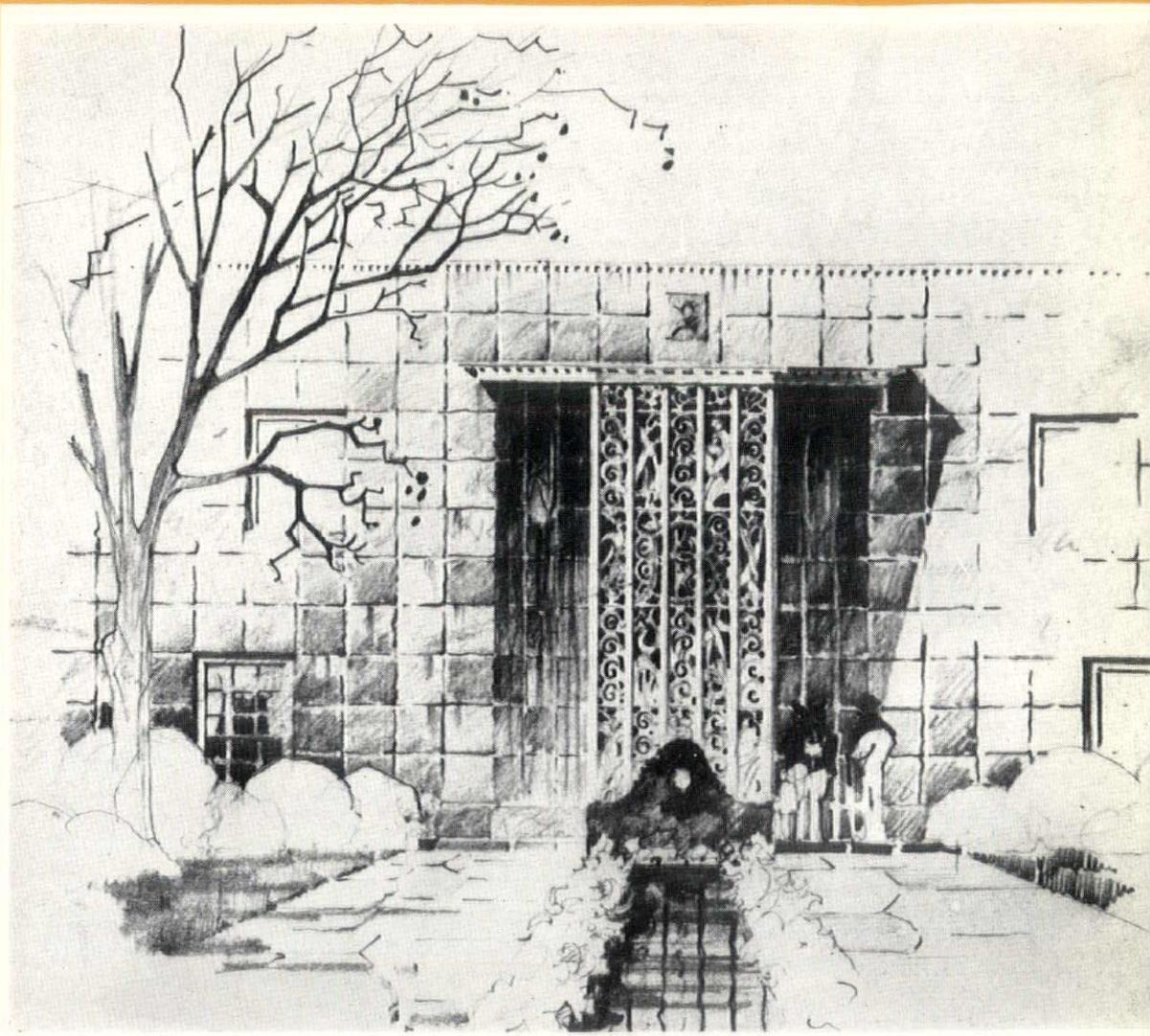
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## ENTRANCE TO FUNERAL HOME

GRASSOLD & JOHNSON - ARCHITECTS

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LEIGH HUNT, F.A.I.A., *Editor and Publisher*  
152 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee Daly 5103

*Contributing Editor*—PETER BRUST, F.A.I.A.

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## BUILDING CONGRESS OF WISCONSIN ORGANIZES COMMITTEE ON SCAFFOLD RESEARCH

A Scaffold Research Committee has been organized by the Building Congress of Wisconsin to study the State of Wisconsin Scaffold and Safety Code in building construction.

Louis J. Selzer of the General Contractors Association has been appointed Chairman, and Howard T. Spetz of the Painters Association, is Vice-Chairman.

Others on the Committee are James H. King, Master Builders Association; Charles J. Ebert, Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council; Frederick A. Luber, Jr., Wisconsin Chapter, A.I.A.; Fred H. Bartz, Plasterers' Association; Arthur S. Frederickson, Iron & Steel Fabricators; Oscar Hoffman, Sheet Metal Contractors Association; Irwin A. Langer, Roofing Contractors Association; Otto Holmskog, Employers Mutual Insurance Association.

Mr. Selzer, the chairman, will shortly be holding meetings on this very vital subject which is of great interest to the building industry. His committee is making a thorough study of all types of scaffolding now in use, permissible according to code, or recommended by contractors but not permissible according to code, and such others as may be acceptable to them or in use in other states.

Individual organizations of the Building Congress are asked to present the subject of proper safety and scaffolding to their members at once and submit reactions and findings as to types of scaffolds preferred, to the Committee as soon as possible. This procedure will be the means of starting the work immediately, according to Walter G. Memmler, Secretary.

The Code was written and adopted in 1932 and reprinted in 1940 with no changes.

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Arthur C. Runzler has returned from a month's travel through Mexico.

