

THE
OCTAGON

A Journal of The American Institute of Architects



An Opportunity

<i>This Profession of Ours</i>	<i>F. H. A. In Action</i>
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THE OCTAGON

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An Opportunity

THE members of The American Institute of Architects are entitled to the best information available as it concerns the practice of architecture; and to the best judgment of their officers as to conditions of practice in the immediate future.

There has been no recent opportunity for me to consult with the other officers, so what I have to say in this statement is based upon my own observations, and upon a knowledge of conditions obtained from numerous visits to Washington since the last Convention.

For the remainder of 1934, and probably for all of 1935, the salvation of the individual architect, wherever he is located, lies in the field of residential reconditioning and residential new construction.

The prospect of large scale private building construction, or of state and municipal building construction not already contracted for, in the period stated, is negligible. No matter what is done in national economics there will be no general renewal of private building construction prior to 1936—except with Federal aid.

Many architects of courage and faith have lived on the hope that suddenly their old practice would come back, and that some quick improvement in the national welfare would bring to their boards the large projects and the splendid opportunities which they had in 1929. Such is not to be the case. Each of us should face that reality.

If we are to continue in practice as architects we must now discard some conceptions of what constitutes architectural practice, which have been deluding us for the past four years.

This is not to say that the architectural profession is going to be wiped out. Quite the contrary! The independent practicing architect in a typical American community will be just that in 1936—and thereafter. But he will be the architect who had sufficient imagination and fortitude in 1934 to adjust himself to new conditions.

These new conditions have to do with the functions of the architect, and their purposes in the community.

It is apparent that human values, based on security of employment and sufficiency of environment (decent housing conditions), are going to receive increasing attention and substantial enhancement in the immediate future. If the architect is to have his rightful share in this new program he must grasp the theory that his function in the community is as definite and as essential as is the function of the physician or lawyer. He must so conduct his practice, he must so approach prospective clients, and he must render such type of service as to gradually build up the popular impression that no citizen should think of building a house, or modernizing a house, or reconditioning a house, without first securing the advisory, or the complete technical service of some competent architect in his community. If the citizen about to build or repair but knew it, an hour of consultation with an architect as to what he thought he wanted to do, as to how it should be done, and as to who should do it, would assure him a substantial saving in money, a better piece of work, and a higher standard of good taste. But Mr. Average Citizen will never know these things unless the architect tells him.

The rapidly developing program of the Federal Housing Administration offers to practically every architect in this country an opportunity to re-establish his practice in a new field, and to make a good living during this critical period in which we live. It also offers him an opportunity to establish a reputation in his community as a professional adviser on every building operation, no matter how small, for which the owner hopes to get the full value of his dollar. In fact, this Federal housing program can be made to be the salvation of the architectural profession. It can be made a nation-

wide opportunity for putting the practice of architecture on a broader foundation than ever before.

The Institute in Washington, through its Officers and Executive Secretary, has ably and almost daily presented the value of architectural service to the officials of the Federal Housing Administration. They have received most courteous attention, and hours of valuable time from Administrator Moffett; Deputy Administrator Deane; the Chief of the Technical Division, Miles Colean; and from a score of other key men who are charged with responsibility for this tremendous undertaking, which will soon cover not only repairs and remodeling but new residential construction.

All of these men are convinced of the value and the desirability of architectural advice and service for those who borrow money from the banks under the F. H. A. guarantee. They have stated, with wisdom, that they *cannot* dictate to the banks, or to the borrowers, that architects must be employed. They wish to encourage such employment, but the desire for it must be expressed by those who have borrowed money with which to repair or build. They cannot *require* the employment of architectural service any more than they can dictate other types of service, or specific products.

Therefore, it is up to the individual architect to adopt a consistent and vigorous course which will give him a part in this housing work in his community.

In a new brochure issued by the Administration, entitled "Community Campaign" a section is devoted to the procedure for organizing a local Better Housing Program.

It contains a typical organization chart which offers many opportunities for participation by any number of architects. It sets up committees on finance, loans, publicity, building industry, general industry, planning, and consultation.

The section on the building industry committee is quoted "Function: to contact all building material and equipment manufacturers, distributors and dealers; all *architects*, builders, contractors, sub-contractors and others engaged in the local building industry, and to enlist and direct their active support in the campaign. Chairman should be leader in local building industry."

The section on the planning committee is quoted "Function: to work out *plans for improvement of community as a whole* and for long-range improvements under Better Housing Program."

It has been stated to representatives of the Institute by Director Moffett that ultimately there will be 15,000 local Better Housing Programs under way, each one under the guidance of a local committee.

Above italics are the Author's.

The implications of that statement; the opportunities for participation by the architect, as set forth in the Housing Administration documents; and the qualifications of the architect to assume leadership and secure participation are obvious.

The Institute in Washington gathers information. It can do no more for its members than to point out the opportunities now offered to them as architects.

If no "Better Housing Program" has been organized in your community, your chapter, or you as an individual, should take the lead in organizing it. If it has been organized, you as a practicing architect should get in touch at once with the Building Industry Committee and with the Planning Committee for the purpose of taking part in the work, as the professional man best qualified to advise in all building operations, no matter how small.

As to fees, their determination is up to you. But bear in mind that the loans for modernization and repair are made at a low rate of interest, for badly needed work, to people in distress who would not ordinarily employ architects.

If enough of these borrowers become your clients—for general consultation at their homes or at your office: If by your initiative you have convinced them of the value of your knowledge and ability in getting them the best for their money: Then you should be able to render an advisory service at so much per visit, and without reference to the customary fee for repair and alteration work. (Obviously the architect who asks a \$100 fee from a prospective client for advice and/or service on repairs estimated to cost \$1,000 will make a mistake—both for himself and for his profession.) While the average project will not require other than advisory service there may be some projects which will require full architectural service, and should be charged for accordingly.

This is not to say that the Schedule of Charges of the Institute should be broken down, or disregarded. It is to say that the architect should be wise enough and able enough to adjust his type of service to the advantage of the client, charging him a fee in scale with the project and individual conditions. Long ago, the doctors solved a similar problem.

Those architects who have open minds should find herein suggestions of value and encouragement.

If you are interested—broaden your view as to architectural practice. Then take immediate and persistent action in your own community.

Not the least reward will be for the future—in the good will of many clients, and in the recognition which will be accorded to you by your community.

ERNEST JOHN RUSSELL
President, A. I. A.

This Profession of Ours

An Enquiry into the Employment, Remuneration and Status of Architects

BY FREDERIC E. TOWNDROW, A. R. I. B. A.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This series of papers by Mr. Towndrow was briefly described in the August OCTAGON.

That number contained "The Earning Power of Architects and Assistants" and "The Amount of Work Available and Who Gets It."

In this number appear "The Architect in the Balance" and "Egoism Versus Cooperation."

In October will appear the concluding articles of the series, namely, "Corporate Propaganda" and "Architectural Education."

THE ARCHITECT IN THE BALANCE

PRECARIOUS PRIVATE PRACTICE

IN this survey we considered in Article II the total amount of work available per annum in Great Britain, the number of *bona fide* architects, and the potential share which might go to each one. These estimates are of course only approximate, for no official figures are published for either (a) the actual amount of work of a kind where some architectural service is necessary or highly desirable, or (b) the actual number of *bona fide* architects practicing on their own or sufficiently experienced or qualified to practice on their own. However, the figures given have been checked from several sources, and are sufficiently correct to establish my main point that there is now an immense amount of work going astray which should fall to the lot of the architect in private practice. The small (and even the large) private practice is much too precarious a matter at the moment; even apart from slumps, the average architect can never be certain where his next job is coming from. There is so much catch-as-catch-can about the business of getting work; especially with the practice in London which may have been started on a success in a competition, or which has specialized on rare high-class jobs.

