

THE
OCTAGON

A Journal of The American Institute of Architects



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THE 1938 CONVENTION

THE seventieth convention of The American Institute of Architects will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 19, 20, 21, and 22, 1938.

The invitation to hold this meeting in The Crescent City—extended by the Louisiana Chapter and graciously presented by the Regional Director of the Gulf States District, Moise H. Goldstein—has been formally accepted by The Board of Directors.

Early in October The President and The Secretary of The Institute visited New Orleans, conferred with the Regional Director and the Louisiana Chapter, and concluded preliminary arrangements for the convention.

The dates of April 19, 20, 21, and 22, 1938, were selected with due regard to the pleasing qualities of the Louisiana climate at that time of the year, and with due regard to the not-so-balmy, but none-the-less-important matter of hotel accommodations.

At the Williamsburg convention in 1936 there were nearly five hundred architects and their guests in attendance.

At the Boston convention in 1937 the Williamsburg mark was slightly exceeded.

At this coming convention—the seventieth national meeting of The Institute since its incorporation in 1857—there should be a total registration of more than six hundred.

The significance of attendance at Institute conventions is being realized more clearly each year, by the membership, by the chapters, and by the state association members.

The coming meeting in New Orleans will offer not only an opportunity for service to the profession through participation in the work of the convention, but will offer the attractions of New Orleans and Louisiana—all of which should prove irresistible to any architect who can spare the time next April to make a pilgrimage to the deep South.

The convention will be held earlier than usual. Chapters, state associations, members, and prospective delegates should make their plans now.

Information concerning the program, the business, and the entertainment will appear in the January, February, and March numbers of **THE OCTAGON**.

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A Journal of The American Institute of Architects

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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The Quality of Federal Architecture

At the dedication of the new post office in Poughkeepsie, New York, October 13, 1937:

Statement by President Roosevelt

"THE government every year builds a great many buildings in order to conduct government business more efficiently. The principal criterion for putting up a new building is, of course, need. The second is economy. It probably is better, in most cases, for the government to own a building than to rent a building. It saves money in the long run.

"All over the United States, there are scattered the most terrible monstrosities of architecture perpetrated by the Government on the people of the United States. To be sure, many of them were built during an unfortunate period of art, but in these latter years we think that we have returned to the simpler forms, returned to practical architecture, which, at the same time, has beauty.

"And during these past four or five years, partly because of the situation of unemployment in the Nation, we have been enabled to bring into the Government service many, many people who otherwise might have been out doing private work. To them much credit is due for the improvement of the architecture of all the Federal buildings in every county and every state of the United States."

Following the publication of the above quotation in the press, a letter of November 4, 1937, was

addressed to President Roosevelt by The President of The Institute, as follows:

Letter of The President of The Institute

November 4, 1937.

HIS EXCELLENCY FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT,
President of the United States,
The White House, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I have read with much interest the published accounts of your remarks at the opening of the Post Office at Poughkeepsie, New York, and have noted particularly your comments regarding the inferior character of the design of Government buildings during a great portion of the history of our government.

The deplorable failure of the official architecture of this country to avail itself of the artistic resources that have been at its command has long been a source of regret and concern to The American Institute of Architects as it has been its belief that the architecture of the United States Government should represent the highest standards of design, both that it might serve as a source of leadership and inspiration to our profession and that it might influence the cultural life of the country as a whole by elevating the general standard of taste. This objective has been reached only at long intervals and for brief periods, if at all.

I am greatly encouraged by the fact that you have shown yourself to be aware of this condition and interested in curing it, and I am very hopeful

that the remedy may be effected once and for all at this time and under your auspices.

Secretary Morgenthau (who in his contacts with our organization has shown that he is sincerely desirous of bringing about an improvement in the standards of design in the work coming under his jurisdiction), sometime since requested The American Institute of Architects, through its Committee on Public Works, to discuss with representatives of his department methods which might be used to insure the highest standard of planning, construction and design in the Federal buildings under his control.

We feel that this marks a most important step in the relationship between the officers of the United States Government and the Architectural profession.

Through these conferences there has been developed a suggested method for the selection of Architects for governmental work, which, we are confident, will successfully accomplish the result intended.

The American Institute of Architects at its convention, held in Boston last June, by resolutions (copies of which are attached) approved this proposed method and tendered its cooperation in carrying it into effect.

We believe that the expected relaxation in the pressure of the government building program offers an exceptionally favorable opportunity of putting into effect this change in procedure without causing any confusion or embarrassment and confidently hope that it may be done in the near future, as we believe that it will be of great benefit to the Government and the country.

Believe me to be,

Very respectfully yours,

CHARLES D. MAGINNIS, *President*,

The American Institute of Architects.

In response to the above letter The President of The Institute received a letter from President Roosevelt which is printed next, in order that the membership of The Institute may be fully informed.

Letter of President Roosevelt

November 22, 1937.

MR. CHARLES D. MAGINNIS

President—The American Institute of Architects
The Octagon, 1741 New York Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Maginnis:

I appreciate your interest in my remarks at the cornerstone laying of the Post Office at Poughkeepsie, in which I commented on the inferior character of design of Government buildings during certain past periods in the history of our Government, and on the improvement that has taken place in recent years.

