

Journal of The American Institute of
ARCHITECTS



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JULY, 1953

New Sullivan Letters

Pioneering in Architectural Education

Mind Over Materialism

R.I.B.A. Conference at Edinburgh

Architect and/or Builder

The Design of Industrial Plants

Books • Educational News • Awards

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JOURNAL OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING
AS THROUGH A MICROPHONE
THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

JULY, 1953

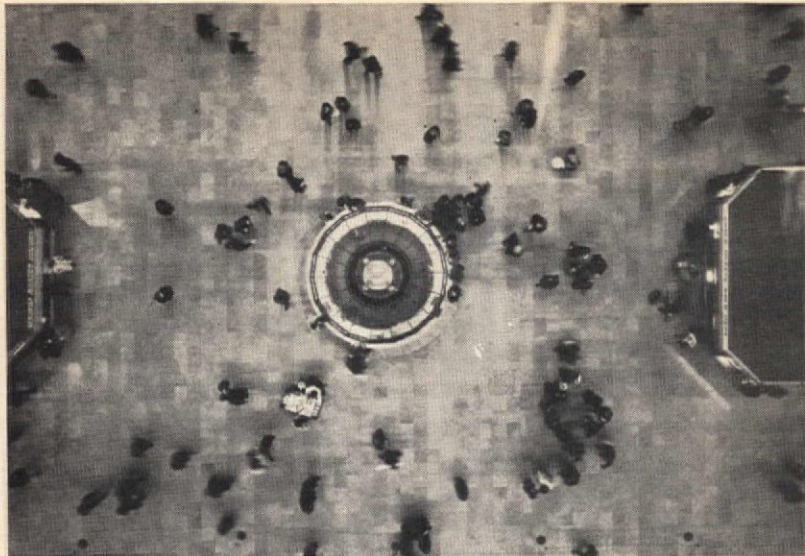
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CONTENTS

Pioneering in Architectural Education—I 3	Is Ours A Profession? 43
<i>By Turpin C. Bannister, F.A.I.A.</i>	<i>By C. Godfrey Poggi</i>
New Sullivan Letters 9	Awards 44
<i>By Willard Connelly</i>	The Editor's Asides 45
The Triumph of Mind Over Materialism 13	
<i>By Roger Allen</i>	
The R.I.B.A. Conference at Edinburgh 16	
<i>By Robert C. Weinberg</i>	
The Plastic Ethic 25	
<i>By "Hubertus Junius"</i>	
The Design of Industrial Plants 25	
<i>By George B. Allison</i>	
Architect and/or Builder 33	
<i>By Talbot Wegg</i>	
Calendar 39	
News from the Educational Field 39	
Books & Bulletins 40	
Architects Read and Write: Hospital Design in Brazil 42	
<i>By Jarbas B. Karman</i>	
	ILLUSTRATIONS
	Cover Spot: Detail of center panel of wood door of Casa de Santa Teresa, Seville Redrawn from "Architectural Details of Southern Spain," by Mack and Gibson, Wm. Helburn, Inc., 1928.
	Dovecote, Dirleton, East Lothian, Scotland 19
	Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh 19
	"Grey Walls," Gullane, Scotland 20
	<i>Sir Edwin Lutyens, architect</i>
	Tenements in Edinburgh's Old Town 20
	Gerrit J. de Gelleke, F.A.I.A., Edward C. Kemper Award for 1953 29
	Honorary Members: Frank R. Creedon, Gurdon Montague Butler 30

