

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS



District News

Executive Board Meeting

A Reference Library

Public Works and The Architect

A Bill

Obsolescence Insurance and the Architect

The Square Deal

We are starting our second year with this issue. All of us with few exceptions are glad 1933 is behind us. The construction industry has been the hardest hit and the promised relief has been slow in coming.

Out of the depression have come many basic changes,—financing, contractual relations, minimum wages, etc., but the greatest change has been the united action of the architects of Wisconsin and the country. Codes are being drafted which it is hoped will be laws in the not too distant future and which will place the architectural profession in the niche in which it has always belonged.

We have a new publisher, Mr. John Holbrook. His maiden effort is before you with new cover and a larger magazine. Let us give him our solid support.

Members of the editorial staff in each district can create more state-wide interest in their magazine by canvassing their districts for news and sending the same to us.

THE EDITOR.

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

O F F I C I A L P U B L I C A T I O N
THE · STATE · ASSOCIATION · OF · WISCONSIN · ARCHITECTS

Vol. II, No. 4 & 5 *An Organization Promoting the Best Interests of the Profession by United Action* MAY, 1934

News From the Districts

First District News

Can one of the associate editors visit this district?

•

Second District News

We have no word from the north.

•

Third District News

The editor waits impatiently.

•

Fourth District News

Dillinger has been about. Is there no remodeling?

•

Fifth District News

Nothing new?

•

Sixth District News

All is quiet at the capitol.

•

Seventh District State Association of Architects

The regular monthly meeting of the Seventh District of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects was held Tuesday noon, April 17, 1934 at Mitzi's Tavern. Forty-six members and four guests were present. Leigh Hunt was absent due to illness; all other officers were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted.

Gilbert Grunwald, Chairman of the Employment Committee, reported no progress. The activities under the F. E. R. A. which would give employment to the Architects, have not been approved.

William Herbst, in the absence of Peter Brust, reported that the Survey of work being done or contemplated

in the City and County Departments has not been completed.

A formal announcement that Urban Peacock has been duly elected to membership in the Mayors' Advisory Council was received by the secretary. He will represent the District and report all matters of interest to the Association. Mr. Peacock asked the entire membership for support in carrying out his duties on the Council.

The report of the Treasurer, Mr. Peacock, was as follows: Nothing going out; nothing coming in; and no cash on hand.

Mr. Redden announced that the Federal Building and Loan Association wishes the co-operation of the Architects in determining amount of work contemplated in the future, principally work which needs financing. They wish to know the approximate total cost and amount of loan desired. This refers to new projects and is limited to residential work not exceeding three-family apartments.

M A Y C A L E N D A R

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9—

Meeting of Wisconsin Chapter, A. I. A., City Club, Milwaukee. 12:15 P. M.

THURSDAY, MAY 10—

Meeting of Board of Directors of Seventh District, Builders Club, Milwaukee. 4:00 P. M.

FRIDAY, MAY 11—

Meeting of State Executive Board, City Club, Milwaukee. 12:15 P. M.

TUESDAY, MAY 15—

Monthly Meeting—District No. 7, Mitzi Club, 920 Winnebago St., 12:15 P. M.

THURSDAY, MAY 30—

Meeting of Madison Chapter, A. I. A., Madison, Wisconsin.

Leo Brielmeier reported for the Blue Print Committee. A meeting was held with the representatives of the Blue Printing firms at which the Architects demanded a cut in prices in the lower brackets where the work is less than 100 sq. ft. The Blue Printers promised to give the matter their careful attention and study, and while nothing definite was promised, the committee feels that a better price scale will be arrived at.

Ted Eschweiler, in the absence of Leigh Hunt, reported for the Publicity Committee. John Holbrook has been given a contract as Publisher and promises the Wisconsin Architect promptly each month.

George Spinti thanked the members of his committee for their work in connection with the Smoker held Wednesday evening, April 11, at the Builders club. Fifty-one members attended.