We are of one mind that the architecture of the United States Government should express the highest standards of design and construction, be an influence on the cultural life of America, and elevate the general standards of good taste.

With these objectives in mind, I have watched with interest the progress in architecture being made by the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department in availing itself of the best architects in private practice in the United States and a review of this work by a board of eminent consulting architects. This method of operation and control has had immediate and far-reaching effects in the development of an economical and uniformly high-grade of architecture in all of our federal buildings.

The cooperation that has always been willingly extended between your Committee on Public Works and the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department has, I am sure, been productive of good results and has promoted a better understanding of the problems surrounding the design of public buildings that will be most helpful in attaining the high objectives for which the Government and the architectural profession are striving.

Appreciating the interest of The American Institute of Architects and yourself personally, I am

Very truly yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

The XIV International Congress of Architects

THE XIV International Congress of Architects was held in Paris from July 19th to the 25th. Architects gathered there from all parts of the world and, while not the largest Congress, it had representatives from more different foreign countries than any previous one. The delegates came from the far ends of the earth, South America, even Chile, South Africa, Australia, but Russia for some reason was conspicuous by its absence although the Russian architects took an active part in the Roman Congress of 1935.

A jolly party of past presidents of The American Institute of Architects sailed over on the *Ile de France*. In that little group alone was our recent president, Stephen Voorhees, also Dan Waid, Bob Kohn, and Herrick Hammond, and trailing in the wake of these luminaries was Dean Emerson. This important group cut quite a swath among the other distinguished passengers. It is rumored that Dan expects to complete the new Octagon administration building before 1939, so that the Congress may be held in The Institute's own quarters.

The first business of interest, which was a matter of real importance to all American architects, took place at the meeting of the Permanent Committee which preceded the formal opening of the Congress. The Secretary of the American Section read invitations from President Maginnis and his Section inviting the Congress to hold its next session in the United States. This was the ninth time America had extended an invitation to the world architects, and the writer during those years had the pleasure of witnessing the change of sentiment that has taken place in the hearts of European architects, for the first invitation was received as a formality, while the invitation extended in Budapest in 1930 was received with acclamation. Only the world depression prevented a Congress being held here in 1935. The architects of Europe, and I believe of the whole world, hail the coming Congress with genuine enthusiasm. They are really thrilled by at least one class of building, the skyscraper, and they all really want to come to America. There is only one real drawback—the Atlantic Ocean and the cost of traversing it!

Our invitation was formally and unanimously accepted, so that the XV International Congress of Architects will convene in Washington and New York in the fall of 1939. This will be the first time the Congress has ever met outside the domains of Europe.

A few words of review are in order here:

The first Congress was organized in Paris in 1867. Since then sessions have been held in Brussels, London, Vienna, Budapest, Amsterdam, Madrid, and Rome. These Congresses have varied in attendance from four or five hundred to seventeen hundred in London.

The London Congress was the largest and most important one ever held. The inaugural meeting was held in the Guild Hall of the City of London. The Duke of Argyll, consort of Princess Mary, sister of the then King of England, presided. On the dais with him were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in full medieval regalia. The Duke's address of welcome was truly inspiring. This was responded to by an official delegate from each country represented. Mr. George B. Post responded for the United States. Other distinguished American architects present were Charles D. Maginnis, Cass Gilbert, Frank Miles Day, W. S. Eames—and others including the writer—some sixty-four in all. The beautiful Gothic Guild Hall made a superb setting for this interesting and distinguished gathering. Another delightful function was a garden party given at Buckingham Palace by the King.

The subjects discussed at this Congress were:

1. "The execution of important government and municipal architectural work." It is interesting to note here that the resolution adopted is pertinent to our own problem of government architecture in this country. It was "that in the future in the interests of administrative bodies and the public, and in the higher interests of the art of architecture, public bodies (whether Governmental, provincial, or municipal) should entrust important architectural works only to professionally qualified architects, either by competition or otherwise."

2. Architectural copyright.

3. Steel and reinforced concrete construction.

4. The education of the public in architecture.
5. A statutory qualification for architects.
6. The architect craftsman; how far should the architect receive the theoretical and classical training of a craftsman.
7. The planning and laying out of streets and open spaces.
8. To what extent and in what sense should the architect have control over other artists and craftsmen.
9. The responsibility of the Government in the conservation of national monuments.
10. The conduct of architectural competitions.

During the Congress visits were made to Oxford, Cambridge, Canterbury; an afternoon was spent at Hatfield House, and Haddon Hall. It would be difficult to find any country with more interesting architectural subjects so close at hand. Of the 1700 members of the Congress, 700 were foreign delegates. The Congress ended with a banquet presided over by the Duke of Northumberland. Among other speakers on this occasion was Mr. Cass Gilbert, and the writer of this paper.

The Congress in Vienna was another of the really great and important gatherings. The opening session was held in the House of Parliament. The great halls of the modern Gothic Rathaus can be opened up in sequence to a length of 500 feet, and here was held the closing banquet attended by 1200 persons.

The Congress in Budapest! Ah, that *was* fascinating. Is it not the most beautiful capital of Europe? Cut in twain by the glorious strains of the "Blue Danube," a city where east meets west, a city where nobody understands the language but the universal language of hospitality. It was a Congress, too, run with military precision, but with all the graciousness of *nobless oblige*. We had not one banquet here but three and a special opera was given in our honor. Budapest might also be called the city of beautiful bridges, for its three great suspension bridges are unsurpassed in beauty in any part of the world.