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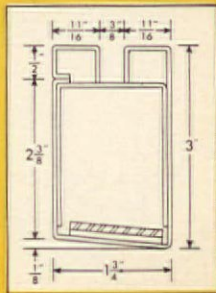
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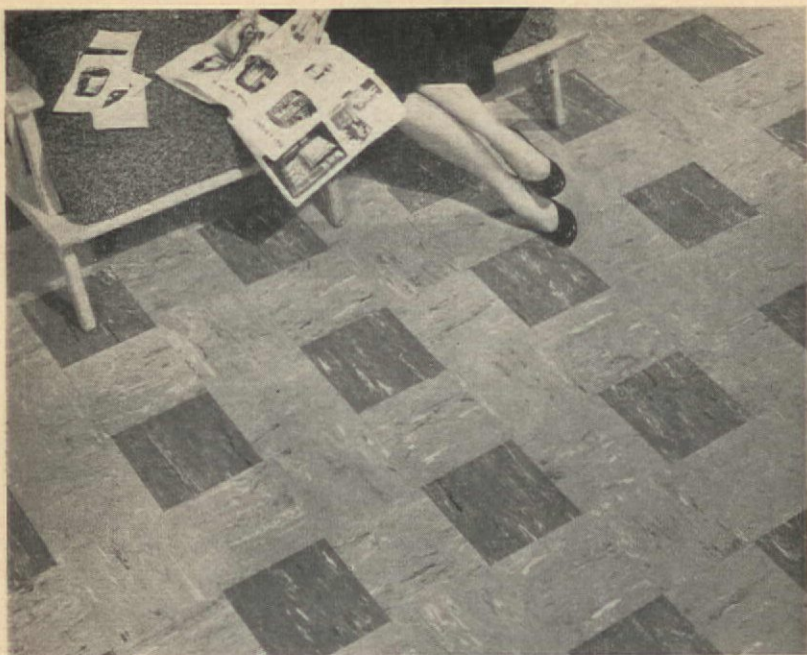
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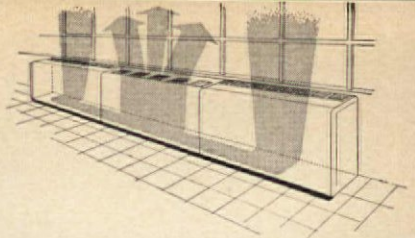
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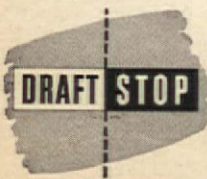


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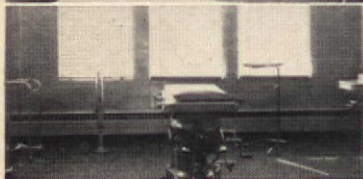
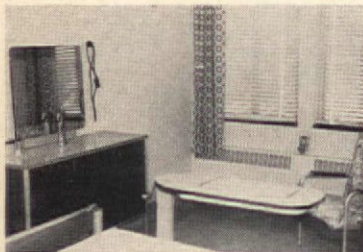
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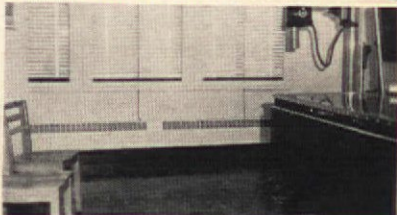
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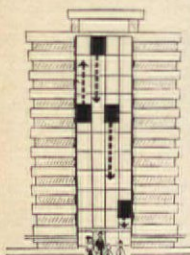


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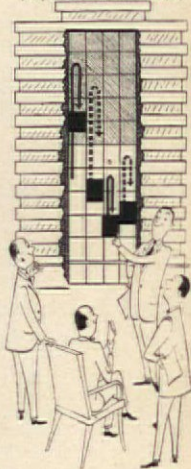
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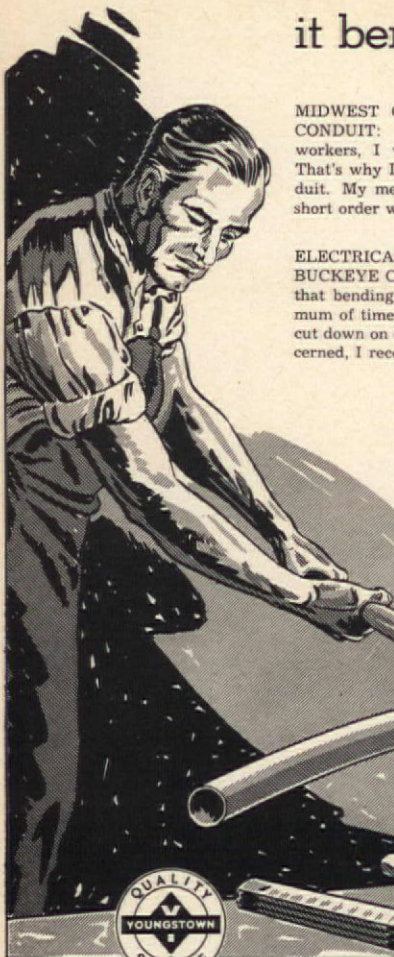
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Pioneering in Architectural Education

RECALLING THE FIRST COLLEGIATE GRADUATE IN ARCHITECTURE IN THE U. S. A.—NATHAN CLIFFORD RICKER

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Turpin C. Bannister, F.A.I.A.*

HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Abbreviated from a paper read at a convocation in Urbana, Feb. 25, 1953, commemorating the eightieth anniversary of our first graduate in architecture, from the Illinois Industrial University, Polytechnical Department.