## THE BUSINESS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE POSTWAR HOUSING PROBLEM

*An address by Douglas Whitlock, President of The Producers' Council, Inc., before the Citizens' Housing Council of New York, May 23, 1944*

**M**UCH of the current discussion about the construction of postwar housing tends to divide the subject into two categories—public housing and private housing—as though there were two entirely separate problems to consider and as though the two problems were equal in magnitude. It is most unfortunate that the controversies between private and public housing tend to obscure many housing problems and to divert attention from matters which are vital to a healthy postwar housing economy. My remarks will be devoted principally to private construction, although The Producers' Council is fully aware of and deeply interested in the need for providing suitable housing for low-income families.

There are many questions about postwar housing which no one is yet prepared to answer, but I believe we all can agree on a few fundamental facts:

First, the construction industry and everyone concerned with and interested in the broad problem of housing should plan to the end that suitable housing will be made available for the maximum number of families.

Second, there must be a huge volume of new residential construction, starting even before the final end of the war, both to supply the great need and to insure that this country enjoys a full economy which will provide jobs for the maximum number of employable workers.

Third, we must plan to make suitable housing available to families at all income levels—rich and poor and in-between.

Fourth, we must adopt every desirable means of reducing the cost of construction without impairing its quality and soundness.

We have been thinking and working along these lines in The Producers' Council and we are sure that your organization shares our views and aims. Housing is so vital to the welfare of the people, from a social as well as an economic point of view, that none of us can afford to approach the problem from a purely commercial standpoint. We cannot be proud of our communities or of ourselves so long as we permit any part of our population to live in unsanitary, overcrowded, or unsafe dwellings. Clear thinking and sane planning of the kinds that are bound to be stimulated by meetings of this sort, are very necessary if we are to meet the housing challenge.

## Record-Breaking Construction Activity Predicted

As for the volume of residential construction after the war, we in The Producers' Council approach the future with confidence. In the first place, we believe that after the war the country will experience an economy in which there will be reasonably steady employment for all available workers, except for about three million who are in the process of changing jobs or who for other reasons are out of work. Naturally there will be a period of readjustment and temporary unemployment.

ment from the time when our factories start to recon-vert to peacetime production until perhaps twelve months after the final end of the war. But even that period need not present too serious a problem if recon-version is planned adequately in advance.

The Council has not attempted to venture predictions as to the level of business activity beyond the first six years after the end of the war, but we have given careful study to that early postwar period. A forecast of postwar construction, prepared by our Market Analysis Committee, indicates that the volume of new construction of all kinds should aggregate slightly above \$16 billion a year, on the average, during the five-year period starting twelve months after the final armistice. That figure is 46 percent higher than the record peacetime volume of \$11.1 billion attained in 1941. The forecast is based on the assumption that as a result of the increase in the general level of prices, the average cost of construction during the five years will be 30 percent greater than in 1940.

#### *Residential Building Will Head Construction Volume*

The Committee believes that new residential construction, excluding the construction of farm homes, will account for \$6.5 billion or nearly 40 percent of all construction activity. The estimate for the first twelve months after the end of the war is \$2.4 billion. Thus, for the six years, the total volume of new urban residential construction is estimated at \$35 billion.

Thus, we anticipate that the construction of new dwellings will be a tremendous factor in our postwar economy. Few of our great industries will surpass it in dollar volume or as a source of employment. We will spend on housing, during the six-year period, more than three times as much as was spent for the same purpose during the six years 1936-41 if our forecast becomes a reality.

That is a huge task to undertake. Nevertheless we are encouraged by the knowledge that the need is there. When we consider the number of families which were living two or more in one household before the war, the number of existing homes that urgently need to be replaced, and the number of new families that are being formed during the war-time period while all residential construction other than war housing has been suspended, it is easy to see that the need is more than sufficient to justify our forecasts.

Economists in the War Production Board tell us that the number of new non-farm families formed during the war period (assumed at 1942 through 1945) will be approximately 2,200,000. Based on information in the 1940 Census of Housing, there is reason to believe that at least 1,000,000 families had no separate home of their own when the war began. And fully 4,200,000 pre-war household units were in need of major repairs or had outlived their usefulness. While the last figure cannot be accepted as representing an accurate need, if it is taken in conjunction with the results of various surveys as to the immediate postwar demand for better living accommodations, we feel that 4,200,000 family units is a conservative estimate of the amount of new replacement housing which might be supplied in addition to the housing required to accommodate family formation. After deducting the 800,000 permanent dwelling units built during the war, the accumulated need at the end of 1945 is estimated at 6,600,000 units.

But this demand will be increased by family formation during each postwar year. During the six years immediately following the war, this will add 3,200,000 family units. Hence, the need which the home building industry faces at the end of the war for six years ahead, is a grand total of about 10,000,000 family units.

The Council's forecast indicates that industry will probably build, during the first year (assumed as 1946) about 350,000 new non-farm dwelling units and an average of 970,000 units in each of the next five years, or a grand total of 5,200,000 in six years. Thus, it is easy to see that, high as our sights are set, we shall fall nearly 50 percent short of the total need. The seeming net result at the end of the first six postwar years is that we shall not even have caught up completely with accumulated family formation needs, while the big job of replacement is still ahead of us. With these facts in mind, it becomes plain that the amount of new housing to be built is limited only by our initiative and ingenuity.

However, we by no means contend that the forecasts will be realized automatically. There is much careful planning to be done. And much will depend on the cost of constructing these millions of new dwelling units.

### Reduction of Costs

In view of the increase in the general price level, we must adopt every desirable method of reducing building costs; first, as a means of giving home owners the best value for their money and second, because we can provide more homes for more families if the cost of residential construction is reduced. Each reduction of 10 percent in the cost of construction might well enable 15 to 20 percent more families to acquire a home. Tangible progress can and will be made toward this objective.