But let us return to Paris—the Congress of 1937. The inaugural meeting here was held in the beautiful grand salon of the Hotel de Ville. Owing to an accident to the beloved president of the Congress, M. Maigrot, who was confined in a hospital,

the meeting was presided over by the gracious M. Tournaire, President of the Federation of the French Societies of Architects and a member of the Institute of France. The address of welcome was made by the President of the Municipal Council, followed by one from M. Vischer, President of the Permanent Committee of the Congress, who was also absent, owing to the death of his mother, but whose address was read by M. Jungo. An informal reception followed, with a buffet luncheon enlivened by champagne.

This informal gathering was very *intime* and gave an opportunity of renewing old friendships and forming new. The Americans were out in force. John Holabird of Chicago was there, Professor Meeks, Paul Cret, Cheney, Professor Arnal, Burkhardt, Delano, Julian Levi, Francis Sullivan and family, Ned Casey, Alex Welch, and Wright.

Following the meeting a trip was made to the Exposition. Lunch was served in one of the group of buildings typifying the Provinces of France. This was one of the most interesting parts of the Exposition. The buildings were not archaeological copies but splendid pieces of original design in the styles of the various provinces. Later in the afternoon the serious work of the Congress began. No plans were made for the evenings.

On Tuesday morning the discussions of the themes of the Congress were renewed. In the afternoon the members were invited to inspect the reconstruction of the stage and stage scenery of the Opera House. The old stage scenery had been entirely removed and the Opera House has today the most complete and up to date mechanical equipment of any opera house in existence. A most interesting description of the work was given by M. Marrast. One was deeply impressed with the great depth of the stage, and behind this and opening into it, was the green room, so that the distance from the curtain to the rear wall of the green room was apparently greater than the depth of the auditorium plus the foyer. Here we met for the first time during the week that lover of the stage, our own Howard Greenley.

In the evening a reception was held in the Louvre. Few of us had ever seen the Louvre artificially lighted. But the most startling and beautiful effect of all was the lighting on the Grand Staircase of the Winged Victory of Samothrace. Ah! this

was indeed worth seeing. It was difficult to leave this for a mundane repast, but such is life!

On Wednesday an early start was made. We first visited the new Zoological Gardens at Vincennes, designed by M. Letrosne, which illustrates how an entire landscape may be created out of reinforced concrete. Here great mountains rise to a height of 200 feet, on the summit of which one spies mountain goats gamboling with delight. And as one turns to the right one suddenly faces a wild looking rhinoceros but a few yards away, without any apparent intervening barrier, so cleverly are they disguised. The humane guarding of the animals without obvious barriers gives them a freedom of movement which may make life less tiresome to the animals but is somewhat startling to the spectator.

We next visited an interesting housing group of Jules-Ferry at the Maisons-Alfort, the Eglise of Saint Esprit, the Chateau de Gros Bois and had luncheon in the Forest of Fontainebleau. A reception too was held at the Chateau de Vaux Le Vicomte. In the evening we wandered at will about Paris.

Thursday in the morning the resolutions of the four subjects under discussion at the Congress were read. The subjects were:

THEME I PROFESSIONAL

President, M. Lanchester
Reporter, M. Virant

Circumstances under which Architects and Contractors may fully collaborate.

THEME II TECHNICAL

President, M. Totten
Reporter, M. Letrosne

Influence of the use of local materials upon the form, the economy and the appearance of structures.

THEME III EDUCATIONAL

President, M. Antonesco
Reporter, M. Dameron

(a) Fundamental Training:

The degree of general culture necessary in order to undertake the study of architecture.

(b) Post-Graduate Education; Probation:

Various technical studies required for fitness to practice the profession of architecture.

THEME IV CITY PLANNING

President, M. Marconi
Reporter, M. Fenzy

Sanitation of old towns, and rehabilitation of urban districts.

(A) Studied at the Congress in Rome, September 1935:
"The Evolution of the Profession."

(B) Referendum

"Existing legislation concerning the responsibility of the architect to individual clients and to the State."

In the afternoon there was a lecture on Maya architecture, illustrated by lantern slides and motion pictures, by George Oakley Totten, Jr.

But the *piece de resistance* of the whole Congress was the evening spent at Versailles. We met in the gardens about eight on a beautiful summer evening, under the full moon, with the fountains playing, and illuminated as they had never been before. The effects were marvelous.

Then the little water theatre of Louis XIV, with tiny jets of water, lighted not by electricity but, as Louis himself had seen it, by thousands of little sperm oil lamps. Few people have ever seen or will see the artistic displays we witnessed that night.

We were then ushered to the Orangerie, which we entered between two lines of "Saphis" with a fanfare of trumpets, a very spectacular effect. The Orangerie never looked so fine or so impressive. This great simple barrel vault, without decoration but with a line of orange trees and other plants on either side, amid which were scattered individual tables, and with a horseshoe table of honor at the far end was indeed beautiful. This reception was given by the municipality of Versailles, and we were welcomed by his honor the Mayor in an eloquent and affectionate address. The sumptuous banquet, graced by beautiful ladies, enlivened by the rare vintages of France, carried one to another world.