EIGHTY YEARS AGO this month, in February, 1873, the University of Illinois conferred its graduation certificate upon Nathan Clifford Ricker, who thus made educational history by becoming the first collegiate graduate in architecture in the United States.

From time immemorial, young architects had acquired professional skill by serving as apprentices under experienced masters. At its best this system produced the creators of the great monuments of the past; but too often the master was too busy to give effective instruction. One remedy to save the master's time was the organization of apprentices into classes, as was done at Prague in 1353 by the court architect, Peter Parler. However, only basic courses, such as drawing, perspective, construction, his-

tory, and theory, were taught, for each master insisted that his own pupils study architectural design solely in his own office. Even when the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was established in Paris in 1819, design was taught not in the Ecole itself but in independent *ateliers*, or studios, presided over by practitioners.

In the United States throughout the nineteenth century the apprenticeship system persisted, but by the middle of the century it had become clear that such a system could no longer produce enough personnel to supply the services demanded by a rapidly expanding nation. In 1849 at Troy, New York, Benjamin Franklin Green, the vigorous new president of the Rensselaer Institute, refashioned this oldest American en-

gineering school along European polytechnic models and proposed the inclusion of a well thought-out curriculum in Civil Architecture. The depression of 1857 prevented the consummation of Green's idea.

While organizing the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, President William Barton Rogers, who knew Green and his plans, and who, as a professor of the University of Virginia, had admired its Jeffersonian design, decided in 1865 to include architecture in the M.I.T. program. Forthwith he appointed the Boston architect, William R. Ware, to carry it out. Ware was well prepared for this assignment for he had graduated from Harvard in 1852, had later studied at its Lawrence Scientific School, and had obtained his architectural training in the New York office of Richard Morris Hunt, who in 1858 had organized his office pupils into an *atelier* modeled on those in which Hunt had studied in Paris from 1845 to 1854. In 1860 Ware and his fellow pupil, Henry Van Brunt, opened an office in Boston and soon set up a similar *atelier* for their own staff. Upon acceptance of the M.I.T. appointment, Ware spent a year in Europe observing educational methods and

a year of planning before beginning the first classes in September, 1868, with an enrollment of four students. It is important to note that the teaching of architectural design at M.I.T. was undertaken, from the very first, by the regular faculty.



In contrast to the metropolitan origin of M.I.T., the second school arose on a mid-western prairie only a generation removed from the frontier. On May 7, 1867, at the second meeting of the Trustees of the Illinois Industrial University, John Milton Gregory, just appointed first Regent, outlined the educational program and the scope of the new institution. One of the six major divisions was the Polytechnical Department, which embraced not only civil, mechanical, and mining engineering, but architecture as well.

There can be no doubt of Gregory's genuine interest in architecture. No doubt, too, he found strong support in one of the original trustees, John M. Van Osdel, the first and most prominent architect in Chicago. Other trustees probably were sympathetic, for eleven of the twenty-five came from eastern states where architec-

ture was more firmly established. Furthermore, since the population of Illinois had doubled in the 1850's and was doubling again in the 1860's, building was an urgent necessity. For the most part, however, construction was in the hands of untrained mechanics. The need for trained architects and means for training them was everywhere apparent.

Thus, Gregory shared with Rogers of M.I.T. the distinction of channeling architectural education into a new collegiate pattern which became the accepted model not only for later American schools, but for many other countries as well. For the first time they envisioned a complete and integrated program of studies preparing for the professional practice of architecture. In the Midwest of his day, just emerging from frontier conditions, architecture must have seemed to many a gratuitous luxury, but the measure of his vision is indicated by the fact that for more than a quarter of a century Illinois maintained the only architectural school beyond the Atlantic seaboard, and that not until 1899 did another state university—Ohio State—undertake a similar program.