A motion was made by R. F. Kloppenburg and seconded by George Spinti that the Seventh District hold a picnic in July and invite the other Districts. The motion carried.

Mr. Brielmeier asked the co-operation of the members in the campaign in progress to force the chain stores and Gasoline Filling Station companies to employ Architects on all their work under an ethical contract.

Phil Hayes, Manager of the Home Owner's Loan Association was the guest speaker. He gave a most interesting and helpful talk on the activities and aims of the organization. A rising vote of thanks by the members was given Mr. Hayes in appreciation.

The meeting adjourned.

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Eighth District News

We have had no word from the south for some time.

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

Official Publication

The State Association of Wisconsin Architects

An Organization promoting the best interests of the architectural profession by United Action.

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NOTES ON THE APRIL MEETING OF THE STATE EXECUTIVE BOARD

WM. G. HERBST, Secretary

The monthly meeting of the Executive Board was held at The City Club, 12:15 P. M., Friday, April 13, 1934.

The following members were present: Fitzhugh Scott, A. C. Eschweiler, Jr., Wm. G. Herbst, T. L. Eschweiler, Arthur Seidenschwartz, Peter Brust, Leigh Hunt, and Wm. Redden. Leo A. Brielmaier, Henry Auler and Henry Foeller were represented by proxy. Those absent were Frank Riley, Roger Kirchhoff and Bruce Uthus.

A. C. Eschweiler, Jr., Chairman of the Legislative Committee, reported on the meeting of his committee at Madison relating to the conference they had with the Interim Committee of the legislature. In attendance at this meeting were the following: A. C. Eschweiler Jr., Henry Auler, Edgar Borners, Irving A. Obel, Roger Kirchhoff, Frank J. Hoffman, Wm. Redden and Wm. G. Herbst of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects. Mr. Lynch, Chairman of the Interim Committee, four assemblymen and one senator. Mr. Callahan, State Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Hans Schmitt of his department and Mr. Wrabatz, Chairman of The Industrial Commission.

A complete transcription of this meeting was stenographically recorded and copies will be available when printed.

The work of Mr. Eschweiler's Committee was indorsed unanimously and the president was instructed to appoint a Committee to investigate the possibilities of establishing *A small school house service bureau* which would be sponsored by the State Association of Wisconsin Architects. The purpose of this proposed Bureau would be to do the consulting work now being done by Superintendent of Schools under the guidance of Mr. Hans Schmitt.

Mr. Peter Brust chairman of the Public Buildings Committee reported the results of the meeting with Mayor Hoan and Alderman Devine on the matter of the employment of an architect for the new filtration plant. Mr. Tudell has been engaged for the architectural work.

A resolution made by Mr. Brust was sent to the General Contractors Association and Mason Contractors Association asking for their cooperation in the construction of watertight masonry walls. A joint meeting was requested with the architects for a thorough discussion.

DISTRICT NUMBER 7 COMMITTEES:

Standing Committees

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Leo A. Brielmaier
Herman Bueemming
Wm. G. Herbst
Charles L. Lesser

EDUCATIONAL:

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EMPLOYMENT:

Gilbert O. Grunwald, Chairman
Herbert L. Ebling
Arthur H. Kienappel
Carl E. Meyer
Fred A. Wegner
Henry R. Slaby

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Alfred E. Mitterhausen
William H. Mitterhausen
Mark F. Pfaller
Albert J. Schutte

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Emil B. LaCroix
Hugo Logemann
Walter Veenendaal
Henry Rotier
Charles A. Valentine

ENTERTAINMENT:

George Spinti, Chairman
Herbert L. Ebling
Herbert J. Grassold
Gilbert O. Grunwald
Elmer A. Johnson
E. R. Kegler
George A. Kemnitz
Arthur H. Kienappel
Emil B. LaCroix
Carl E. Meyer
Wm. H. Mitterhausen
Walter Pollatz
Fred A. Wegner

DISTRICT OUTING:

Elmer Johnson, Chairman
Members will be printed next month.