On Friday more visits were made, including one to the Cité Universitaire with a luncheon and reception in one of the pavilions, after which was a visit to the Exposition. I will not attempt to describe the Exposition other than to say that the new Trocadero and the Musées d'art Moderne are the two outstanding and permanent structures. Each Exposition in Paris has left its imprint—in

1889 the Tour Eiffel—in 1900 the Grand and Petit Palais, etc.

The general plan of the Exposition and the *terrain* which it covers is similar to that of the Exposition of 1900, but the style of architecture, well, that is different. The Exposition of 1900 might be called a period exposition, and this one, well! it has already been so ably described by others we will pass it by by saying it is different.

The closing meeting of the Congress was held in the same hall in which the discussions took place. It is a very nice lecture hall with a barrel vault skylight of interesting design, and with a mysterious mechanism which could instantly, by the pressing of a button, plunge the room into absolute darkness. The official closing banquet was held Saturday evening in the Grand Salon of the Cercle Interallie. Like all French banquets the repast was delicious, the wine was exhilarating, followed by dancing still more exhilarating.

The one foreign residing member of our Committee, *notre cher confrère* Welles Bosworth, was to have welcomed us in Paris, but he had the great misfortune of getting a job in America at just the wrong time so we did not see him, nor his charming wife. But we did have the good luck of meeting Madame Marzin, the mother of his wife. This delightful lady graced the closing banquet with her presence, in fact she was the life and the light of the particular table at which she sat.

On the morrow she invited us to see the new house which Welles had built at Vaucresson. It is in the ultra modern style, but we all voted it to be the finest piece of ultra modern house design we had ever seen. We may have been somewhat influenced by our vivacious and alluring guide.

GEORGE OAKLEY TOTTEN, JR.

Secretary, American Section C. P. I. A.

Highlights of a Housing Tour of Northern Europe

What is Fundamental in Housing Standards?

BY GEORGE H. GRAY, A. I. A.

AS THE housing movement has progressed in this country it has become evident that it was the upper strata of those in need of better housing who were being helped first. Those whose plight is worst, whose neglect is the greater menace to the public, are those who, by the present logic, will be the last to get relief. For the logic seems to be that the upper strata can do most to help in their own case and so require the less subsidy for each family, thereby making a given appropriation relieve a greater number. Is this logic sound? Might it not be better to begin at the bottom and cut out the rottenest conditions first? To make this possible, would it be reasonable to scale downward, for this class and maybe some others, the minimum standards we have heretofore set for sanitation, health and convenience? Are our standards for these things—(light, air, heat, kitchen equipment, bathing facilities, and general comfort)

—based on scientific data, or are they based on arbitrary and even sentimental assumptions? Is there any uniformity in these standards in those other countries where housing has progressed furthest? How do their standards compare with American standards and how are they working out?

It was these questions and also questions of methods and cost of construction which led me to make a tour this past summer into England, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Germany, countries which include a wide variety of governments, of social traditions, of economic outlook, of climate and of topographies.

In each country contact was made with the housing authorities. They were exceedingly courteous, each and all, and showed a great frankness in recognizing the difficulties of their problems and the shortcomings of their efforts, and also a desire for comparison with the experience of other

countries. The tour was most illuminating, but did it give the answer to the question of fundamental standards of living, of planning and of methods of construction? Yes, broadly speaking, for it is only in a broad sense that comparisons can be made between countries which differ in so many ways.

PART I

The Dutch Recognize Varying Degrees and Kinds of Needs.

In all countries where an organized housing movement has been in progress for long, as well as in our own country, the procedure has been to make careful selection of desirable tenants for the new houses, on the basis of financial reliability, character, etc., leaving, as we have implied, the undesirable, the most needy and the least responsible of the slum dwellers in the old slums. Holland alone seems to have faced this problem. In Amsterdam they have built in open areas on the edge of the city two relatively small groups of one story apartments for the "undesirables"—a harsh term, but wait. These quarters are severely simple and of rugged construction and finish. They consist of livingroom, bedrooms, and a w. c., a kitchen with a gas outlet and shelf for a gas stove, a tap and drain for cold water, and no more, for they are houses for the asocial—those who are the neighborhood trouble makers, drunkards, people of low intelligence, and in some families idiots. There are provided separate bath houses and laundries, each in charge of an attendant. The baths are free but for the laundry there is a nominal charge. The apartments open on generous courts, and vegetable gardens are available for those who have the inclination to work them. There is a club-room where housewives and girls are taught sewing and the boys various kinds of work. There is a day nursery for the children from 1½ to 5 years old, whose mothers must go out to work. The older children go to the standard public schools.

Each group is in charge of a full-time woman superintendent (a trained social worker) assisted by the two male attendants at the bath and laundry and the nurse in charge of the day nursery. No families are compelled to live in the asocial group, but most of them find their lot here so much

better than in their former quarters that they are loyally attached to them. Since the completion of these colonies (1926 and 1932), housing 187 families, as many as 143 families have been graduated to the better quarters of normal neighborhoods as a reward for good standing. Under other circumstances many of these tenants would be frequent public charges in various houses of detention, asylums, at a greater cost to the public, and with little chance of the family rising to anything better. To my mind this is a successful social venture of great significance. It makes an important contribution both to housing standards and to housing methods.