THE COUNTRY ARCHITECT

In times like these the architect in the small country town is in a better position, for he is compelled to work on the assumption that he must have several strings to his bow. And by his extended interests and amazing versatility he can depend upon a steady dribble of odd jobs with an occasional good one. The nice distinctions of professional life, such as we may admire in London, can mean very little to him: he has to live. He takes out his own quantities, he will negotiate the sale and purchase of land and property (he may even speculate a little himself in that direction), he will do any kind of surveyor's work in valuations for building societies, and he

is not above arranging insurance policies and mortgages. And apart from these very helpful commissions he finds that one thing leads on to the other; in fact, it is almost imperative for him to do all these things, for unless he gets in early on the sale of the land or the arranging of the mortgage, someone else will cheerfully do the rest. Thus to depute the menial tasks to an estate agent would mean in most cases that the estate agent would design the building; a relatively small matter to the average person. All this, and much more, the small provincial architect does quite openly. He is singularly free from pompous professionalism.

Yet is very very hard work, and though he may earn the respect of his townfolk, he is financially much worse off than the local butcher, baker, or candlestick maker, not to speak of the parson and the doctor, who probably look down on him just as they are secretly afraid of the wealthy local tradesmen.

OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL ARCHITECTS

But before we consider the activities of the individual architect we must give our attention to the inroads which have been made of recent years into the fields of private practice.

First there is the official architect. The growth of social services, and central government and municipal activities, combined with the precariousness of private practice, has driven many architects into government and municipal employ. As recent events have shown, all too bitterly, in all these government and municipal staffs there is a large proportion employed only on a temporary basis, and liable to the "sack" at a month's notice. It is not for me here to enter into the questions affecting such employment, partly because there is not space, and partly because there are various official organizations which have, from time to time, taken up the case. The main stumbling block, of course (from the official architects' point of view), is that the attitude towards architects within government and muni-

cial offices is similar to the one outside it, and is not likely to be raised until the general remuneration and status of architects are raised.

However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that now is much as one-fifth of the whole profession is (or rather was, until a few months ago) in whole-time employment with official bodies, including government, municipal, railway, brewery and business offices. What this means by the way of loss to the private practitioner is incalculable; he seems likely to be the exception rather than the rule. This process of rationalization and bureaucratic activity is probably inevitable. It is little use trying to reverse it; what the profession must do is to plan for it and work together as a whole to improve the remuneration and conditions of the salaried architect for the very simple reason that in ten years' time about one-third of the whole profession will be in that kind of employment. Yet, given the support of the profession as a whole, there should always be certain definite reservations as to the amount of private work (if any) that official architects should be allowed to undertake.

CASUAL LABOUR

One of the first things to attack is the casualization of employment—where men are taken on only for special jobs and “sacked” immediately the jobs are finished. There may be some excuse for this in the small office, but it is now prevalent in the large ones, and seems to be fostered by government and municipal authorities—where there is no excuse at all. In this I recommend the following: in private offices where a qualified assistant is taken on specially for a job he should receive a special bonus on his salary, proportional to the fees on the job and consistent with the time spent on it: if this can be done for the clerk of works and general foreman—as it is occasionally—surely it could be done for the assistants in charge of jobs? Further, I recommend that in government and municipal offices temporary employment should be reduced as far as possible, or at least there should be the arrangement of six months' notice on either side, with an increased salary for the unestablished assistants to compensate them for their insecurity of tenure. According to the last available census, there were no less than 647 *temporary and unestablished* architectural draftsmen in the Civil Service alone, that is, in the H.M. Office of Works, the War Office, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry, the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport and the Post Office. And this is apart from the L.C.C. and the hundreds of local authorities.

THE SURVEYOR AND THE ENGINEER

Both in departmental offices and in private practice the architect is often placed at a dis-

advantage with the surveyor or the engineer. This is a thorny subject, and little good will be done by merely *hoping* that the surveyor or engineer will be less aggressive in his encroachments into the fields of architecture. It is difficult at times to draw sharp lines between the legitimate activities of the three professionals—architect, surveyor and engineer. At one time they were one and the same person; it is only the Victorian segregation into professionalized bodies which has appeared to make them so distinct. And with the alteration in the methods of construction, with steel and reinforced concrete, with the fundamental change-over from rule-of-thumb methods of artistic judgment to the methods of scientific calculation, it is inevitable that the engineer should hold increased sway over the art of building. Yet here the architect should look to his laurels: he must change himself or go under. The business of calculation is not the sole prerogative of the engineer: our fathers always did their own calculations, and this ground will have to be regained. I will deal with this later, under Education. But our concern here is to see that the architect's legitimate functions in the planning and design of buildings is not interfered with, for he is the only man nowadays who is properly trained for that job.

THE MAN BEHIND THE SCENES

In many local authorities the architect is placed “under” the borough surveyor or engineer, or he is rated as an “architectural assistant” in the department. This should be resisted at all costs, for more often than not his design is spoiled by the ignorance of the borough surveyor or engineer; his identity is lost, and though he may be a fully qualified architect, and may do all the work of such, he gets little pay and no “kudos” whatever.

Occasions often occur where a borough surveyor will either openly, or by deputy, undertake private architectural work in active competition to local private practitioners. This is a pernicious business, and should be exposed and fought wherever possible, especially where the surveyor is “passing his own plans,” or those of his “ghost.” I do not think that the R.I.B.A. should have any compunction about taking up cases of this sort, or of members reporting the matters to local societies or the Institute. Broadly speaking wherever a man is drawing a good salary from public funds, he should undertake no private work which would seriously deprive those who are helping to pay his salary.

Really good planning and design can only come by years of training and experience, and though there are many architects sadly remiss in this respect, it is no use throwing up the sponge and

allowing others to run where we are too lazy to tread.

QUACKS AND TRESPASSERS

Moreover, there are Surveyors and surveyors, just as there are Architects and architects; the average estate agent and auctioneer calls himself "surveyor and architect," even if he has no qualifications of any kind whatever; and when one thinks of the thousands of them who thus advertise themselves on large boards up and down the country (whereas the real architect has a tiny illegible nameplate in an obscure street), one cannot be surprised that the average person has little or no idea as to what an architect is. In fact, when one comes to think of it, it is surprising that the qualified architect manages to get a living at all. For apart from the estate agents,

who must be numbered in their thousands, there are the speculative builders' draftsmen, untrained and generally ignorant of anything, who draw up the plans for the council at so much a time or for a pound or two per week, and are generously referred to as "our architect" by the builder; and there are the gentlemen and building companies (unrestricted by any professional code) who freely advertise in the papers that they will design anything and build it anywhere; then there are the furnishing firms, who will build the house to go round the furniture; and finally there are the people who in certain building papers offer to provide complete sets of plans with specifications at a few guineas a time.

Where do the properly qualified architects stand in the midst of all these?

Unknown, apathetic, and just mumbling to themselves—at least the greater part of them.

EGOISM versus COOPERATION

AN ART OR A PROFESSION?

The general purpose of this article is to consider the ways in which architects do, or do not, act together as a profession, and to suggest methods for improvement in the cooperative services of both individuals and the R.I.B.A. Thus it is divided into two parts: the first part relates to the activities of the individual, and the second part to the constitution and activities of the R.I.B.A. But before we deal with these two methods of approaching our goal of more work and better remuneration for architects, we might give a moment to that old, and perhaps outworn, controversy: Is architecture an art or a profession?

It is obvious when one comes to think of it, that it is both an art and a profession. It is an art in the abstract sense of its *being*, and it is a profession in fact of its practical relationship with the community at large.