A REFERENCE LIBRARY

ARTHUR SIMON

A reference library such as has been proposed lately for the city serves many classes of the population.

It serves the student of the natural sciences in his quest for knowledge.

It serves the researchers in the different branches of engineering and the arts by making it possible for him to find out what already has been accomplished in his particular line of interest and by getting him in touch with the thoughts of co-workers in his field all over the world.

The economist may find information regarding the development of various branches of commercial activities and the possible trend of future development.

The public official and statesman may get more detail knowledge of the inter-relation of various human activities, of their relation to the health and comfort of the population, of the trend of development in architecture and engineering as it affects the present and future welfare of Society.

The individual who wishes to advance himself in his own work has made accessible to him a vast amount of stored up knowledge, some of which he can make his own, and thereby advance his value as a worker and thinker to himself, his employer and Society as a whole.

The present facilities of the Public Library only serves these purposes very inadequately and the time appears to be ripe to seriously consider major steps which should be taken to bring the community abreast with other far-seeing communities by the creation of an adequate reference and research library serving the above purposes.

Considering for the present only the relation of such a library to the commercial life of the city, it is a fact that Milwaukee is a typical industrial center, whose industries have, in the past, been conspicuous for leadership in their respective fields. The welfare of the entire city depends upon the maintenance of that leadership and to maintain it the efforts of these industries in the future must be even greater than they were in the past. The statement that industrial leadership can only be main-

tained and advanced by constant study of its present methods and constant search for improvement in methods and materials is today accepted without challenge. Such study is greatly helped and speeded up by the availability of a large reference library.

After many years of study of the local situation it has been found that one handicap of our industries and those employed by them is the lack of an adequate scientific and technical library. Such a library requires years of development. A modest start has been made in the scientific collection of the Public Library, but the funds available in the past for the purchase of important new books as they appear was insignificant compared with the production of our industries to which they are related and the number of wage earners who could be helped by their use.

In 1927, Milwaukee's industrial production amounted to over 850 million dollars and the industries employed over 127 thousand people, paying nearly 200 million dollars in wages. Aside from the help which industry would receive from an adequate library, a still greater benefit would come to the wage earner, as the use of the library by him would increase his earning power by an increase of his own knowledge of his work.

The adult education department of the Library has, in the past, done splendid work in helping workers to increase their knowledge of their work and thereby advance themselves. There are hundreds of employees who have gained advancement through this work but the possibilities in this direction both for the Library and for the individual student is greatly limited on account of the limited amount of literature available and on account of the lack of personnel for this work in the Public Library. The amount spent by the Public Library for the purchase of technical and scientific books in 1933 was about \$1,500.00, being less than 6% of the total spent by the library for books. Investigations which have been made by various agencies indicate that the expenditure for research by progressive firms in various industries is from 2 to

5% of the annual turn-over. Taking the lower figure, this would correspond to 17 million dollars for Milwaukee as a whole and even 1% of this total expenditure would yield 170 thousand dollars which would be several times the amount required annually for the maintenance and operation of an adequate reference library.

The large concerns can, in a measure, buy books relating to their special field of work, but even in this case the information required is often of such a nature that it could not be supplied by a private library whose scope, of necessity, is limited. Local workers, therefore, find it often necessary to go to Chicago or even to New York or Washington to find the information which should be available here. The smaller industries, which represent the bulk of the activities in Milwaukee, are particularly handicapped in this respect, though they are even more in need of a local source of information.

Thus considering the industrial worker and the industries as a whole without leaving out of consideration the other phases of service of a reference library as I have outlined at the beginning, it becomes daily more apparent that the time has come when Milwaukee must seriously consider the creation of a separate reference library for Science, Art, Industry and Business of a size and scope comparable to similar institutions elsewhere and commensurate with the intellectual and industrial importance of the city. As I have indicated, the amount required for such a library is insignificant in relation to the direct advantage gained thereby and any increase in tax which may be required is almost insignificant in relation to the total budget of the city while the returns from such an investment would be many times greater than the returns from almost any other expenditure by the community.