In somewhat similar manner in Amsterdam they have segregated other small minorities—not undesirables. Thus old folks, who have attained the age when their pensions are available but who still have sufficient energy to do a little housekeeping and care for a little garden, can live quietly in an attractive compact one story cottage, one of a row, built on a by-street, or about a central garden, in a well organized neighborhood—a charming environment. Each house has a water closet, but instead of a bathroom there is a small sheet metal portable tub hanging on the kitchen wall. Everything in a Dutch home is so immaculate that the tub does not seem out of place. There is usually no heat in the bedrooms, for Holland has a relatively mild climate, and the dressing may be done in the living-room or kitchen, kept warm by a stove or range. This same arrangement seems to be equally appropriate for families having children under the adolescent age. It is essential to such an arrangement, however, that the tenants have habits of orderliness and cleanliness. The highest standards of living which we observed in the various countries visited were not always in the best equipped homes, but often in those of simplest equipment, where the people knew how to live. When people have inadequate standards of decent living it then becomes important to give such advice and training as are given in Amsterdam to the "asocial" group—otherwise good housing is of no avail.

Small apartments for bachelors, men and women, old and young, are scattered in the garden city groups. The Jews from the old Ghetto have a very attractive neighborhood. The Roman Catholics, a relatively small minority, have a garden suburb cen-

tered around a simple but very beautiful little church. The wisdom of the segregation of some of these minorities, usually somewhat estranged, may be questioned from some points of view, but it is well to bear in mind that similar traditions and tastes make for neighborliness and that it is important to foster whatever will add to neighborliness and neighborhood cooperation—the first step toward good citizenship. The advantages may more than offset any disadvantages. The municipal and national loyalty of these groups is fostered through the common school system; so in time they will learn that they have more in common than at variance.

In Amsterdam they recognize six types of families to be housed: (1) the normal worker's family; (2) very poor families; (3) very large families; (4) the old folks; (5) bachelors, male and female; (6) the asocial. Group 1, the normal workers, can find their homes in the open market or through cooperative building associations. The other classes are assisted, in varying degrees, to the point of direct subsidy, by the government and the municipality. The old folks, the bachelors and the large families and the asocial are generally in row cottages; the other groups are largely in four-story apartments.

The average family unit consists of a kitchenette, a living room, a w. c., a shower bath, a store room in basement or attic and a variable number of bedrooms of modest size. The kitchen has a built-in stand for a small gas stove, a small sink with cold water tap. Heating for rooms other than the kitchen is usually by compact tile-faced built-in stoves, except that in some recent large apartment houses there is central heating. If there are children over 10 years old, the sexes must be provided with separate bedrooms. Under strict housing supervision only, can the parents use the living room for sleeping. Block apartment houses have basements in which bicycles and other goods can be stored, and some contain a common laundry.

Many of the groups of buildings, particularly the cottages, are of unusual architectural beauty. All buildings are well planned and of ingenious construction, particularly in the application of new materials. Brick clay is abundant, which results in the traditional architecture of brick and tile. They trade dairy products for German cement, floated down the Rhine, hence a goodly share of stucco in finishing the walls. Of lumber

they have none, hence use little in the exterior architecture. Some of the blocks of apartments may seem over severe and uncompromising and too closely spaced to allow for gardens and large playgrounds. Large and beautifully appointed playgrounds exist, but at long intervals. The lack of playgrounds immediately at hand can, however, be explained by the fact that everyone rides a bicycle—literally every city dweller in Holland travels from the cradle to the grave on a bicycle. It solves all transportation problems for work and for pleasure. Young couples travel on tandems; when the first child comes there comes the bicycle equipped with bassinets. Water sports or skating are always near for the cyclists.

On the whole I would say that in public housing the Dutch are decidedly in the lead of all other countries, both in the thoroughness with which they have analyzed their problem and organized their program and in the extent to which they have achieved it. It serves as a good frame work for reference and comparison for other countries.

Denmark.

In Denmark they have built well for varying incomes and for the old folks, but so far as we learned not for any other small urban minorities, such as the asocial or religious groups. In Copenhagen we saw fewer cottages and row houses, except those privately owned than in Amsterdam, despite the fact that Copenhagen is the smaller city. On the other hand, apartments of three stories predominate over those of four, whereas the reverse is true in Amsterdam. The architectural characteristic of the newer Copenhagen apartments is a general use of the balcony, consisting of an ample cantilevered concrete slab, a light iron railing, to which are attached sheets of corrugated asbestos ("transite"), surmounted by a flower box. The asbestos is painted in bright colors (Indian red, ochre, pastel blues, pistachio, etc.) In summer the flowers are profuse with bloom, and the balcony is usually shaded by a gaily colored beach umbrella, or an awning. Imagine, if you can, an unbroken sunlit stretch of these houses 600 feet or 800 feet long, with such a balcony for every unit on each of the four floors throughout the row, all against a background of slightly tinted stucco, topped by a red tile roof. This balcony feature makes it possible

to keep the wall severely simple. Denmark also is long on clay, sand and gravel, and dairy products, short on lumber. Hence again brick architecture, stucco and free use of concrete for structural purposes, though not often exposed in housing.