THE "UNATTACHED" AND "ARTIST-ARCHITECT"

For no matter how much a man may consider himself to be an individual working in his own way, it must be confessed that in our work there is no such thing as individual creation. A building is not like a picture which may be created entirely out of the ability and imagination of the artist. It is the embodiment of conditions, *external* to its designer; such as financial conditions, social standards, customs, styles and fashions, site, materials, and accepted methods of workmanship. And when we get a number of individuals whose activities are really prescribed the whole time by external conditions, it is no more than foolish vanity which would cause any one to set himself up as an isolated artist. Can the isolated architect-artist in any way set his own standards for the

sizes of bricks, or steel casements, or doors, or fittings: things which he is forced to use? Is not his work affected by the ignorance or enlightenment of his client, his neighbours, the local authorities, and the different supply companies; all things needing collective action for reform?

When a man is properly trained as an architect he becomes a part of a group of men whose activities, outlook, and purposes are similar. Therefore it is incumbent upon him, in the interests of everyone, to devote some part of his energies to the common cause and ally himself with the active Professional Body.

THE INDIVIDUAL ARCHITECT

Yet there are enormous numbers within the professional fold of the R.I.B.A. and its allied societies who lack even the excuse of wishing to pose as individualistic artists—these are the apathetic ones and the grumblers. How often does one hear an architect say, even though he may be a member of the Institute: "What use is the R.I.B.A.? What has it ever done for me?" The reply to such a man is to put the question to him: "What have *you* done for the profession? How much interest do *you* take in its affairs?" It will probably be found that he has done nothing. He probably never returns a voting paper, never opens the R.I.B.A. journal (nor, for that matter, reads any other architectural journal), never attends a meeting, and never takes the slightest interest in any of those national interests such as town-planning or housing, or broad reforms in legislation which would make this country a better place for everyone—including architects—to live in. Such a man is like mud in the wheels—one can have no patience with him—and there are hundreds like him in our profession.

APATHY

When I speak of this appalling apathy I speak from facts. I give here some proofs of this:—

(a) In 1931 the Exhibitions sub-committee arranged the Biennial Exhibition of the R.I.B.A. The subject was the Architecture of Modern Transport, a subject which should appeal to the young and progressively minded. A great deal of time and trouble and money was put into this exhibition. It was a first-class show; yet not one-tenth of the architects in Greater London visited it.

(b) For years the R.I.B.A. has been suggesting to architects that they should sign their buildings in order to increase the public interest in our work, yet less than one in a hundred architects has had the courage to do it.

(c) For years the R.I.B.A. has offered medals to local societies which they might award to notable buildings in their areas on the lines of the R.I.B.A. London Architecture Medal—but it has taken about six years for the different allied societies to realize this, and only one or two of them are sufficiently keen to take up the suggestion.

(d) A short time ago, as a result of representations made by the R.I.B.A., the Royal Fine Art Commission offered to give its opinion on any projected scheme of public interest which any architect might like to submit to it. How many architects have taken advantage of this, even though such opinions would be given in confidence and the architect would in no sense be bound by them?

(e) Several years ago a leading London Daily (not one of the sensational kind) offered—if requested by the architect—to send a competent critic to write upon any building which would be of general interest to the public. I think I am right in saying that there was practically no response from our profession—possibly out of a miserable fear of what the critic might say. Similarly, the architectural critic of an important Sunday newspaper tells me that the apathy in architectural criticism is not with the public, nor the Press, but with the architects.

HOW CAN THE INDIVIDUAL HELP?

What we need above everything else is an active, highly enthusiastic, *absolutely united profession* where every man does his best to assist the architectural and professional interests. The individual can help in many ways, of which I suggest the following:—

(a) He should attend the R.I.B.A. meetings, exhibitions and functions. If he does not like them he should say so and suggest how they might be improved. This applies specially to the young members.

(b) He should make a point of voting at the annual elections and if he feels that he has any reason to be dissatisfied with the older *regime*, the remedy is there in his hands, for there is no objection to younger men at the Institute, providing they are elected. In fact, the Council often has to co-opt younger men, because the members—and this applies especially to the associate class—will not bother to vote for them.

(c) In local societies he should support a policy of holding periodic exhibitions of local work. And welcome the travelling exhibitions which are sent out by the R.I.B.A.

(d) He should support any policy of local propaganda by the way of lectures to the public, letters and paragraphs in the local press, the formation of civic societies, the awarding of R.I.B.A. medals to notable buildings, and a dozen other interests in which the active architect should be concerned.

(e) He should, wherever possible, take an active part in local, non-architectural, affairs and enterprises. He might

stand for election to the local or county council. If other professional men—not to speak of builders—can do this, why not the architect? Think how much better the amenities of this country would be if, during the last twenty years, there had always been at least one architect on every Municipal and County Council in this country.

THE R.I.B.A.

We might here contend that the difficulty is not so much with the individual architect as with the central organization of the profession—the R.I.B.A., which needs new and younger blood—for that is essential to any organism. But where is the younger blood? Why doesn't it come forward? Are we to assume that most of the younger men in the profession—say the men about forty—are too bored or too lazy, for there is nothing to prevent them from being nominated and elected? There is still a preponderance of oldish men on the Council and Committees who, when all is said and done, are the men most willing to give up their time to Institute affairs.

CONSTITUTION OF THE R.I.B.A.

Let us broadly consider the constitution of the R.I.B.A. It consists in its central organization of (a) the four standing committees of Art, Science, Practice and Literature, (b) the Council, (c) the Inner Council or Executive Committee, (d) the Finance Committee, and (e) about a score of specialist committees and sub-committees dealing with detailed matters, most of them permanent, such as the Exhibitions Sub-committee, but some of them set up for a special need, such as the Aerodromes Committee.

Generally speaking, all ordinary questions requiring decisions are referred to the Standing Committees, who report to the Council, who takes action upon them. Thus the Committees have no executive powers in themselves, but each of the Chairmen of the four Standing Committees is *ex officio* on the Executive Committee of the Council, which is, as it were, the Cabinet of the Institute. Therefore it is important for members to note the personnel of this Executive Committee and to see that its membership is representative of all sections of the profession, young and old, progressive and conservative. At the moment, both on the Executive Committee and the Council there is a singular dearth of men who might with any stroke of the imagination be called young, or modernly minded. Surely this is an anachronism in a world which has changed so fundamentally during the last fifteen years? For no matter how active an elderly man may be, he can never see the point of view of the man who finished his education in the full bitterness of the War and who has been caught up in the spirited drive of these post-War years.

INITIATING POLICY

No system of government is perfect, but one extraordinary thing about the system at the R.I.B.A. is its lack of defined policy. This seems to be inevitable with the method of voting. Members of Council are elected not upon the lines of any proclaimed programme submitted to the electors, nor upon any broad principles as to whether a man is progressive or conservative, but simply upon the haziest knowledge as to his personality and activities. The result is that all that we have is a collection of men who are empowered to give opinions on questions forced upon them from the outside, but not properly empowered to initiate or implement any kind of reforms which might offend even a small proportion of the electors. Manifestly this system of voting is haphazard, for members are asked to vote on many people they do not know and whose views they know nothing about. Yet without descending to the banalities of party politics it is almost impossible to suggest any method better than the present one.

The most serious defect of the present system is the lack of new ideas, for no one is empowered, or even expected to suggest them. When they are suggested, they are discussed for too long a time and generally discussed to death, for the Council has no idea as to what the electorate might think of new proposals.

A POSSIBLE WAY OUT

There is one way out of this situation which I should like to suggest, *it lies in the opening-up*

of the discussion on architectural and Institute matters, in the following way:—

(a) There should be open debates at the Institute, when matters of architectural interest could be discussed. Sometimes the subject could be on Institute policy, and sometimes a controversial matter connected with the practice or the art of architecture. These debates should be reported (but only in the R.I.B.A. Journal), and upon the views expressed by different speakers one would get some idea as to what they thought; and upon a show of hands of "for or against" one could get some idea as to the general feeling of members. This incidentally would create much more enthusiasm for professional and Institute matters (especially with the younger members, who, at the moment, are apt to regard 9 Conduit Street with fear or active dislike).