Lettering on cover

by

MILTON C. HERRMANN,

1753 So. 57th Street,

West Allis, Wis.

Public Works and the Architect

Procurement Division Agrees to Employ Private Architects

In the March number of THE OCTAGON, attention was called to a memorandum submitted by the Chairman of the Institute Committee on Public Works to Mr. W. E. Reynolds, Assistant Director in charge of Public Works under the new Procurement Division. That memorandum was dated February 27th and requested an appointment to discuss the status of the Architect under the New Deal with Administrative Officials of the Treasury Department in charge of policy.

Your Chairman is privileged now to report that on Monday, March 19th, a conference with officials of the Procurement Division and representatives of the Institute took place. Present at that interview were the Director of Procurement, Rear Admiral C. J. Peoples; the Assistant Director in charge of the Branch of Public Works, Mr. W. E. Reynolds; the Supervising Architect, Mr. L. A. Simon—representing the Bureau; and Frank C. Baldwin, Secretary of the Institute; E. C. Kemper, Executive Secretary; and the Chairman of the Institute Committee on Public Works—representing the architectural profession.

The Agenda submitted in our memorandum of February 27th was followed as a guide in the extended discussion. Admiral Peoples stated his general agreement with the principle which the architectural profession has endorsed regarding the employment of Architects outside of this Bureau. Mr. Reynolds asserted that within the previous week the Bureau had been very seriously considering the policy of employing Architects outside of the Procurement Division, with respect to certain Federal buildings. He added, however, and Admiral Peoples confirmed his statement, that in the smaller units involving contracts below \$60,000.00, the Bureau was inclined to prepare the designs, plans and specifications.

The representatives of the Government did not take issue with the arguments of the profession, with regard to the direct advantages to be expected from the employment of competent Architects outside of the Bureau of Public Works. Neither did they question the indirect advan-

tages, as set forth in our Agenda. The greater part of the discussion related itself to terms of employment, character of service and responsibility, and the basis of proper remuneration. As spokesman for the Bureau, Mr. Reynolds stated his belief that the system of computing the Architect's fee should be improved. He expressed the thought that the fee should not be computed on a percentage basis, either in justice to the Government, or to the Architect, and advocated a fixed fee to be agreed upon, which fee should be properly related to the size and complexity of the project. He indicated that this subject was engaging the attention of the Bureau, and that he had not yet come to any definite conclusions. The representatives of the Institute agreed that the manner of computing fees has absorbed the attention of its members for a long time past, and that within the profession itself considerable difference of opinion exists. It was stated, as our conviction, however, that no great difficulty would be encountered in arriving at a meeting of minds, as the method of computation would matter very little so long as the result arrived at could be determined as just and equitable.

Mr. Reynolds further elaborated his ideas, with regard to the Architect's remuneration, by stating that the Department had received many complaints from Structural and Mechanical Engineers, charging that some Architects were refusing them fair compensation for adequate engineering service. These complaining Engineers stated that they could not possibly render adequate service for the fees allowed them by the Architects. Mr. Reynolds pointed out that the Government would insist on competent and adequate engineering service in connection with all of its projects, and asked what steps could be taken to insure proper payment to Engineers associated with Architects on Federal projects. The representatives of the Institute suggested that the matter lay within the power of the Government to remedy, inasmuch as the Government might insert, in its contract with the designing Architect, the rate of compensation to be paid to Engineers associ-

ated with him. Presumably, the Government might also stipulate a proper wage scale for draftsmen, in view of the fact that it is the announced policy of the Government, under the National Recovery Act, to insure proper compensation for all elements engaged in any enterprise. The first point to be determined would, of course, be the establishment of a just and equitable fee for the Architect, based on the value of his services, his technical costs and other items making up his total cost of production.