The internal standards of the Copenhagen house unit are not very different from those of Amsterdam. One group for the lowest rental, which we visited, had utilized a large interior court for a supervised playground for small children. But neither here nor in Amsterdam did we see day nurseries in any typical groups. As in Amsterdam, here also because of the bicycle and the everpresent water, neighborhood playgrounds and clubs seem to be few, but we saw one particularly fine highschool playground, with individual student gardens.

Sweden.

Sweden is the outstanding example of how well the needs of the mass of people can be taken care of in a democracy. It has been accomplished not by a highly centralized government but through unofficial civic action. From the English they have taken the principle of the Consumers' Cooperatives and given it wide application, including housing—10% of the total in Stockholm. In addition to wholesale buying and retail distribution they have acquired or built factories for the preparation of many of their staple goods, particularly foods, but only where prices were unreasonably high. In the field of hydro-electric power alone has the government stepped in as a competitor on behalf of the people to keep the prices down.

The housing in Stockholm lives up to the standard of one of the most beautiful cities of the world. There has been, and still is, serious overcrowding of land and rooms in the older central section of the city. Within walking distance of this area the Cooperative has built extensive blocks of fire-proof apartments from six to nine stories high; they have developed garden suburbs where a member can purchase prefabricated parts from the Cooperative and with the aid of a mason for the cellar walls and chimney and with the further aid of unskilled neighbors he can erect a house built either of sturdy prefabricated wood sections, or of hollow concrete blocks (made on the job). Wherever there is a cooperative factory there is well designed housing, whether individual cottages, row houses,

or apartments, depending upon the location. The municipality also has taken a big hand in housing and has done a good job both in design and in location and distribution.

The minimum living standards are about the same as in Holland and Denmark. The predominating wall construction seems to be cinder concrete in forms in the taller buildings and in blocks in the lower ones all finished with stucco. As Sweden abounds in wood, wood is used freely in the rural districts. Color is used almost as freely as in Denmark. Day nurseries are the rule, so much so that the Cooperative has a special school for training the nurses—a gem in arrangement and decoration, housed in one of the centrally located apartments. We saw no playgrounds, but water is almost as abundant as in Venice and bordering the water at short distances from the city are wooded hills with small natural harbors in abundance—little need for other playgrounds for any but the toddlers.

England.

OCTAGON readers are generally aware of the extensive housing which has been done in England under the Ministry of Health. English garden suburbs far surpass those of other countries. The traditional standards of plan and equipment, however, I would say are generally more spartan and simple than in Holland, Denmark and Sweden. Prior to 1934 the almost invariable equipment was a kitchenette (with a gas outlet for a "cooker," a small sink, a cold water tap, a cupboard), a water closet, closets for supplies, bedrooms, living room, and sometimes a parlor. The bathing was often done in a portable metal tub. Units not essentially different from these are still being built by housing authorities. In one recently constructed cottage for lowest rental in a garden suburb of London they were experimenting with a built-in tub in the kitchen and a coke-burning hot water heater (in kitchen) for circulating hot water, the tank having a hand pump for transferring the water from the boiler to the tub. To the American architect this and the usual English arrangement seem quite primitive, yet are not very different from the equipment of many small American farmers, who live well. Here again the usual tidiness and cleanliness of the people must be borne in mind. Generally speaking they live decently even with a minimum of facilities. In 1934, how-

ever, the London County Council worked out typical plans which included a bathroom for each unit and a laundry shared by three families. These units were in a block with a continuous outside gallery having outside stairs at each end. They are now experimenting cautiously with the less spartan "Plan of 1937," similar to the 1934 plan, but dispensing with the gallery and substituting a staircase for each two major apartments, each of these with a balcony. Additional, also, is a linen closet with gas-heated water tank over. One and two-room apartments opening off the same stairway are without balconies. This standard is as high as any in Northern Europe, except certain French apartments which have central heat and garbage disposal outfit.

Here, as in Holland, the relatively mild winters do not make the heating of all rooms essential. In winter woolen underwear prevents a loss of body heat. Are the English spartan and frugal, or are we soft and extravagant? Despite our superior equipment I would expect the English slum dweller to have as clean a house and body as the corresponding American.

In London, day nurseries, social clubs, and playgrounds, are not on the general program, though there are exceptions. Their housing leaders recognize this shortcoming. Nevertheless, the most complete and high scale housing which I saw in all Europe was in London—Kendall House, built by the Gas and Coke Company, motivated in

part by a desire to demonstrate the application of gas and coke to modest scale living. In each apartment are all the conveniences: day nursery under the same roof with the apartments, and clubs for all ages—all housed in very attractive modern architecture, showing as much ingenuity in arrangement, construction and use of materials as the Dutch and Scandinavian work. Incidentally, it was designed by a group of private architects and not by a bureau. There was a government subsidy, the tenants were selected and the scale of rents determined by the usual governmental agencies—and still it is said to be on a sound financial basis. All housing in London is carefully located as to work and the necessary transportation for the particular population to be housed, based on thorough population surveys.

The smaller cities confine themselves to cottages, semi-detached, and in rows, in the usual garden suburb setting. In Oxford where the Morris Auto plant is located, and also at Welwyn, that most efficient and attractive self-contained garden city, a satellite of London, we found a movement toward more heating and more sanitary conveniences.