Although the great demands of the war production program have to some extent prevented the industry from exploring and perfecting certain cost reduction projects, we have already begun work on numerous proposals which cannot help but lower the relative cost of residential building and offset the effects of general price increases.

#### *Revision of Building Codes*

For one thing, there is the matter of revising obsolete building codes so as to permit the use of new and more efficient techniques and materials. Substantial savings can be made without in any way lowering the quality of construction. As a matter of fact, better construction should result from most of the proposed changes. Nor will the code revisions reduce the income of labor. By lowering the over-all cost of construction, code revisions will help to stimulate a larger number of projects, and thus provide a greater volume of work spread over more days of the year.

#### *Dimensional Coordination*

Dimensional coordination, a plan for interrelating the dimensions of the various building materials and products so that they can be combined into finished structures with a minimum of wasteful cutting and fitting, is another project which promises to effect cost reduction. There will be savings, not only in materials and labor on the job, but also in the designing, manu-

facturing, and distributing branches of the industry. Manufacturers will be required to make fewer sizes of their products which they can put into mass production. Material dealers also will have fewer sizes to keep in stock and hence lower inventory expense. The brick and tile industry is the first to adopt the plan of producing modular products for postwar construction. Other groups may be expected to follow suit promptly.

#### *Training Programs*

Plans are under study for training returning service men and other industry employees in better methods of producing, merchandising, and constructing postwar homes. The well-trained workman invariably builds better and at lower cost.

#### *Design and Financing*

Architects and engineers are hard at work figuring out ways to provide all of the comforts and space expected in a home for a smaller investment than has been required in the past. There also are indications that interest rates will continue low and that financial methods may be further improved.

#### *Equipment*

So far as any of us know now, there are no \$1,500 houses in early prospect, at least not including the cost of land and public utilities, along with the cost of the structure and its equipment. However, it must be granted that there is an opportunity to produce less costly home equipment, especially for kitchens, bathrooms, and heating plants, without undue sacrifice of quality or utility.

#### *Pre-Assembly and Job Organization*

Pre-assembly of related building parts, which permits greater efficiency in the erection of structures and the increased use of mechanical aids on the site, are other developments which will help to lower the cost of constructing dwelling units. Skillful job organization is bestowing other cost advantages.

Reputable builders offered a high degree of quality for the money in the most recent prewar homes. This does not mean, however, that we should not seek out and adopt very desirable means of reducing costs without lowering quality. That is the one most feasible way of broadening the market for housing and of permitting the maximum number of families to enjoy suitable homes.

### Encouragement of Home Ownership

It is to be hoped that a greater number of families than ever before will own their homes after the war because a high percentage of home ownership means better and more stable communities and better citizenship. There is no greater satisfaction which a family can enjoy than the knowledge that it owns a piece of land and a house.

For that reason, The Producers' Council is committed to giving its full support to reminding the public that home ownership deserves a preferred place in the family budget and to making it as easy and convenient as possible for homes to be acquired.

However, we must recognize that there is a need for a large number of rented homes. Some families prefer not to buy, either because they do not expect to reside permanently in the locality where they now

are living or for some other reason. Many families hope to acquire a home in the future but are waiting until they can afford a better dwelling than their present circumstances would permit them to purchase. Some families are unable to save sufficient money to make a down payment on a home, no matter how liberal the terms of purchase are made. For one reason or another, 56 percent of all families lived in rented dwellings in 1940, while only 37.5 percent of the urban families were owner-occupants.

#### *Direct Investment by Trusted Funds*

Pronounced changes in these percentages probably will be gradual at best. It is imperative that the construction of rental properties be encouraged after the war. The Council has proposed that more states should pass legislation, similar to laws now existing in New York, California, and Virginia whereby insurance companies and other large holders of trustee funds are permitted to own rental property outright. Moreover, we have endorsed the idea of establishing some means of insuring the yield on such investments in rental housing as a further means of encouraging this highly necessary form of residential construction.

### Financing

With respect to the question of financing, The Council recommends the re-establishment of FHA on a sound basis and has proposed for consideration a number of detailed suggestions for the protection and improvement of that agency. The Council recognizes the value of the mortgage insurance facilities provided before the war by the Federal Housing Administration and believes that comparable facilities should be continued by the Federal government until private enterprise is prepared to provide fully equivalent services.

According to all indications, there will be ample funds for financing a huge volume of residential and other construction after the war. It is estimated that liquid savings, in the form of war bonds, savings deposits, and other investments will total about \$100 billion by the end of this year, and a large proportion can be available for the building of new homes and other types of construction.

### Private Enterprise Can Supply Maximum Needs

As to who will build the millions of new homes, there certainly can be no question about the ability of private enterprise to meet the full demands of that part of the public which is able to purchase homes or to pay adequate rentals. The resources of the construction industry were not fully exhausted in 1925 when 937,000 new dwelling units were built, and the manpower and other resources of the construction industry will be greater than ever after the war.

There has, however, been a considerable amount of discussion and disagreement as to how to provide housing for that part of the population which is unable to pay the adequate rent for living accommodations. I refer, of course, to families in need of relief, many of whom reside in slums or substandard dwellings. We all believe they should have better housing.

There has been some talk of the need for a huge public housing program to care for these needy fami-

lies and some indication, as well, that the Federal government should provide housing for other than needy families.

### Public Housing

Any discussion of public housing is likely to become confusing unless we define our terms rather carefully and examine the situation to see just what kind of public housing we are talking about and what purposes it is intended to serve.