Your chairman then requested that the Department submit an outline of its proposals for study and consideration by us, so that we might recommend definitely their endorsement. Mr. Reynolds agreed to do this as soon as possible.

Then ensued considerable discussion of the general responsibility of the Architect. In no spirit of criticism, but as indicating some of the difficulties with which the Department has to contend, Mr. Reynolds brought up the general question of the Architect's liability for error and omission. Embarrassing situations undoubtedly arise in private practice, but in the case of Government work their solution is rendered more difficult by reason of certain necessary routine and departmental procedure. It would seem only fair that the Architect should assume responsibility for the technical accuracy of his work, and his contract might reasonably set forth the extent of this responsibility. If, when contractual relations between the Government and any individual member of our profession are entered into, they are consummated in a spirit of fairness, the interests of neither party need be jeopardized.

The question of the selection of the Architect was touched upon, and Mr. Reynolds stated that, as a result of the questionnaire sent out by the Treasury Department last summer, he was in possession of full and satisfactory data regarding the qualifications of Architects in every part of the United States. He stated that certain projects would be released and that certain appointments were expected to be announced at an early date. Throughout the discussion, the appointment of only qualified men, properly equipped by training and past performance, was stressed.

The representatives of the Institute heartily endorsed the Government's policies with regard to simplification of design and economies of construction. They reaffirmed, however, the obligation of the Government in the encouragement of good Architecture, however simple or however practical the proposed projects might be.

Regarding the standardization of types, it was felt, and stated by the Institute representatives, that this is a decision for the Government itself to make, and that only the results achieved, and the reaction of public opinion to them, could determine how far standardization should be carried.

This report of progress shows that conditions in Washington, at least in the Treasury Department, have crystallized in favor of the private architect—since the last report entitled "Public Works and the Architect" which appeared in the March number of THE OCTAGON.

In conclusion, it is gratifying to state that at the conference Admiral Peoples expressed his agreement with the principle which the Institute has long endorsed, regarding the employment of private architects outside of the Bureau, and resident in the general localities of the post office buildings to be erected. Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Simon concurred in this general statement of policy which, in effect, is—That the Procurement Division, through the Branch of Public Works, will, as a general rule, employ private architects to design the larger projects, with the reservation that in the smaller communities, involving contracts at \$60,000 or below, the Bureau will continue to prepare the plans.

It is understood that the program of the coming Convention will give ample time for a discussion of the whole question of public works and the employment of the private architect thereon. A report will be submitted to the Convention by the Committee on Public Works.

LOUIS LA BEAUME,

Chairman, Committee on Public Works, The American Institute of Architects.

March 23, 1934.

The Octagon

Mr. LaFollette Introduced the Following Bill; Which Was Read Twice And Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A Bill — S. 3348

To provide for additional appropriations for public works, to amend the National Industrial Recovery Act, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That there is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$10,000,000,000, for the purpose of carrying forward the program of public works inaugurated under the provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act, approved June 16, 1933. Such sum shall be allocated within the following limitations:

(1) Not less than \$1,850,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated for highway construction and related projects under the provisions of section 204 (a) and (b) of such Act: of which not less than \$1,250,000,000 shall be allocated for the elimination of hazards to highway traffic under the provisions of section 204 (a) (1).

(2) Not less than \$50,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated for highway and other construction under section 205 of such Act.

(3) Not less than \$125,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated for apportionment among the several States in accordance with the provisions of section 21 of the Federal Highway Act, approved November 9, 1921, as amended and supplemented, for expenditure in accordance with the provisions of such Act as amended and supplemented.