Despite the high quality of plans and design of the more recent English urban housing, the architecture still lacks the color and buoyancy of other countries of northern Europe.

Part II will cover France, Germany and Russia, with conclusions bearing on the American problem.

Competitions for the Prizes of Rome

THE American Academy in Rome has announced its annual competitions for fellowships in architecture, landscape architecture, painting, sculpture, musical composition and classical studies.

In architecture the Wm. Rutherford Mead fellowship is to be awarded, in painting the Lazarus fellowship provided by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, through the Jacob H. Lazarus Fund, in landscape architecture the Garden Club of America fellowship, in musical composition the Walter Damrosch fellowship and in classical studies the Jesse Benedict Carter Memorial fellowship.

The competitions are open to unmarried men (in classical studies to men and women) not over 30

years of age who are citizens of the United States. The stipend of each fellowship is \$1,250 a year with an allowance of \$300 for transportation to and from Rome and \$200 to \$300 to fellows in the fine arts for materials and incidental expenses. Residence and studio are provided without charge at the Academy, and the total estimated value of each fellowship is about \$2,000 a year.

The Academy reserves the right to withhold an award in any subject in which no candidate is considered to have reached the required standard.

The term of the fellowship in each subject is two years. All fellows have opportunities for extensive travel and for making contacts with lead-

ing European artists and scholars. Fellows in musical composition are also enabled to conduct and hear renditions of their own works, and the Academy has a fund for publishing some of their compositions.

The Grand Central Art Galleries of New York City will present free membership in the Galleries to the painter and sculptor who win the Rome Prize

and fulfill the obligations of the fellowship.

Entries for competitions will be received until *February 1st*. Circulars of information and application blanks may be obtained by addressing Roscoe Guernsey, Executive Secretary, American Academy in Rome, 101 Park Avenue, New York. When writing for these documents the applicant should specify the subject in which he desires to compete.

Fellowship Contest for Young Architects

THE opening of the twelfth annual competition for the James Harrison Steedman Memorial Fellowship in Architecture has been announced by the Governing Committee, consisting of Louis LaBeaume, chairman, Kenneth Wischmeyer, and Prof. Lawrence Hill, Acting Professor in charge of the School of Architecture at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

The Fellowship offers an award of \$1,500 to assist qualified architectural graduates to benefit by a year of travel and the study of architecture in foreign countries. It is open to all graduates of recognized architectural schools, who are between the ages of 21 and 31 at the time of appointment, and who have had at least a year's practical work in the office of a St. Louis architect.

The competition consists of the study and presentation of a problem in design to be worked out by the competitor without outside assistance or criticism. The winner of the fellowship is expected to spend at least 10 months abroad in travel and study, in fulfillment of some pre-determined plan

of architectural research. Upon his return, he is required to present a thesis reflecting his study abroad, which, if brought into conformity with the requirements of the Graduate School of Washington University, may be presented to the Board of Graduate Studies in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Architecture, to be conferred by Washington University at the commencement exercises following the completion of the candidate's work.

Application blanks for registration can be obtained upon written request to the Secretary of the School of Architecture, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., to whom application blanks properly filled out must be returned not later than January 29, 1938.

The preliminary exercise—a 15-hour sketch—will be held on Saturday, February 12th in the School of Architecture building, Washington University, or in the case of candidates residing outside of St. Louis, during the same hours under duly approved conditions.

Book Reviews

The Town Planning Review.

The Journal of the Department of Civic Design, University of Liverpool

A prospectus reads as follows:

The Town Planning Review, which is in its twenty-seventh year of issue, is the only publication of its kind in England. Ever since its inception it has occupied the foremost place in Town Planning literature.

The material in its pages embraces every aspect of Town and Country Planning, Slum Clearance and Housing, Landscape Design and Gardens,

Road Planning and Construction, Water Supply, and allied subjects, from both the historical and modern standpoints.

Much of its material is drawn from foreign sources—from America, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, the British Empire—and comparisons are made between the planning and legislation of the different countries.

The earlier volumes contain, amongst other items, series of studies of famous examples of town planning, descriptions of villages and small towns which describe and illustrate features of practical

utility for modern housing development, and details of monuments and other component parts of fully-equipped towns. In general only those individual features which are recognized to be of artistic worth, and only material of a permanent nature, are given.

In recent years special attention has been paid to modern town and regional planning—in particular to the progress made under the Town and Country Planning Act—, to the preservation of the countryside as an integral part of the policy of national planning, and to the dual problem of slum clearance and rehousing the population in tenements or cottages.

Reviews are given of all important publications relating to town and regional development, English and Foreign, a practice being made of obtaining the service of an expert in each subject.

THE REVIEW, which is published two or three times a year, is fully illustrated with plans, diagrams and photographs. It may be had by addressing The University Press of Liverpool, 177 Brownlow Hill, Liverpool, 3. (4 Nos. 15/- post free.)

Washington—City and Capital.

Government Printing Office, for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. —\$3.00.

From the Preface, "This volume is one of an extensive series of American Guides, compiled and edited by the Federal Writers' Projects of the Works Progress Administration. In plan and scope, this series goes beyond the general concept of the conventional guidebook. Its objective is to present as complete a picture as possible of American communities, their political, economic, industrial, and cultural history, their contemporary scene, as well as the specific points of interest ordinarily sought out by the tourist.