#### First Phase—Employment Housing

The history of public housing in the United States shows a frequent change of focus. The movement first assumed national significance in this country during the early days of the present administration and was brought forward as part of the program to create jobs for the millions of construction workers and others who had become unemployed as a result of the depression. The program enjoyed rather wide support at that time, winning the wholehearted backing of many business elements which now oppose public housing in any form. The program was considered a temporary necessity since it constituted a form of relief spending but which many felt would create a tangible and useful asset for the country. The volume of Federally financed public housing was not great in the early years; it totalled only about \$71 million through 1936. Nevertheless, a new movement, potentially of great proportions, had come into being.

#### Second Phase—Economic Planning Housing

The second phase of public housing developed in 1936. It took the form of economic planning and rehabilitation. It was designed to provide a more abundant life for the underprivileged. The individuals housed in the Greenbelts and in new rural communities were expected to find new opportunities away from the crowded and oppressive cities. Housing was only one part, but an important part, of the new plan.

#### Third Phase—Welfare Housing

Then followed the period when welfare became the prime objective of the public housing movement. Socially-minded individuals began to plan for the rehousing of the third of the nation's people who were said to be "ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed." It was during this era that the demand for slum clearance came into prominence. Public housing still was looked on as a means of relieving unemployment all through this period, but the movement also acquired additional aims.

#### Fourth Phase—War Housing

The present phase of public housing is the war housing program, adopted to meet the pressing needs arising from the war. About 667,000 units have been built by the government for war purposes, and some additional 65,000 units are under construction now from public funds.

Total Federal expenditures for public housing through June 1940 totaled only \$360,000,000. From that date through 1944, additional public housing, consisting almost entirely of war housing, will amount to about \$2.1 billion, making a grand total, beginning with 1934, of \$2.4 billion of Federal funds spent for publicly built residential units of all types.

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Considering the distinctly different types of housing which have been planned and built with Federal funds, it is not strange that people become confused when they try to discuss the pros and cons of public housing.

One type of public housing—war housing—can be dismissed from consideration so far as additional construction in the near future is concerned. The housing program for this war is virtually completed. The one remaining problem is how quickly and effectively the temporary war housing can be removed under the terms of the legislation which permitted its construction.

In addition, it is the belief of The Producers' Council that, so far as the first six postwar years are concerned, we also can drop from consideration all thought of constructing new public housing purely for the purpose of providing employment. It is our conviction that we will enjoy an economy, starting about one year after the end of the war, in which there will be jobs for practically every able-bodied worker in the country.

Under these conditions, every available worker would be employed on needed, useful projects, making or doing things that serve a useful purpose or fill a real need in themselves. Thus, there would be no raking of leaves or digging of ditches merely for the purpose of keeping men at work. The country's labor force, in an expanding economy, will be building houses and roads and automobiles, growing food and making furniture, and hauling goods to meet the demands of consumers.

Many prominent business leaders and economists are confident that this high level of business activity can be attained provided reconversion from war production to the production of peacetime needs is rapidly

completed. If they are right, there will be no need to build public housing merely for the sake of keeping idle men at work. Whatever residential building is done will be for the purpose of providing needed shelter and home comforts for the people. If we plan with that end in view, and not with the idea of providing work relief, we will build more and better homes and create finer and more desirable communities.

It is highly improbable that public housing erected to achieve "the more abundant life", as conceived by some officials in Washington, will be undertaken in early postwar years. We must restore the incentives which have made this country great. We should not embark again on a policy of providing people, through government subsidy, with those goods and services, the desire for which should induce them to work and save.

### Good Housing Environment

Germane to the whole housing question is the problem of environment. Efforts must be intensified to secure good city and regional planning, sound zoning and other measures to insure proper land utilization. Public housing is frequently proposed as a means of slum clearance, whereas the basic consideration should be to get people out of the slums. Redevelopment of slum and blighted areas is at most a collateral problem only. The Producers' Council recommends that the benefit of eminent domain and the right to form redevelopment companies should be made available to a majority of the property owners in a given district.

Now let us consider the matter of providing housing for that part of the population which is ill-housed and cannot by itself solve its housing problem. It is this group for which public housing has been most vigorously recommended in recent months.

In considering this controversial subject, many advocates of government-built dwellings for the needy overlook the fact that the problem of providing housing for this segment of the population will by no means be as great as it has been made to look. If our Market Analysis Committee and other competent sources are correct in their assumption that our postwar economy will be such as to afford practically full employment, there then will be comparatively fewer families unable to pay adequate rentals for dwellings meeting minimum standards.

There always will be some families needing welfare assistance, either because of unemployment, because of disability, or because the wages they can command are too low to permit the family to meet the full rent bill and at the same time cover other essential living expenses. But the number of such families will be relatively small when compared to the period back in the thirties when many millions of workers were unemployed. In fact, the number may be so small that providing suitable dwellings for the needy will be one of our lesser housing problems.

One point on which everyone seems to be in agreement is that the dwellings in which these families now live cannot be demolished, until or unless other more suitable accommodations are available.

Aside from the apparent disagreement as to how many families must be rehoused, the principal differences arise from discussion of who is to provide the replacement housing and what sort of housing it should be. Some persons insist that the low-income families can be rehoused only in new structures. They maintain

that the new dwellings should be built and owned and operated by the government, either Federal or local. We believe there is another and less costly alternate.

There are numerous ill-housed urban families. Many of them will be able to rehouse themselves without public assistance in the postwar years. Whatever the number of families needing assistance may be, one of our responsibilities is to make sure that any public funds which are made available are used to help the largest number of families. We should not use all available resources to benefit a small fraction of the total number. While making certain that the homes to which the needy families move measure up to certain acceptable minimum standards, we should work to keep the cost per family as low as is consistently possible. Adopting that principle means that we cannot afford, except in unusual cases, to provide a brand new dwelling for each needy family that is rehoused.