(4) Not less than \$1,500,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated for new building construction; of which not to exceed \$175,000,000 shall be allocated for construction of Federal buildings and for such purposes sections 305 and 306 of the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932, as amended, shall apply; not less than \$500,000,000 shall be allocated to the Home Owners' Loan Corporation for use by the Corporation in financing new home and building con-

struction secured by first mortgages at low interest rates, subject to the same terms and conditions, so far as applicable, as in the case of loans under the Home Owners' Loan Act of 1933, as amended; and not less than \$825,000,000 shall be allocated for loans and grants to finance building construction as provided in section 202 of the National Industrial Recovery Act, as amended.

(5) Not less than \$20,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated for coast and geodetic and geological surveys as provided in section 202 (b) of the National Industrial Recovery Act, as amended.

(6) Not less than \$5,855,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated and made available for expenditure on non-Federal projects, exclusive of projects included under the foregoing allocations.

(7) Not less than \$600,000,000 of such amount shall be allocated and made available for expenditure for carrying out the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act for the relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work, and for other purposes", approved March 31, 1933; and for such purposes the authority of the President under such Act of March 31, 1933, is extended two additional years.

SEC. 2. Section 201 (d) of the National Industrial Recovery Act is amended by striking out "two years" and inserting in lieu thereof "three years."

SEC. 3. (a) Clause (a) of section 202 of the National Industrial Recovery Act is amended by adding at the end thereof a comma and the following: "and school buildings when included within plans and surveys made or approved by the United States Commissioner of Education."

(b) Clause (b) of section 202 of such Act is amended by inserting after "(b)" the following: "Coast and geodetic and geological surveys,".

(c) So much of section 202 of such Act as reads "the construction of naval vessels within the terms and/or limits established by the London Naval Treaty of 1930 and

of aircraft required therefor" is repealed.

(d) So much of clause (2) of section 203 (a) of such Act as reads "but no such grant shall be in excess of 30 per centum of the cost of the labor and materials employed upon such project" is repealed.

(e) Section 203 of such Act is amended by adding at the end thereof of the following new subsection:

"(e) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress that this title shall be liberally construed, insofar as the requirement of security for loans made is concerned, to the end that the Public Works program contemplated hereby shall be expedited to the fullest extent possible."

(f) Section 204 (a) (1) of such Act is amended by inserting after the words "relocation of highways to eliminate railroad crossings" a comma and the following: "track elevation and depression through cities".

SEC. 4. The amendments made by section 3 of this Act to the National Industrial Recovery Act shall not be construed to limit the expenditure of funds heretofore obligated under such Act.

SEC. 5. The provisions of section 210 of the National Industrial Recovery Act shall apply with respect to the amounts herein authorized for additional expenditures under such Act.

SEC. 6. The Emergency Housing Corporation is authorized to proceed with the acquisition of property, by eminent domain or otherwise, and the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair of low-cost housing and slum-clearance projects, as authorized under the National Industrial Recovery Act.

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THE SQUARE DEAL

We are reprinting the following editorial from the *American Architect* for March.

The clear and concise statements of conditions which appear to exist in practically every city, county, state, and Federal administrative office in our country are well presented.

The practice of putting architects to work on an hourly basis in this emergency is appreciated but if this procedure discontinues, rather than the employment of architects on a fee basis, the profession of architecture is doomed.

Where architects are in executive positions in the N. R. A. they are not given the title of architect or recognized as a member of a profession.

It is high time we assert ourselves to the end that our identity is not lost and our profession absorbed by the executive branches of our government.

The architect serves best when he is the executive. Our profession is a composite of the many specialized branches of which administration, business, engineering, and art are uppermost.

THE SQUARE DEAL DOES NOT APPLY TO ARCHITECTS

BY BENJAMIN F. BETTS, A. I. A.