"The main series of regional, State, and local guides will be supplemented and reinforced by a number of separate publications dealing with American folklore, architecture, education, bibliography, Indian culture, and numerous other subjects concerning which a vast store of valuable first-hand information has been assembled by the Nationwide organization of the Federal Writers' Projects.

"The volume on Washington herewith given to the public differs in at least one important respect from the guides to other large cities now being prepared. Washington is predominantly the Capital of the United States. Visitors to the city are commonly interested as much in the machinery of national government as in the great buildings which house that machinery. Therefore, a considerable portion of this volume is given over to detailed accounts of the functional activities of all Government departments, bureaus, and independent agencies. The development of Washington's basic plan has also been treated in detail, since an understanding of L'Enfant's original scheme, its temporary abandonment, and its rehabilitation after nearly a century, is essential to an understanding of the city itself.

"Any book descriptive of Washington must necessarily stress the city's notable architecture—its magnificent public buildings and monuments, its many important churches and fine private homes, some of them dating back to the late eighteenth century. It is believed that a full and adequate account of Washington architecture, both public and private, has been given here, the subject being dealt with as far as possible in language easily intelligible to the layman."

Our Cities—Their Role in the National Economy.

This is a report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee. Printed by the Government Printing Office, and for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. at fifty cents per copy.

This new Government publication contains some eighty-seven pages of material, including many maps, charts and graphs illustrating the text.

The volume is in three parts.

Part I is devoted to the facts about urban America; the process of urbanization; and the problems of urban America.

Part II covers special studies of the Urbanism Committee.

Part III consists of statements of general policy and recommendations.

This book is recommended to all architects and architectural societies as well as to civic bodies engaged in the study of problems arising from the typical industrial cities of the United States.

Bridges in History and Legend.

By Wilbur J. Watson, D.Eng. and Sara Ruth Watson, Ph.D.—*J. H. Jansen, Cleveland, Ohio—\$3.50.*

In the preface the authors are frank in declaring that "in attempting to gather and to correlate the vast amount of material upon this subject," they "soon realized the impossibility of the task, and they knew that their work would fall far short of completeness. But this very failing is an important part of the charm and beauty of the subject. Interest never lags, for there is always fresh data to be unearthed; friends never cease to present their own favorite bit of legend or poetry about a bridge, or to contribute valuable historical material; and, most important of all, there is surely not a person in the world who cannot speak with some knowledge, because he has been caught at some time or other by the intrinsic beauty of a bridge.

"It is not intended that this be a treatise on the art or science of bridge building; it is, instead, designed to show the significance of the bridge in

civilization, in the thoughts of man and in his art. To do this, technical terms have been avoided almost entirely. . . .

"The last chapters are almost entirely historical because not enough time has elapsed to permit the embodiment of this material into the permanent channels of literature. For instance, the chapter on the bridge builders does not include those living because the lives of these men are not yet history. Similarly, the twelfth chapter, the Span of a Century, connects the older types of bridge, many of which have acquired fame and charm through the poems and tales that gather about them during the course of time, with the more modern and recent structures that have not yet aged.

"Cornelius Walford in an essay presented to the Royal Historical Society of London in 1884 on 'Bridges, their Historical and Literary Associations' stated that, 'No serious attempt has been made to bring them (the materials relating to the history and literature of bridges) into a manageable compass.' It is the hope of the authors that their modest effort will help, in some degree, to fill this need."

Necrology - Members and Fellows

AS reported to The Institute from December 1, 1936, to November 30, 1937. Please report any omissions to The Secretary.

FELLOWS

Berlin, R. C.
Boring, Wm. A.
Brueggeman, Geo. F. A.
Fisher, W. E.
Johnston, Clarence H.
Lewis, Jr., Edwin J.

Malcomson, Wm. G.
Myers, David J.
Pope, John Russell
Revels, Frederick W.
Trueblood, Wilbur T.
Warner, J. Foster

MEMBERS

Bacus, John James
Barton, Harry
Bell, Algernon S.
Boone, Allan E.
Browne, Randolph Maury
Cody, Chas. Paxton
Gifford, Chas. Alling
Gmelin, Paul
Gordon, James Riely

Greene, Ernest
Griffin, Walter Burley
Holden, Frank H.
Johnson, Lindley
Johnstone, Wm. O.
Kelham, Geo. W.
Lee, James S.
Lloyd, Charles Howard
Maher, Edward F.

MEMBERS (Continued)

Miller, Lee Douglas
Norris, W. Irving
Paist, Phineas E.
Reeves, Robert R.
Reynolds, Marcus T.
Sanguinet, M. R.
Schmid, Richard G.
Steele, Rezin D.

Sturr, Albert
Sugden, Percy
Tyre, Philip Scott
Walker, Harold Damrell
Wallin, Henrik
Wheat, Jr., Leonidas P.
White, Howard J.

HONORARY MEMBERS

Crowinshield, Frederic
Dielman, Frederick
Kraus, Frank S.

Root, Elihu
Shaw, George Russell

THE OCTAGON

A Journal of the The American Institute of Architects

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