At least 50 percent of the nation's families live in dwellings that are over twenty-five years old, including a large percentage of the families which enjoy reasonably high incomes. The Producers' Council believes that there is no reason why those families which now are ill-housed should not be rehoused in suitable older dwellings, provided the dwellings in question meet certain standards and provided a tremendous private home building program is launched which will release adequate numbers of good older properties. We can rehouse many more families by utilizing existing dwellings than could be provided for by relying exclusively on new dwellings built and owned by government.

If the selection and any necessary reconditioning of the existing structures were supervised by competent, public-spirited groups of citizens familiar with local conditions in each community, we could count on seeing the responsibility executed in a fair and intelligent manner.

The Producers' Council believes that this plan should be followed to the greatest extent possible in every locality, in order that the public funds available for welfare purposes can be made to assist the maximum number of families. Although there is a large reservoir of these older, but fundamentally sound, properties in most large communities, the number will become larger as postwar housing gets under way. Our stand in The Council is merely this: build many new private dwelling accommodations, then use the sound, older properties as far as they will go to house the less fortunate, and use them all. Then, and not until then, should any new public housing be built for this welfare purpose.

Next comes the question of how to make it possible financially for low-income families and families on relief to pay the rent even of these older properties. Inasmuch as these older homes should, so far as possible, be owned and operated by private enterprise, the difference between the amount which the tenant should

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pay to give the owner a fair and reasonable minimum return on the value of his property and the amount which the tenant is able to pay, must be made up in the form of welfare assistance.

The Council believes that the entire basis of action should be local. Public assistance provided to needy families should be frankly earmarked as a welfare expenditure and local funds should be used. Federal funds should be used only under severe depression conditions where dire suffering would result from the absence of Federal assistance. Even then, the form of relief and the management of the operations should be left under local control, in order that the need may be met by individuals who are thoroughly familiar with local conditions and local needs. When necessary, this plan contemplates that these local government agencies would rent or purchase older dwellings, repair and remodel them, and place needy families in the properties as tenants of the organization at rents the tenants are able to pay, the remainder being made up from local welfare funds.

It is true that in some cities there is now no large supply of available older houses to use for this purpose, but the deficiency should be remedied quickly after the war as more and more new dwelling units are constructed. This is the key to the solution of this vexing problem. When families enjoying higher incomes build or buy or rent newer homes, the older structures which they vacate will promptly become available for families with lower incomes. The "filtering up" process should become almost automatic, much

in the way as automobiles pass along from one income group to another. As good older properties are vacated, the needy families can move from sub-standard dwellings which can then be condemned so far as occupancy is concerned.

Older dwellings which are not suitable for housing the needy families naturally will not be approved by the agencies charged with responsibility for local housing matters. They should have the right to insist that each individual dwelling be put into proper condition and that it contain the necessary conveniences and meet certain minimum standards before they approve occupancy by a family receiving welfare rental assistance. They also should have the authority to approve the rentals asked by owners of the properties.

Some advocates of public housing object to the welfare plan of rental assistance on the grounds that it is degrading for families to have to receive aid in this way. However, the fact that public assistance is being received is less likely to become known under this plan than when needy families are segregated into public housing projects.

These are the views of The Producers' Council on the subject of housing in general. We have the greatest confidence in the ability of private enterprise to provide the tremendous needed amount of suitable housing for the American public after the war. In recommending against the construction of new public housing for needy families, we have not by any means overlooked the valuable contributions to be made by those public-spirited citizens who constitute the mem-

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bership of nearly 600 local housing authorities, in all parts of the nation. In many places, their members represent a typical cross-section of the communities, and are well constituted to assist in determining sound local housing policies and in pressing for the enforcement of local housing ordinances.

They have a vitally important responsibility in selecting and approving properties to be utilized for the housing of welfare families. Above all, they have the opportunity to awaken public interest in order that every family may have the privilege of residing in a home of which the rest of the community need not be ashamed.

### Postwar Building Products

There are a number of other pertinent questions about postwar housing which no one yet is prepared to answer. For one thing, many of the producers of building materials and equipment are not yet able to tell us very much about the new postwar products they expect to produce. Most companies have been so busy meeting the demands of the war production program that they have not had time to pay full attention to postwar lines.

Of course, there are numerous new products, perfected to meet the requirements of the war construction program, which will have been fully tested and are now in production. These will be immediately available for civilian use as soon as the production of war goods is cut back. You should begin hearing about some of those products before long.

In addition, there are other products which were ready for the market when the outbreak of war halted civilian building. Those products also can appear with little delay. Then there are other products which were developed to meet war needs but which have not yet been tested and perfected. These will come along later.

In summary, the building products available for immediate postwar use for the most part will represent improvements on prewar lines, with the result that the postwar home will be somewhat better than, but not too different from, the fine houses that were being built in 1939 and 1940. Completely new and entirely different building products will come along slowly as the postwar construction program develops and will bring gradual improvements in residential construction.

There are a few other general observations which can be ventured at this time. It is generally believed that there will be fewer very large and expensive homes built after the war, for the simple reason that taxes probably will remain quite high for a number of years, and there won't be as many people able to build expensively. There is good reason to believe that the percentage of new low-cost homes will be greater than ever before.

Because of the higher prices expected to prevail for materials and equipment and for transportation, and in view of the high level of wages paid to construction workers, it does not seem likely that good small homes can be built in the early postwar years at costs as low as those prevailing before the war.

Regardless of the unknown factors, we are about to face the greatest opportunity of all time to improve American housing standards. The producers of building materials and equipment stand ready to help make certain that the task is well done.

## ARCHITECTURAL APPRECIATION

A "talk at large" at the opening of the R.I.B.A. Conference on the Teaching of Architectural Appreciation in Schools on 6 January, 1944

By CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS [F]

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### Conclusion

"(1) Are you practical? That is, are you an efficient house, shop, school, factory or church? Can a family be brought up in you or cheese be sold or children taught or boots made or services held in you with convenience?"