(Reprinted from the March issue of the *American Architect*)

The treatment of architects by government agencies is not consistent with policies of fair play urged by the Administration. . . . The NRA Division of Research and Planning, under Dr. Alexander Sachs, spent months preparing recommendations for stimulating the construction industry. Alvin Brown, executive officer of that Division, suppressed the report and dismissed the only architect and the only engineer in the Division. . . . Public Works Administrator Ickes appointed a committee to simplify the design of post offices. So far as can be ascertained, no architect was appointed to serve on that committee. Yet who could be better qualified to offer such recommendations than any one of several architects whose ability cannot be challenged? . . . L. W. Robbat, Jr.,

Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, led the profession to believe that he would assign a large volume of Federal buildings to architects outside of his department. This has not been done. On the contrary, practically no new work has been forthcoming from that office since March 4th, 1933. The Supervising Architect's Office has recently been placed in the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department under the direction of Admiral Peoples. One suspects that fewer—rather than more—Federal buildings will now be assigned to outside architects. . . . PWA *Federal Projects* are for the most part being designed by Government architectural departments. State institutions are being designed by state architectural offices; many municipal buildings are being designed by city architectural offices. . . . A *School Superintendent* publicly stated that the use of stock plans furnished by a public office saved an architect's fee of \$10,000.00 on a \$250,000.00 school building. An acting city architect has been employing architects—at about \$1.00 per hour—to prepare sketches and working drawings for several million dollar's worth of institutional buildings. Had this work been given to architects in private practice, they could have maintained their own offices and employed draftsmen at the usual rate of pay. . . . Common Labor on a CWA city plan project is being paid 60 cents per hour; masons and bricklayers \$1.25 per hour; electricians \$1.37½ per hour; Architects, landscape architects and engineers on the same project are paid from 61½ cents to 92⅓ cents per hour! . . . These policies are not in accord with the avowed purpose of the Administration's program stated to be the widespread stimulation of employment. The architects of the United States are on the outside; and they are finding it difficult even to "look in." . . . The situation warrants scrutiny and vigorous action that will secure a square deal for the professional man. . . . Write or telegraph your congressmen and state representatives. If local government officials are not giving architects a square deal this fact should be brought to their attention as well as to that of the public.

Obsolescence Insurance and the Architect

by J. C. KNAPP
Vice President, Otis Elevator Company

Second Installment — Concluded

Obsolescence Insurance virtually says to the Building Owner: You have already provided a bookkeeping fund to compensate you for the total loss of your building in years to come. This you call Amortization Reserve. Instead of a mere bookkeeping entry, why not spend a part of this fund for the renewal of what *really* deteriorates — and *save* the building? Spend this part regularly, as conditions develop. Use it for the purpose of maintaining your property at its full earning status. With such a regular and continuous program of modernization, the outlay each year will be found to be very moderate. You can pay for this modernization program as an integral part of the building's operation; and it will prove a scientific protection against Time, Wear and Tear. In fact, it will prove just as practical as your insurance against the fire hazard—and just as necessary. It will keep the value of your investment intact, and it will maintain, and even increase, the building's earning power. Do this, and you will roll up a growing good will, and a growing property value, which now is so often denied you through your old method of letting the building become out-moded.

Naturally, for building owners to follow this advice, there must (first) be set up an adequate routine. This should consist of a periodical survey and examination of the building—say once a year. Then a decision

should be reached as to what must be done. This settled, the money set aside for Obsolescence Insurance in that year is appropriated to pay for the improvements determined upon. . . . Once started on this path, common sense will dictate the course for future years. Visible things will usually get the first attention, because such defects quickly prejudice both tenants and visitors against the building. When these first eyesores have been cured, the functional apparatus will have attention. These as such items as water service, electric service and things similar. By this method, the building will always hold its strong place against its newer competitors. And it will also have what they have not,—all the added advantages that time, reputation and location bring.

If this practice of Obsolescence Insurance grows in this country (and there seems to be evidence that its principles are already becoming better recognized) it is going to mean that building owners will have to adopt a method whereby, say once a year, a really scientific survey of the building is made. This survey will determine just what changes and improvements are necessary to keep the building in the front rank.