(b) The pages of the Institute Journal should encourage the discussion of matters in its columns, especially when the Council wishes to get a "feeler" as to any new line of policy. Such discussions should be as free and as vigorous as possible. Scholarly pomposity should be avoided at all costs. There is far too much of it already in our professional life.

(c) The meetings of the Council might be reported *verbatim* in the Institute Journal. This would give the electors some idea as to what the Members of Council really do, say, and think.

The soundest rule which the profession and the R.I.B.A. might learn is that people do not take a real interest in things until they are able to argue about them. This explains the wild enthusiasm for professional football and the "leg theory" in cricket. Mystery, pomposity, and professional dignity will merely smother us in our own grand regard for ourselves. The world is changing rapidly and, if the business of architecture does not change rapidly with it, we may be swept out of existence.

(To be continued.)

Costs—and Architecture

THE Federal Architect is the official publication of the Association of Federal Architects, Washington, D. C. That Association is composed of architects and architectural draftsmen employed in the many bureaus in Washington which perform architectural functions. A large proportion of the members of the Association are employees of the Office of the Supervising Architect, in the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department.

In the July number of The Federal Architect there appeared an editorial which is quoted herein. It was called to the attention of Mr. Louis La Beume, former Chairman of the Committee on Public Works of the Institute, who responded to it in a letter to the Editor, as quoted.

The two comments are enlightening; and quite relevant at a time when there is a strong tendency to "bureaucratize" architecture—by every public agency charged with building construction duties.

The Editorial—In The Federal Architect

"MR LA BEAUME, Secretary of The American Institute of Architects, in the last issue of The Octagon took occasion to say that he "questioned the Treasury Department's figures relative to its costs." This sounds discourteous—but it is actually just the result of bewilderment. It refers back to a statement the Institute for some reason

elected to make some time ago that the item of cost to the Government for plans prepared by private architects was less than the Government's item of cost for preparing its own plans.

"This theory was presented to a Congressional committee, which asked the Treasury for its part

to report on the second item—a report Mr. La Beume later questioned. The committee then asked Mr. La Beume for his part to report on the first item to which the record shows he responded he did not know. This put Mr. La

Beume in the difficult mathematical position of dealing with two sums, one of which he did not know and the other he feared that someone was deceiving about; and trying to determine which was the greater.”

A Reply to the Editorial

BY LOUIS LA BEUME, F. A. I. A.

To the Editor, The Federal Architect.

YOU honor me beyond my deserts and I am duly grateful for your reference in the July number of *The Federal Architect*. But as all architects, whether within or without the Government service, have been inspired from time immemorial by a passion for accuracy and order, you will, I am sure, also be grateful to have certain misstatements in your paragraph corrected.

At the risk of seeming to prolong the discussion as to the wisdom of the Government's policy with relation to the employment of architects outside of your Department, I still feel it may be worth while to try to clear the record. During the three years of my service as Chairman of the Public Works Committee of the Institute (not as Secretary of the Institute)—from April, 1931 to May, 1934—many reasons were advanced to support the more wide-spread recognition, by the Government, of the country's architectural ability. These reasons were always advanced in good temper, unaccompanied by innuendo or malice. They have not been successfully refuted. They are all embalmed in the record, and the embalmer has done such a good job that they look as natural to-day as they did in life.

If you are still interested in a matter which seems to have become, thanks to the now famous ruling of Secretary Morgenthau, a dead issue, I shall be glad to send you all of the documents in evidence. Some of these, however, may be referred to in archives more accessible to you, and, if by any chance you can lay your hand on the bulletin containing the hearings before the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Second Congress, First Session, on H. R. 6187, etc., you will find, on page 68, a brief on the cost of architectural services, the reading of which should not cause any bewilderment.

You will find, also, on page 114 of the same pamphlet, another brief on the subject of Comparative Costs—Treasury Department—Outside Architects. This brief attempts sincerely to analyze and clarify some of the verbal testimony submitted at the hearing, and contains a very mild statement that as a result of this analysis

“We feel justified in calling your attention to the fact that the actual disparity between Government costs and outside costs has not been conclusively demonstrated.” This statement is the basis of my comment in the May Octagon to which your paragraph takes exception and implies discourtesy. It is quite true that my Committee questioned the Treasury Department's figures relative to its costs. It still questions them.

Credulity is often a charming trait, but it is hardly a *sine qua non* of citizenship. Were it so, vast numbers of our people would be disenfranchised, for there is a general feeling abroad in the land that however efficiently Government Bureaus may exercise their functions, economy is not one of their virtues. Parenthetically I am not convinced that economy is a virtue at all; but this is my personal feeling. Certainly I do not believe that good architecture can be measured by the cost of producing a set of drawings.

And I have never said that I did. Neither did I ever say, nor as far as the record shows, did the Institute ever state that “The item of cost to the Government for plans prepared by private architects was less than the Government's item of cost for preparing its own plans.” The plain fact is that the Government itself raised the issue of comparative costs of production. I replied with the briefs I have cited. Can you honestly find in the record any statement of mine to justify your charge that I stated that I did not know what the “established” fee referred to in H. R. 6187, with regard to Federal Work, amounted to?

Though the economic issue was stressed by some during the presentation of our case, and resulted in some confusion, it was, by no means, the paramount issue.

That paramount issue may be summed up in this simple question, which I ask you as a fellow architect and not as a Government functionary:

Were the great works of architecture, which we both admire, the manifestations of individual genius, or were they designed by Public Bureaus? Put it another way:

Is there any outstanding work of architecture in the world to-day which was designed by a National, State or Municipal Bureau?

I ask this in all humility, for here I really am bewildered.

Survey of Institute Affairs

THE following analyses have been printed in The Octagon:

In July, "What Is An Architect;" "The Architect and The Institute;" and "The Architects Can Take It;"

In August, "The Schools and the Students;" "The Question of Fees;" and "The Rules of the

Game." Read them now, or again.

In this number appear analyses with respect to "A Need For Making Friends;" "Institute Documents;" and "Where To Meet;"

In the October number will appear three additional reviews, thus completing the publication of those which are suitable for publication.

A NEED FOR MAKING FRIENDS

THIS ANALYSIS BY SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT PEASLEE

Public Opinion of the Architect—

The synopsis read: Politicians and other informed people often say that the architect is a dilletante—that he is a theorist and does not follow through to assure a finished product.

Question: (a) Have you encountered this attitude?

Returns: 150 said "Yes."

50 said "No."

Question: (b) If so, is there any basis for it?

Returns: Practically all who said "Yes" in (a) said that there is a basis for an unfavorable attitude.

Few said unwarranted.

Question: (c) What should be done about it?

Returns: Here are some of the answers: Discourage the architect who withdraws the hem of his garment from things practical; the depression is doing that anyway . . . Improve standards of performance . . . the architect should insist on being paid for advice, sketches, and all other services and not offer to work for nothing. . . This is one of the most important questions facing the profession; the standard of professional ability including design, office and business methods is way below what it should be throughout the country; This should be forcibly brought to the attention of the whole profession with a view of stimulating greater efforts along these lines and of eliminating the smug attitude that we are not being properly recognized in accordance with our deserts. . . Concerted action should be taken to demonstrate that progress in architecture; design and construction is not mere chance but has been achieved by the diligence, concentration and persistent efforts of the profession . . . proof that the architect is a leader in civic work and that his training qualifies him to carry through . . . a great many architects have acquired a true basis of

knowledge about economic factors influencing building and real property—the Institute should eliminate the feeling that it is in any sense an academy, the architect an idealist and his office a studio . . . If the attitude is correct, educate the architect; if it is not true, educate the public. . . Part of the reason for such an attitude is due to the deliberate efforts of the interested agencies to undermine the position of the architect. . . Let our substantial architects enter into all normal civic activities. . . An architect should participate in every civic enterprise; . . . The architect must be taught realistic thinking; he is in a world of realities; his training must be applied to combine reality with beauty and reason. . . Men who fail to discharge their obligations should have their registration revoked in a legal manner . . . Let the architect become more interested in civic affairs and he will become more of a factor. . . Bring up the new crop of architects to believe it is unethical and unprofessional to be unbusinesslike . . . the cure is the service rendered by the architect. The Code Authority will determine this service and require its performance.