"(2) Are you well and truly built, solid, safe and sound?"

"(3) If you are new, are you going to look shabby or still raw in ten years' time, or have your materials been so wisely chosen and used that the years will pleasantly mature and mellow you?"

"(4) Are you beautiful, or any at rate to me, or did you seem so to those who built you; and if so, why?"

"(5) Is there any special idea about you? Are you vigorous, or restful, long-strung-out (horizontal) or all-up-and-down (vertical), quiet or gay; in short, have you any special character, and, if so, of what kind?"

"(6) Are you a good neighbor? Do you love the Tudor inn next door, the Regency chemist's shop opposite, the pollarded elm trees or the church across the way, as yourself? Do you 'do-as-you-would-be-done-by'? Do the other buildings and the trees and surroundings near you generally gain or lose by your presence? In short, have you civilized manners?"

Questions such as these will naturally lead on to more detailed and technical ones—for example, What is the relation or proportion between wall surface and windows? What are the proportions of the windows themselves, and even of their panes? Is the pattern a pleasant one, or is the general effect rather blank and sad or too cut up and fussy?

Would you agree that that kind of thing could usefully be employed? I feel that perhaps the most difficult thing and the most necessary thing is somehow to extract expressions of opinion from children and get them to commit themselves to *something*. If they are wrong, you can say "Yes, I see what you mean, but on the other hand have you considered this, that, or the other?" This is not like mathematics, where an answer is right or wrong; but you may have an unconsidered answer, based on insufficient data. What we want to do is to give the children the data on which they can make up their minds. That is what our general population so tragically lack; they do not know what they might have and what to ask for, and it is very difficult for them to make any contribution to the vast planning debate which is going on at this moment all over the country.

In every factory, in every military unit and on every ship there is informal, if not actually formal, discussion going on, and discussion groups busily engaged in discussing things that are nearly related to architecture in this wider field, and of course that is a debate which will need to go on as long as civilized life goes on. Although, as I said earlier, we have started too late—ten years, twenty years, a generation, a century too late—too late, that is, for the immediate things—any child who can be given a civilized, informed outlook on these things is going in time to make its influence

felt. What we are now launching is going, I hope, to carry on increasingly (possibly with less momentum but with better direction to make up for it), and for ever. Unless into that stream we can inject a perpetual recruitment of young who have some contribution to make, we shall do no better than we did in the nineteenth century, in the Industrial Revolution, when our "demi-paradise" was very nearly turned into a demidustbin. That's all.

## PRACTICE IN CHINA

By "KALLEE-DIJON"

From Ohio Architect

**W**HEN an American sets up an office in China, he must get a "Hong name"—that is, he must go to an educated Chinaman and be given a distinctive name, which naturally must have a meaning.

The same is true with a Chinaman who desires to set up an establishment to cater to the American. He must get an official name from the Chinese, but the trouble is here that he generally goes to the American sailors for the Hong name, and I will quote you the American Hong names which I have seen in beautiful raised metal letters, such as:

1. John Yellow Belly, Shoe Maker.
2. Barnical Bill, Sail Maker.
3. Who-Flung-Dung-Kee, Contractor.

The word "Kee" means contractor, a typical name being Sin-Jin-Kee, Contractor.

The architectural office consists of:

1. A compradore, who is your Chinese manager, working on a percent of your business. He makes the contacts with Chinese owners, and he has four or five assistants who bring business in to the foreign master. He must entertain a great deal in night life and the usual tea parties and "talkie talks."

2. The next in order is the Schroff, who by nature is a natural bookkeeper and money changer. He is the fox. He extracts "squeeze money" from the contractors for the privilege of talking to the head master, the Architect. This money is distributed pro-rata through the office and down to the draftsmen.

Confucius teachings have made him adept in remembering names and accounts, to memorize anything. He does not have to look up in account books for the cost of work done years previous.

3. The next are your stenographers, who become quite good considering that they have to write in a foreign language. American women stenographers do not fare so well, as men do the work of women, and, after all, if a girl is born in China, it is not considered good luck.

Your draughting room becomes a school of architecture. Wealthy fathers ask you to place their sons in your office, all working for food and travel money. Under foreign head-draughtsmen they learn very fast, become very efficient in mathematics, engineering, concrete design, and their draughting is superb in minute details, but naturally they misspell some funny names on your plans if not well supervised.

In other words, the American architect is known to have a creative mind, whereas the Chinese and Japanese are good at copy work.

You can talk about the "Fifth column" in the United States, but just employ German, Russian, Italian,

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Procedure in architectural business:

1. Often a paid competition between American, British, French and Spanish architects.
2. Plans and specifications in the usual way, but never any stock details.
3. Full size details are laid out full size without breaks.
4. Contract figures taken and lowest man gets the job.
5. Construction bonds are not heard of. The contractor's word is his bond, and it is as good as gold. He never fails.
6. Changes in plans and materials, to a certain degree, do not entail extras.
7. Constant supervision is necessary, usually by a qualified American builder, but no foreign contractor can succeed in the Orient. The labor system will ruin him. Concrete hoists are not allowed. It goes from the mixer in a human conveyor of women in bamboo baskets to the top of building.

Contractor's procedure:

1. The contractor first builds extensive bamboo sheds, sets up carpenter benches, lays planks between bamboo trusses for sleeping quarters. An ordinary \$15,000 resi-

(Please turn to page 11—China)

## MUSINGS ON THE MORROW

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

**T**HINGS are disturbing the leisure of the professional mind. The architect is not happy. For long his days have been an anxiety and a dreariness. But it is the terrors of the night that weigh so heavily on his spirit. Then it is that his familiar world takes on the formidable shape of his apprehensions. Swarms of disembodied engineers move across his dreams, bearing awful implications of his submergence in the impending scheme of things. A universal and monstrous perversity, against which he is impotent, is obviously at work to tear him from his honored place. The sombre prophecies of the critics are in process of fulfillment and the end approaches for the great profession. With dawn comes sanity again and the sense that the world is still with him in all its ancient circumstance. There is reassurance in the sun and the green trees and the gracious and enduring things that the Lord fashioned for his delight, and life beckons to high adventure.