Now, to do this, will undoubtedly require the services of an architect, and preferably that architect who is familiar with the buildings, due to his having originally built it. I would like, therefore, to offer a sug-

gestion. I advance it in the hope that it will prove of some interest and value. It is this:

Why should there not be an arrangement made between the architect and the owner whereby the architect *continues* to have an official connection with the building, after the building is completed. For a small retainer, the architect would agree to examine the building once a year and formulate for the owner the changes and improvements to be made that year. After these have been agreed upon, the architect would handle the contracts and supervise the work, charging therefor a percentage based on the actual cost. In this way the architect would retain a vital interest in the building indefinitely. First, he would build it. Then, as the years went along, he would see it grow into a constantly more modern structure. He could incorporate new materials and practices. It would be *his* building from first to last.



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Perhaps, such a plan has shadows that I do not see, but I offer it, very tentatively, as something that may prove of value. It will take time to get American building owners to handle their investment scientifically, but I think that the architects can, if they wish, aid in bringing about this better practice. When it comes we will have more livable and better looking cities.

I think I am safe in saying that the average architect considers his activity and interest is over as soon as the building is finished. I believe this to be both wrong in principle and short sighted in practice. However, now that modernization is in the air, I am hopeful that, with the help of the architects, a scientific means can be provided for establishing a general and continuing modernization policy.

Today, the great majority of buildings are handled by very able managers or superintendents. They are generally familiar with the ordinary problems of operation and maintenance. A few of them may even suggest minor improvements or changes. There is, however, no professional person whose business it is to see that the building is kept in a healthy economic state—attractive and modern, inside and outside—comparable to the newer buildings in the vicinity.

In that capacity, it seems to me, the architect (and preferably the *original* architect of the building) is best suited to advise. His role should be, perhaps, somewhat similar to the one played by the family physician. He not only brings the child into the world, but looks after the child's health through manhood, and thereafter. The architect certainly knows more about his own building than anybody else. My suggestion is, therefore, that he capitalize on it—to his own advantage, and to the advantage of the building.

Before broaching this subject, I took the precaution of obtaining the advice of several of your own group, as well as the advice of those in related fields. The advice was encouraging. Mr. Lee Thompson Smith, Vice President in charge of building management for Pease and Elliman says, "To me this idea is a practical one—so practical that we are thinking of adopting a practice similar to it. We now pay commissions to architects throughout the year, and

I think a straight fee to cover all kinds of consulting might be a sounder basis."

Mr. Kenneth K. Stowell, Editor of the Architectural Forum says, "I think it is a sound plan. Architects should find a good reception from the owners."

Mr. Joseph L. Hernon, Vice President, Brown, Wheelock, Harris & Company, Inc., says "In a few cases owners with whom we deal do retain architects as permanent consultants on their buildings. They are paid on a yearly basis and make periodic inspections of the building and we find that such buildings are given better care than those which do not take advantage of such services."

From this, it would appear that if the architects become seriously interested in modernization work, and will formulate a practical method of approach the much harassed building owner will welcome the move.

—❖—
The public seems to be right often enough to keep its critics guessing.

—❖—
Successful men often are the least competent judges of the reasons for their success.

—❖—
The route to success that most of us are compelled to take is a long, up-hill climb.

—❖—
Prosperity seems to come and go in no time at all whereas depression seems interminable.

—❖—
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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION
OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS

I wish to submit this grateful acknowledgment:

Without the aid and backing and cooperation of the editor and others vitally interested in the State Association, the success of the May issue of the Wisconsin Architect would have been doubtful.

I am thus assured that this magazine will gain impetus with each successive issue and that it will become a power in the hands of the state Association.

It is my intention to effect state-wide representation in display advertising. In this connection I wish to excuse the localized advertising appearing in the current issue of the Wisconsin Architect. Ground work, necessary from my point of view as publisher, forced the postponement of a planned trip through the state. That trip will take place in May.

I cordially welcome advice, criticism and suggestions from every member of the State Association and sincerely hope that the new Wisconsin Architect meets with your approval.

JOHN S. HOLBROOK,
Publisher.