Question: (d) Are the architectural schools to blame?

Returns: Insofar as the schools are concerned, 25% of the replies charge responsibility, and 40% state that the fault did not rest with the schools, while 35% gave indefinite answers, such as "Partly," "Yes," and "No," "Perhaps."

The most pertinent of the answers concerning the responsibility of the schools, is as follows: "I have not noticed that the untutored architects were better in this respect."

Question: (e) What are your comments?

Returns: Here are some of the answers. The modern tendency is to establish an office without sufficient practical experience . . . Many of us undertake to deal with problems for which we are not equipped . . . Architects and engineers should group themselves together to take an active and progressive part in the growth of their communities, using their economic knowledge to the best interest of the city and town; . . . the architect must get out of his office and into the life about him . . . An architect should be a practical reasonable leader in his community . . . Most of the architects in my community are taken quite seriously by the business men and are entirely competent to take care of themselves in business matters . . . Architects should take more part in public and community affairs individually . . . The client knows but little about design and the preparation of drawings but he is quick to know careless business methods . . . We need frank, published criticisms of architectural work; if the architects were rapped "good and hard" they might be more keen to follow through . . . The more I think about the idea of a man with a professional, idealistic approach to his problem who yet keeps his feet on the ground and follows through, the more I like it—a business-like professional man . . . Let the architec-

tural schools teach public speaking so that the architect can think on his feet for the benefit of the community . . . Schools should advocate an apprenticeship for the graduate . . . Get the architect out of his office and interested in activities which do not directly concern him or his practice.

The comments by Mr. Peaslee were as follows:

The surprising part about the answer to this major question and its sub-divisions is that the question itself is so completely answered by the complete unawareness on the part of the minority of the profession about a condition concerning which a majority seems very much concerned.

Three-fourths of the answers report having encountered such an attitude on the part of the public in greater or less degree, and with such a showing it seems almost superfluous to ask whether there is any basis for such an attitude; only a few of those who admit the existence of the condition deny a reason for its being.

The suggestions for correcting the conditions show a surprising variety. We might have expected to receive recommendations for improving the standards of performance, being more businesslike, educating the architect, educating the public, stressing competency and eliminating incompetency, training as master builder instead of as designer, and strengthening registration requirements; but it is interesting to find emphasis placed on what may be expected from code requirements of service-to-be-rendered, upon eradication of the unbusinesslike free-sketch evil, upon the knowledge and use of the English language in written and spoken propaganda, upon mixing with men, and most emphatically upon the assumption of an active, vigorous part in civic, social, and political, as well as in professional affairs.

INSTITUTE DOCUMENTS

THIS ANALYSIS BY DIRECTOR JAMES O. BETELLE

The Contract and Professional Documents—

The synopsis read: You are familiar with the Standard and other Contract Documents, and with the various professional documents. All these documents will be revised in due course to meet final code requirements.

The total number responding on this subject, in whole or in part, was 300.

Question (a) Do you use these documents?

Returns: 187 use the documents.

13 do not use the documents.

Question: (b) What changes or comments can you offer?

Returns: Arbitration clause should be modified, made more brief, and placed on one page.

Arbitration clause should be eliminated, as it belittles the architect and invites doubts as to his fidelity and judgment.

Only Institute members should get the benefit of these documents, and only Institute members should be allowed to use them.

Revise the standard "cost-plus" form. It is now almost useless.

Prepare simpler form of contract between architect and owner, to make it less formidable for small work.

The documents should be checked over and corrected to date, and also be made to apply to the different states, if possible, as well as to the N.R.A. codes.

General Conditions and Contract forms are too lengthy and should be more brief.

The Institute documents have been injured by too much General Contractors' Association dictation. They rob the architect of his former pro-

fessional standing and they make him a mere agent of the owner.

Question: (c) Have they enhanced the standing of the architect?

Returns: 179 said the documents have enhanced the standing of the architect.
9 said they have not.

The deductions which Mr. Betelle drew from all returns on this subject were as follows:

That the Institute Standard Contract Documents are in general use by the profession; that they are generally satisfactory; and that they have enhanced the standing of the architect.

The few criticisms of these documents are general in nature: that they should be made brief, and brought up-to-date with the N.R.A. code provisions. All suggested modifications are of a routine nature.

WHERE TO MEET

THIS ANALYSIS BY THE SECRETARY, FRANK C. BALDWIN

Institute Conventions—

The synopsis read: For many years, the Institute has been holding two conventions out of every three in Washington. It has been said that at least every other Convention should be held elsewhere. It has been suggested that Institute Conventions be held each second year, and that the intervening year be devoted to regional Conventions.

The total number responding on this subject, in whole or in part, was 222.

Question: (a) Should Conventions be held in Washington two years out of three; or every other year; or how often?

Returns: 61 favored Conventions in Washington two years out of three.
92 favored Conventions in Washington every other year.
15 favored Conventions in Washington every third year.
3 favored Conventions in Washington every fourth year.
5 favored holding all Conventions in Washington.
3 asked why hold any in Washington.
2 favored holding Conventions only every second year, regardless of location.

Question: (b) What do you think of holding Conventions every other year and regional Conventions in alternate years?

Returns: 65 favored holding a Convention every other year and regional Conventions in alternating years.
23 thought it might prove an interesting experiment.
13 were doubtful.
48 were definitely opposed to the idea.

Replies to (b) indicate some confusion in the minds of the writers. Some seemed to think that it was the intention to hold a regular Institute convention in a selected regional Division in the alternate years. Others thought that simultaneous conventions in all Regional Divisions were intended.

Very positive opinions were expressed by the majority of the 48 who were opposed to plan (b) to hold regional conventions in alternate years. Among the reasons given were the following:

Regional conventions are unsatisfactory.

Regional conventions should be held semi-annually, in addition to Institute conventions, otherwise there may be a bigger split in Institute affairs.

It is imperative to encourage the idea that the Institute is national, not sectional or local. The Institute convention is the one big thing each year and does the profession a world of good.

Regional conventions would not be beneficial. A broadly national point of view should be cultivated by maintaining annual Institute conventions.

A smaller annual convention should be held in Washington in the Spring, and regional conventions as desired in the Autumn.

Regional conventions might have a beneficial

effect upon the public in the localities where held, if properly publicised locally. They should be attended by all A. I. A. officers if possible.

Regional conventions might be of theoretical benefit, but it is doubtful if practical application would prove successful.

"Hold Institute conventions yearly. Keep the A.I.A. in the foreground. Yearly conventions renew interest and make one realize how much there is to the A.I.A. just as this damn questionnaire is doing to me now."

Regional conventions are a failure. They do more harm than good. There should be state meetings of the registered architects in each state to discuss local problems.

Regional conferences are desirable and in time they might be supplanted by meetings of State Societies, as the latter are developed.

The recommendations made to the Board by Mr. Baldwin, on the basis of all returns, were as follows:

That an annual convention of the A.I.A. be held, every other year in Washington, and in alternate years in some other city selected with regard to the benefits that would accrue to the profession and to the public of that particular region.

That regional conferences be held, if possible, in the autumn, or at least four months prior to the holding of the annual convention, and that Regional Directors endeavor to influence and direct the character of the regional conferences, to the end that they stress the solidarity and national character of the A.I.A., at the same time giving ample opportunity for the consideration of more localized problems.

That ways and means be found to enable some of the national officers, other than the Director of that Region, to attend such regional conferences.

NOTE: These recommendations were approved by the Board, submitted in its report to the Convention, and adopted by the Convention. The 1935 Convention will be held in Milwaukee.