Change, after all, is in itself no fearful thing, but a genial principle to which Art has always made its accommodations. Only as we looked behind us were we used to note the quiet current of its influence. Now with a startling suddenness we find ourselves drawn into drama for which history has no parallel. It is a fateful time. Architecture feels the challenge in it, direct and inescapable. Already a philosophy submissive to its influences has taken on authority and is slowly coming to public judgment. The merits of it are almost beyond the limits of profitable controversy. Its more temperate expositions have met a large acceptability but, even at its most provoking, its conquests are not to be denied, nor the significance that the professional schools have come totally under its dominion. The conservatives, unmoved by the lightnings, resist its invalidation of the academic concept, believing it portends the virtual capitulation of architecture to engineering.

Once, at a convention of our presumptive rivals, the president in his address invested his profession so liberally with prerogatives that, when my turn came, I was left only to apologize for a wasted career. Defensively I submitted as the difference between an engineer and an architect that, while both must keep their feet on the ground, the architect has to keep his head in the stars. I could think of no better vindication. The metaphor was crude enough, but it held a reasonable postulate. Without the element of imagination architecture can have no intellectual validity and no convincing profession. For long we have been exercised at the intrusion of the engineer upon our privileges. Yet we give him as fair a right to protest our encroachment upon him if we elect to emasculate architecture to the mere terms of science. Only upon this premise, I believe, need we be troubled about the engineer. In this country, as in England, government gave him preference in the war program. It carried to him as a consequence problems which were without doubt the legitimate interest of our profession. We did not conceal our feelings of chagrin, but we could have kept our dignity had we perceived that, in the circumstances of the moment, we were not stultified by the choice, which was merely the operation of the idea that engineering is part of the military tradition and architecture isn't.

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In spite of which the engineer is a benevolent soul and can always be counted on the side of peace.

Another professional torment is that the architect has failed to catch the rhythm of the new world and is obviously out of step. Very likely. But it is too early for hysterics in the face of the larger phenomenon that the wisdom of man is lagging far behind his inventions. The exciting triumphs of the new technology may indeed presage some supreme and corresponding felicity for the race, but philosophers are by no means agreed about it. What is clear only is that humanity is committed to a world of mysterious forces that are driving it at appalling speed. Whither it will lead us in its uncharted course no man knows. In the world that is passing the thoughtful found great foolishness. The new one may be wiser. With what vision we have we must compose our life to its dynamic energies. It is a time for faith and not for panic.

Critics of the household complain that the architectural mind has been obstinately closed to the signs of the new day, and cry aloud for a more alert and sophisticated profession. Admittedly the architect has been inadequately scientific. I have known only one of whom it could be said that, locked in his drafting-room, he could make the complete working drawings and specifications of a building to the smallest detail of mechanical and structural engineering. But these cloistered faculties, impressive as they were, are not enough for ministry to the exacting patronage that is to be wooed in the coming years. The architect must now be equipped to discuss the intricacies of finance with bankers and to discourse on reasonably even terms with industrialists and social economists and all the challenging intelligences of the new order. The thought that so many talents can comfortably reside under one hat makes me so abashed at the comprehension of my own ignorance that I feel in conscience moved to a public confession of it. Mine seems to have been a path of primroses for, as I look back, I cannot remember when I was made to blush in the presence of my client. Clearly I might have carried about with me through all those years a diversity of knowledge that would have only lain neglected in a dusty attic of my mind. Are we training too encyclopedically for the individual, forgetting that the architect in action usually works with a competent team? The sweep of his interests is so large that in theory there is almost no limit to the endowment of the architect, but room should be left in his poor brain for the play of his personal genius. Richardson and Burnham and Goodhue did not come to eminence by an accumulation of realistic aptitudes but by their brilliant faculty of creation. This felicitous gift earned them a leadership in their generation that could be sustained quite as confidently against the demanding temper of tomorrow. This is the high principle without which, whatever the day, there never can be great architecture nor great architects.

—*Journal of the A.I.A.*

#### CHINA—Continued from page 9

dence would probably have 100 skilled mechanics and apprentices. The apprentice is his son or nephew who learns the trade from the bottom up. He first makes hand tools for the father.

A cook contracts to feed them for \$2 per month.

They work ten hours per day for 40 cents, equal to 4 cents at present exchange. They are master **mechan-**

ics in masonry, carpentry, plastering, painting. They make the hardware and bronze work by hand.

Until recently there were no woodworking mills in China. The custom is to deliver huge logs to the site; the foreman marks the end of the logs for all detailed sizes of mouldings and trim and the log is whip-sawed by two workmen. The lumber is stacked 30 to 40 feet high to air dry in the hot sun.

No building is built in less than a year, as time means nothing.

There is no leaking of brick walls. The masons first pick up the brick and cover the ends and beds with mortar, smooth it out, then lay the entire unit, but don't forget that labor is 40 cents a day for 10 hours' work.

The best method to hurry work is to give the masons a pack of cigarettes.

Thieves' Union: China has a Thieves' Union, and unless the contractor contributes to it, he will be minus expensive materials.

Execution of work is very high class. The mechanics take great pride in their work, and really excel.

Building costs are about the same as in the United States. Cheap labor is offset by imported materials. The American Club in Shanghai paid \$150 per 1,000 for ordinary \$25 face brick, but to get around this, the facades are now laid up with  $\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ -inch face brick tile, plastered to locally handmade brick.