F. H. A. In Action

THE Federal Housing Administration has gotten off to a good start, under the able direction of its Administrator, James A. Moffett.

The Administration has been careful not to promise too much. All of its documents and pronouncements have clearly stated the conditions under which the benefits of the National Housing Act can be secured. This logical and somewhat unusual launching of a great new Federal enterprise is encouraging, and speaks well for the prospect of success.

Various documents have been issued with which the architect should be familiar. They can be had upon request, and free of charge, by addressing a letter to the Federal Housing Administration, Washington, D. C. Titles are as follows:

How Owners of Homes and Business Property Can Secure the Benefit of the National Housing Act: A 24-page document with many illustrations, including some of "Before" and "After", and giving recognition to architectural service.

Community Campaign—How Your City Can Get The Greatest Benefit from the National Housing Act: A 34-page document citing the purposes of the Act and outlining campaign methods for modernizing and reconditioning. (Every chapter of the Institute should have a committee on housing—taking a leading part in the local campaign.)

Community Planning in Relation to the Modernization Phase of the National Housing Act: A new document ready by the time this is printed.

Architects, Contractors Building Supply and other Merchants; a 28 page document on "Your Opportunity—Your Responsibility", under the Housing Act.

Modernization Credit Plan—Bulletin No. 1, relating to credit insurance for the alteration, repair and improvement of real property.

Fourteen Answers: This single page document lists fourteen leading questions about modernization credits, and answers them.

List of Financial Institutions Prepared to Extend Credit to Property Owners under the Act: This list is issued periodically and is kept up to date. It is arranged by states and every chapter committee should have a copy, if there is any uncertainty as to what local financial institutions are participating.

The second phase of the Housing program, namely, mortgage insurance for home construction, will soon receive its share of attention. Under the Act the Administrator is empowered to insure mortgages covering eighty percent of the appraisal value of newly built homes * * * * which he considers "economically sound." Mr. Moffett has stated that by refusing to insure

mortgages for projects which are deemed "economically unsound," he hopes to prevent the rush of shoddy building which usually follows a depression, to improve building standards generally, and to curb real estate speculation.

Miles L. Colean, Chicago Architect, has been placed in charge of the Technical Division of the Mortgage Department. He favors improved building methods and standardization of mate-

rials, but *not* of design. In a recent interview, Mr. Colean said, "We are not going to put the architects out of business. What we have to know is that the homes will stand for twenty years—the maximum term of the mortgages—and will remain a good investment during that time."

Further information concerning financing of new house construction will be published in *THE OCTAGON* as it becomes available.

F. H. A. Operations in Pittsburgh

*PROPOSED SET UP—DEVELOPED BY THE ARCHITECTS
IN CONFERENCE WITH BANKING GROUPS

IN order to facilitate and make practically possible the operation of the modernizing and repair program of the Federal Housing Administration, safeguard the loans, and to insure that the purposes of the National Housing Act be carried out, it is proposed that a central loan application office and clearing house be established for the Pittsburgh District, sponsored by an association of the banks, trust companies and other qualified lending agencies.

This cooperative agency would be charged with the performance of the following duties:

- (1) Assistance and advice to applicants in making their applications and obtaining the required data.
- (2) Verification of such information and statements.
- (3) Certification, and if requested by the lending agencies, allotment of loans to the various banks, trust companies, etc.
- (4) Check as to the satisfactory performance of the work for which the loan is made.
- (5) To investigate and advise upon the following factors:

- (a) The soundness and advisability of the proposed improvement.
- (b) Its compliance with zoning laws and building regulations.
- (c) The character of the neighborhood, as it would affect such improvements.
- (d) The "Property Record" (mortgages, judgments, taxes, and the like).
- (e) The estimates of cost of the construction.
- (f) The advisability of architectural and engineering services, where such are indicated as necessary to protect the loan.

This agency could well be housed in some ground floor room, as a vacant banking room. Its operating cost should be held to a minimum necessary to accomplish the necessary work.

After it has accomplished the above purposes, it might well become a central collection agency for the repayments of the loans.

*Editors Note: This plan is tentative and pending. But it shows action. What is your Chapter doing in this matter?

Registration Laws For Architects

TODAY thirty-five states and the District of Columbia have registration or license laws for architects. The other thirteen states are meeting the inevitable slowly, and in most cases gracefully.

For a number of years the Institute issued a Model Form of Registration Law, which proved to be a valuable guide to chapters engaged in preparing legislation for enactment in their respective states.

However, changing conditions developed some undesirable provisions in the model law and the Committee on Registration Laws was requested to consider a revision of the document in the light of modern experience.

Pending the submission of a final report the Chairman of the Committee on Registration Laws, Emery Stanford Hall, of Chicago, has prepared a "Tentative Statement of Recommendations Covering the Principles and Detailed

Provisions Which Should Be Embodied in a proper Architectural Registration Law."

The table of contents shows five major topics, namely: Definitions; Provisions Governing the Practice of Architecture; Examiners; Qualifications, Examinations, Licenses, and Fees; and Enforcement.

Mr. Hall says:

This statement has been prepared through the editing and summation of responses to a series of questionnaires sent out to the members of the Institute Committee on Registration Laws and other authorities on the subject. The correspondence, which is the foundation for this report, has extended over a period of three years. The Committee has seemed to come to the conclusion that it is unwise to attempt to prepare a model law due to the fact that there is such a wide variation in state constitutions. It is thought that the material here presented, if placed in the hands of a competent local attorney, will enable him to prepare a law in harmony with the state constitution and which will be freer from errors than would be the case if he attempted to follow a model law with its possible conflicts with the local state constitution.

The material was collated by the Chairman of the Committee on Registration Laws, who was unable to complete the

task in time to submit it to the members of his committee preceding the Institute Convention. As a consequence, it was handed to the Board of Directors of the Institute as an unofficial document indicating progress and subject to revision to meet any criticisms or constructive suggestions from the members of the Committee.

Chapter committees on registration laws, or members and officers charged with duties in this respect, are invited to apply to the Institute for the statement here described. It is a twelve-page document, with a wealth of valuable and up-to-date information. Copies will be sent promptly upon request.

It should be noted that criticisms and constructive suggestions on the document are desired from all sources.

This reference would not be complete without a tribute to the extensive and valuable preliminary work in this field, which was done by Professor James A. White, deceased, formerly Chairman of the Committee on Registration Laws.

Construction Industry Code—Explanations

IN August, the Construction Code Authority (National Press Building, Washington, D. C.) issued three explanations with respect to a like number of provisions in the Construction Industry Code about which questions had arisen.

The official communications from the Construction Code Authority on these points are quoted herein because they are of special interest to the architectural profession.

The Construction League, which sponsored the

Construction Industry Code, has its headquarters at The Octagon. The League issues a Construction Code Manual each quarter, with supplementary service and documents between Editions. The price for this manual Code service—to members of the Institute—is \$10.00 for the year ending July 1, 1935. Pro-rated subscriptions will be accepted in September and October at \$8.00. Further information will be sent, upon request addressed to the League.

Explanation No. 29—August 3, 1934

For the Code of Fair Competition for the Construction Industry—Chapter I

ARTICLE VII, Section 10—Substantial Change in Plans and/or Specifications

It is impracticable to fix a minimum percentage of change in the estimated cost of a project denning for all construction projects a substantial change in the plans and specifications justifying the inviting or submission of new bids previous to the elapse of ninety days from the rejection of the original bids; it is the joint responsibility of the awarding authority and his Code Authority to determine whether a substantial change in plans and specifications has been made.

On a project where bids have previously been received, the question is asked whether changes made in gross figures which will amount to not more than ten per cent of the bid price would constitute a substantial change in the plans and specifications as used in Section 10 of Article VII, so that the project may be readvertised after only

thirty days have elapsed since the original bids were rejected.

The last sentence of Section 10 of Article VII reads as follows:

"Where all bids are rejected, bids shall not be again invited or submitted for the mere purpose of obtaining a lower or revised price or prices for substantially the same work previous to the elapse of ninety (90) days from the date of such rejection, except there be a substantial change in the plans and/or specifications, or except there be evidence of collusion, or except there be such a marked difference between the bids submitted and the awarding authority's estimate as to the valuation of the work as would indicate to the awarding authority and his Code Authority the necessity of new bids in order to secure fair competition."

There are three modifying conditions defined in this Section under which bids may be again invited or submitted previous to the elapse of ninety days from the date of the rejection of the

original bids, one of which is "a substantial change in the plans and/or specifications". It will be noted, however, that the existence of any one of the three modifying conditions must be agreed upon by the awarding authority and his Code Authority, which joint confirmation is not mentioned in the question submitted.

CONSTRUCTION CODE AUTHORITY, Incorporated
STEPHEN F. VOORHEES, *Chairman*

Explanation No. 29—August 3, 1934
*For the Code of Fair Competition for the
Construction Industry—Chapter I*

ARTICLE VII—Competitive Bidding Practices:
Withdrawal of Bids
Revision of Bids

The Code does not alter any existing legal right with respect to the withdrawal of bids. A sub-contractor may not modify his bid after the time set for the receipt of his bid by the general contractor.

A special or sub-contractor having made his bids to the general contractor and filed duplicate copies with the designated bid depository discovers that he has made an error in his price. He inquires whether he has the right to withdraw his original bid from the general contractor and the bid depository, or whether he may revise his bid to correct this error prior to the time when the general contractors' bids are to be received by the awarding authority.

The Code does not alter any existing legal right with respect to the withdrawal of bids.

Under the provisions of the Code, the bidder may not revise his bid after the time set for its receipt, as this would be a violation of Section 7 of Article VII.

There is further protection provided in Section 9 of Article VII against the use of a bid which is so unduly low as to indicate an error or mistake in estimating, providing that the awarding authority "shall not use any bid which is so unduly low as to indicate an error or mistake in estimating without first giving the bidder the opportunity of demonstrating by cost sheets or other methods the correctness of the bid that he has submitted".

CONSTRUCTION CODE AUTHORITY, Incorporated
STEPHEN F. VOORHEES, *Chairman*

Explanation No. 31—August 3, 1934
*For the Code of Fair Competition for the
Construction Industry—Chapter I*

ARTICLE VII—Competitive Bidding Practices

Competitive bids submitted by special or sub-contractors to a general contractor who bids to an awarding authority or owner are automatically rejected or cancelled if the owner determines to do the

work in question directly with a special or sub-contractor; and the owner is free to obtain new prices subject, however, to the restrictions imposed by the code as to asking bids for substantially the same work previous to the elapse of ninety days from the date of such rejection and the provisions of divisional chapters restricting the alteration of bid price of members of such divisions.

The question has been asked whether a special or sub-contractor may agree with the awarding authority to perform the work required in a particular branch of the industry at a price lower than the special contractor had bid to a general contractor for this same work. It is explained that initially the awarding authority had requested bids from general contractors, and special contractors had submitted bids to the general contractors for performing their portion of the work. Subsequently, the awarding authority decided to reject all general contract bids and forthwith proceeded to negotiate with special contractors for performing their portions of the job under direct contract. A similar situation had arisen in another case where the portion of the work to be performed by a particular group of special contractors had been eliminated by the awarding authority from the contract given to the general contractor. Granting that the special contractors in these instances are now at liberty to quote a price to the awarding authority less than that quoted to the general contractor, the opinion is expressed by the party requesting the interpretation that here is a possible opportunity for defeating the fair competitive practices of the Construction Code with consequent chiseling by awarding authority and contractors.

It is apparent that if the owner rejects the general contractor's proposals in whole or in part the sub-bids made to the general contractor for such work are automatically rejected. The owner is then free to secure prices for the work which he will directly undertake subject to the restrictions thereon imposed by the Code. Section 10 of Article VII states that bids may not again be invited or submitted for the mere purpose of obtaining a lower or revised price for substantially the same work previous to the elapse of ninety days from the date of such rejection except under certain modifying conditions enumerated in Section 10. Furthermore, several divisional chapters restrict the members of their respective divisions with regard to changing prices bid except for variations in wages or material prices or substantial changes in original plans and specifications.

CONSTRUCTION CODE AUTHORITY, Incorporated
STEPHEN F. VOORHEES, *Chairman*

R. I. B. A. Centenary Celebration

THE Institute has been advised by the Royal Institute of British Architects that it would be highly honored if The American Institute of Architects would appoint an official delegate to attend its Centenary Celebration.

Any member of the Institute who plans to be in or near London from November 21 to November 24, 1934—the dates of the Centenary Celebration—is requested to so advise President Russell, with a view to appointment to represent The American Institute of Architects at the Centenary Celebration.

The new building of the R. I. B. A. is rapidly approaching completion and will be formally opened early in November, with appropriate ceremony.

The Centenary Celebration Conference will begin on Wednesday, November 21, and will continue without interruption until Saturday, November 24. A most interesting program of entertainment and discussion has been arranged. It is hoped that some fortunate member of the Institute will advise that he expects to be in London during the November dates stated.

With the Chapters

Georgia.

Harold Bush-Brown brought to the attention of the Chapter the fact that a movement is under way to collect subscriptions for an Uncle Remus Memorial to the late Joel Chandler Harris. This project, it was reported, has not received the approval of the Harris family and apparently is being handled as a private promotion. It was the sentiment of the Chapter that a matter containing so much of public interest, and for which public funds are being sought should be handled in a more formal and customary way to properly protect the interest of the public.

On motion of Mr. Bush-Brown, the committee on public works was instructed to take up with the Atlanta Art Association the matter of the Uncle Remus Memorial, calling to their attention the fact that under the present set-up no provision is made for a public accounting of the money received or for the proper selection of the sculptor: That in view of the public character of this project the sculptor should be selected by competition and that adequate rules and guarantees should be set up to insure a fair basis of competition, an unbiased jury and assurance that the jury's verdict shall be binding: And that unless such steps are taken the project is fraught with danger and apt to be abortive.

Kentucky.

At the residence of Ossian P. Ward, Secretary, in Indian Hills. Although notices had been sent out that on account of summer heat and general lassitude no regular meetings of the Chapter would be held during the months of July and August, there developed (with the usual perverseness of such things) several reasons why it seemed advisable to the officers to call a special meeting.

In an endeavor to relieve the stress and hardship of a Chapter meeting in the good old summer time, the Secretary suggested having a dinner meeting at

his home in Indian Hills where cool breezes are supposed to play. The time set was 6:00 P. M., and at precisely that hour the architects began to arrive with a punctuality that was gratifying as well as unusual. In conveyances of various vintages and luster they came. Mr. Nolan (with accent on the "Mister") arrived in state in a resplendent yellow cab.

Those present were Baldez, Gazlay, Oberwarth, Nolan, Grimes, Rueve, Hutchings, Tafel, Wischmeyer, Luckett, Marmor, Letzler, Epping and Ward.

Shortly after six o'clock Mrs. Ward served a most enjoyable dinner on the lawn, under the gracefully drooping branches of elm trees of the type the delineators love to portray. By special arrangement the weather man granted a brief respite from the terrific heat that was torturing the country.

After dinner and before daylight failed President Epping called the meeting to order. In order to conserve time and on account of lack of candlepower or illumination by Nature the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.

The first order of business was a report on the present status and operation of the Kentucky registration law, by Mr. C. J. Oberwarth of Frankfort, Secretary of the Board. The recent reorganization of the State's fiscal affairs which places the State Board on a ridiculously meagre budget effects to some degree at least the operation of the Board, which has been self-sustaining heretofore. The economical and efficient management of the Board's activities for which great credit is due Secretary Oberwarth has acted rather like a boomerang. When the State Auditor saw the small amount that the Board was operating upon he recommended the ridiculous budget of \$1,150.00. Later even this small sum was cut ten per cent, resulting in an annual budget of \$1,035.00 for the State Board, probably the smallest amount granted any State

Board having an architects' license law to administer.