Cement plaster and concrete: You never see hair checks in cement plaster in China. The cement is slow-setting and walls do not leak.

#### \* \* \* \* \*

### CARPET WOOL PICTURES

There's now a better prospect, as a result of information given the mills by WPB concerning imports from India, of having enough carpet wools to step up production quickly when backing materials again become available.

One special importation was allowed last fall and another, with specified totals for each mill, was announced by WPB in April.

Following that announcement a hitch developed which delayed the expected shipments, but that has now been ironed out in a manner which materially betters the prospect over that of last month.

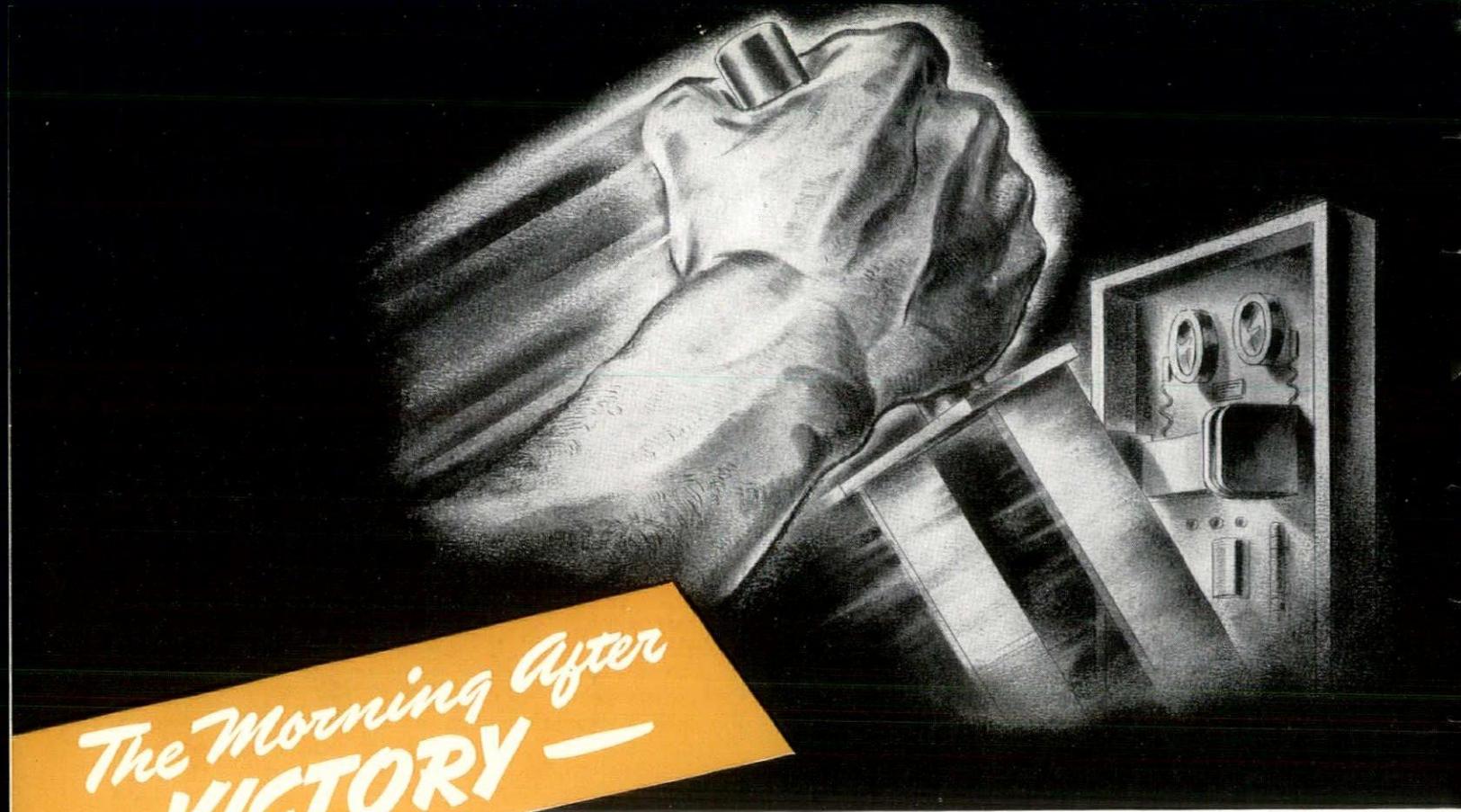
New quotas which triple those of April have now been assigned the carpet mills along with a new date for the period in which these quantities may be shipped from India west coast ports.

If the actual shipments equal the assigned quotas they will help materially to ease second half worries so far as wool is concerned. The industry is still hopeful that its vital need for a stockpile to permit quick reconversion to civilian production after the war will also win recognition and consideration in WPB.

While it was learned that linoleum manufacturers will probably have an Opening to coincide with the New York Furniture Market, June 26, no similar announcement from rug and carpet manufacturers is to be expected.

Manufacturers will welcome the opportunity to discuss the current situation with their dealers, both at New York and Chicago, but with allotments established there will be very little to "pick up" beyond the latest estimates of 3rd quarter production.

The Alexander Smith-Masland  
Washington News-Letter



*The Morning After*  
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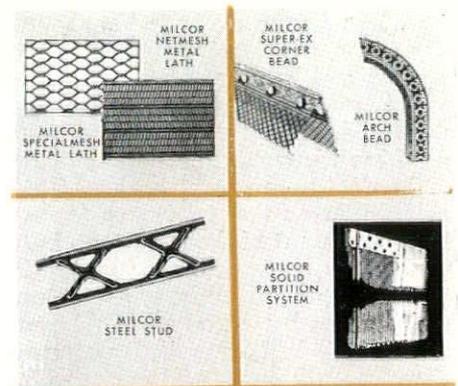
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