Mr. Oberwarth reported that during recent months more applications have been received, violations investigated, and other business done than has been the case for some time. He also reported that a substitute law has been drawn up ready to submit to the State Legislature whenever the architects are ready to attempt it.

Mr. Nolan brought up the subject of plans and other architectural work being done by the City Administration with its own force, and did not think it was fair to the practising architects who are greatly in need of work. After some discussion President Epping appointed a committee consisting of Nolan, Grimes, Hutchings and Wischmeyer to investigate the matter, visit the city officials, and see what could be done.

The preliminary draft of a proposed ordinance to be submitted to the Board of Aldermen requiring that all plans submitted to the Building Department with application for permit shall be made by registered architects, with certain minor exceptions, was read and discussed. President Epping then appointed a committee consisting of Ward, Tafel and Hutchings to study the document, to make any changes deemed advisable, and to submit to the Building Inspector for his approval and further action.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 with a full moon casting its soft rays over the country side, with an effect so soothing and serene that at least one of the members dwelt upon more romantic subjects than the problems of the architectural profession, until he was rather rudely brought back from his reverie by an abrupt question by one of those present.

Altogether the meeting was a great success.

Minnesota.

Twenty-one members of the Chapter went to Don McLaren's summer home at Lake Minnetonka for the annual meeting. Your Secretary is at a loss as to how to record the affair. The Institute, in Washington, is perhaps only interested in the election and whether or not we still want an architects' code. Robert Jones our newly elected President absented himself only because this was the first meeting in a decade at which the Architects Small House Service Bureau was not the bone of contention. The publicity bureau of the Institute will probably not find anything in this record of moment.

A record of athletic events and otherwise would be too lengthy so we will call the roll:

Dunham: Electioneering for a third term in 1935 and meanwhile assiduously keeping down the formation of a third party in the Chapter by the Red Menace.

Raugland: Winner of the nineteenth hole in the golf tournament, slept while the auditing committee represented by Bissell attempted to figure out how large a membership the Chapter must attain in order to have three annual meetings each summer.

Bersback: Finally found his putter and went home.

Duke Johnson: Maitre d'hotel and winner as usual of the golf cup.

Clarence Johnson: Winner of the broad jump event. His demonstration of rock gardening will not again be referred to.

Macgowan: Still hoping to catch a fish at an annual meeting.

Professor Mann: Whose regular attendance at all meetings in spite of many duties should be an inspiration to those Chapter members who rarely appear, even when the feed is gratis.

Dave Jacobson: Master of ceremonies (for a little while).

Meanwhile the record grows hazy—Bill Dorr ran a penny ante game with so many pennies that no one knows yet how many he lost or won.

Clyde Smith: Threw a wicked horseshoe—and so after the rest of the self appointed house committee had started a furnace fire the Chapter proceeded to transact the usual business of an annual meeting. The minutes of the May meeting were read and approved.

President Dunham made his usual farewell address and the Chapter gave Mr. McLaren and the committee a vote of thanks for the complete arrangements which had been made and his hospitality.

The Treasurer, Raugland made his annual report which was accepted. The auditing committee reported neither defalcation nor the failure of the bank.

The following committee reports were read and accepted:

Building Code, Larson; Committee on Housing Activities, Chapin; Government in Business, Larson; Legislation, Croft; Publicity, Bissell; City Planning Commission, Mann; Discipline & Registration, Raugland; Membership, Lang; Program, Dorr; Federation, Dorr.

The Chapter proceeded with the election of officers:

President, Robert Jones; 1st V. P., Carl Stravs; 2nd V. P., Peter Olsen of Duluth; Treasurer, Rollin Chapin; Executive Committee, Roy Childs Jones, O. T. Lang.

Stravs took the Chair and new business was acted upon:

Moved, seconded and adopted that a committee prepare By-Law changes and submit to the Chapter on the following questions:

1. New Chapter members shall be required to make measured drawings of historic buildings.

2. No guests shall be allowed at the annual meeting.

The following resolution, introduced by Larson, was adopted and ordered sent to the City Planning Commission and to the Board of Park Commissioners:

Resolved, that the Minnesota Chapter believe that the planning of Block 20 and the surrounding

area should have careful study as to traffic and future development, and we suggest that the ideas of all Minneapolis architects be made available to the City through a competition; and that in behalf of public interest the Board of Park Commissioners and the City Planning Commission are invited to avail themselves of such comprehensive planning through such a competition with suitable awards for such designs.

Items of Interest

The Art Students League of New York.

The League is an association of artists and art students who intend to make art a profession. The objects of the association are the maintenance of a school of art which shall give a thorough course of instruction in drawing, painting and sculpture and the cultivation of a spirit of fraternity among art students.

Maintaining one of the largest art schools in the world, the League is a cooperative society run by students for students. Its constitution provides for a democratic form of government. Freedom is a tradition of the League. There is freedom of speech and expression, freedom to the instructor to teach as he chooses, freedom to the members to elect a governing body which will select the sort of instructors they wish and freedom to the individual to be the master of his own fate. The League's outstanding feature is free choice with the widest possible field from which to choose.

During the year the League invites speakers to lecture on art and allied subjects. Most lectures are free to students and members; the others are arranged as regular courses for which a fee is charged. Thomas Benton, John Steuart Curry, Frank Vincent DuMond, Eugene G. Steinhoff, S. Clements Horsley, Richard Lahey, Kenneth Hayes Miller, James Michael Newell, Kimon Nicolaidis, and William Zorach have spoken at a series of free Saturday lectures. This policy will be continued during the coming winter.

The winter season schedule may be obtained from the League at 215 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y.

In the Face of the Sun.

By *Birdsall Briscoe (A. I. A.)*. Published by *Edward J. Clode, Inc.*, \$2.00.

This romantic and valorous tale of the South-western border contains in its tangled skein almost enough diversified material to furnish forth half a dozen ordinary yarns of Western adventure. Here is the story of Don Luis Romero, who dreamed of creating "The Republic of the Rio Grande" as a buffer State or shock-absorber between the United

States and Mexico, and accumulated vast stores of munitions on his 1,500,000-acre Texas ranch. He took as his motto from Tacitus: ". . . they fight, as do the Romans, armed, and in the face of the sun."

Here is the story of Gregorio Ruiz, ambitious, egotistical and treacherous Mexican revolutionist and bandit general. Here is the story of Bill Clay, Texas Ranger, who was sent to the border to investigate the gun-running. He got a job with Romero as a fence rider and shortly disappeared. But above all, here is the story of Captain Lewis Randon of the State Rangers, who came riding to the border upon a fantastic but dangerous mission—to find Bill Clay or avenge him. And here is the story of Estrella Romero, called "La Estrella del Norte," niece to Don Luis and real owner of the great estate of Los Alamos—a love story that does not run exactly smoothly.

The threads of these various life stories and how they impinge one upon another are dexterously handled to fabricate a tragi-comedy that has dash and courage and romance and pathos and subtle humor and mystery and never-failing interest. At the same time this is a lifelike and an extraordinary tale based upon certain border happenings of the year 1916, and uncommonly well told.—*New York Times Review*.

Beyond the Hills Lies the Hamburger Stand

By *Ted Cook*
In the *Washington Herald*

I beyond the hills would ride,
Tearing through hamlet and countryside;
I slow down to sixty as I swerve
Over the mountains, around the curve,
I look not to left, nor glance to right,
She's hitting eighty! Supreme delight!
Beyond the trees is a crystal brook,
But I won't take time to stop and look;
The trout might go for a well cast fly,
But I won't take time to stop and try;
The open road! The smell of gas!
Hurrah for the great American ass!

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