Although the University of Illi-

nois inaugurated its first classes in March, 1868, with 77 students and a faculty of 4, instruction in architecture awaited the arrival on January 2, 1870, of the first student to request it. He was Nathan Clifford Ricker. Born on a farm near Acton, Maine, in 1843, he early acquired those qualities of integrity, industry, and frugality so admired down east, and he coupled to them an insatiable thirst for knowledge. In 1856 the family moved to nearby Springvale to enable the son to attend high school. Spare time was devoted to work in his father's corn and shingle mill where, in addition, he acquired familiarity with wood-working tools. In 1861 he taught country school and at night continued his own education by studying Latin, French, botany, and geology. In 1862 he joined his father in wartime Washington and worked for some months in the commissary service. Returning to Springvale and the mill for another year, he came of age in 1864 and began his independent career in a local shop which manufactured piano cases. Early in 1867, after two and a half years in this work, he decided to see something of the west by visiting an uncle who had migrated two years before to La Harpe, Hancock

County, in western Illinois. There he soon put his craftsmanship to practice as a building carpenter and in mid-1868 as a partner in a wagon and blacksmith shop. But despite modest success, he still yearned for knowledge, and when, at Christmas, 1869, a student of the state university came home to La Harpe with glowing descriptions of the school's opportunities, Ricker immediately sold his share of the shop and departed for Urbana with his five years' savings of \$750.



Ricker's experience in building led him to choose the course in architecture. He was not deterred by the fact that, though the catalog offered such a course, no actual program was as yet formulated. He easily obtained credit for his self-taught Latin and French, and he was confident that he could overcome by his own efforts any shortcomings that might develop in courses or facilities. Mathematics and German, as well as other general subjects, were readily available. But, even in architectural subjects, the new school provided surprising resources.

Ricker's first architectural teacher was the instructor in me-

chanical drawing, James Bellangee. Bellangee, born at Dover, six miles northeast of Princeton, Illinois, had graduated from the University of Michigan in 1867 with the degree, Bachelor of Science. This curriculum had included geometrical and topographical drawings, shades and shadows, perspective, and a course entitled tinting, shading, and lettering. All these were taught in a typically tight, meticulous style by De Volson Wood, Professor of Civil Engineering and a recent graduate of Rensselaer. After a year of working for a Chicago architect, Bellangee joined the faculty at Urbana in September, 1869. It is tempting to think that Van Osdel may have suggested him to Regent Gregory.

After completing a program of graduate studies in his spare time, Bellangee resigned in June, 1871, to become professor of mathematics at the Nebraska State Normal School at Peru.

To replace Bellangee, Regent Gregory secured a teacher of more professional qualifications. He was Harald M. Hansen, a Swedish architect who had studied for two additional years at the *Bauakademie* in Berlin. It is interesting to note that he was the first of a long line of European teachers in

American architectural schools. During the fall and winter terms, 1871-72, Ricker studied drawing, design, and rendering under Hansen, and long afterwards paid tribute to him as a very competent instructor. Although Ricker, while still a student, is credited with preparing Illinois' first definite curriculum in architecture, which appeared for the first time in the catalog of 1871-1872, he was no doubt strongly influenced by Hansen and his description of the *Bauakademie*. Meanwhile more practical resources appeared. Beginning in September, the construction of University Hall from Van Osdel's plans furnished first-hand illustrations of classroom theory. Then, too, during the fall and winter terms, Ricker managed the university's carpenter shop, repaired and altered buildings and equipment, and taught wood-working. This position excused him from military drill, but it also conflicted with a much desired class in Strength of Materials. To retrieve this loss, Ricker studied the text, worked out all its problems, and passed a proficiency examination.

In March, 1872, at the start of the spring term, Ricker decided to obtain some practical experience in

Chicago, where reconstruction following the Great Fire of October, 1871, had created a fabulous building boom. So, during the spring and summer he worked in the office of John W. Roberts, who, himself, had been a pupil of Richard Upjohn. While there, Ricker was occupied on the Briggs Hotel and no doubt watched the development of plans for the Pike Block and perhaps the Keith Brothers Building as well.



When September came, Ricker returned to Urbana to complete his course, and discovered that Hansen, who had gone to Chicago to work during the summer, was delayed by illness. Regent Gregory immediately requested Ricker to take charge not only of his three fellow students, but also his own instruction. Thus, he outlined his courses, made out, took, and graded his own examinations, and reported his own grades. It must not be supposed, however, that this irregular procedure constituted academic laxity. Gregory knew his man, and trusted his sincerity, honesty, and purpose. He was sure that this mature 29-year-old student would be his own severest taskmaster. It was at this time, perhaps, that

Ricker persevered through the intricate problems of C. E. Loth's "Practical Stairbuilder," a feat of will as well as intellect.

So, at the end of February, 1873, Ricker received his certificate and became the first American graduate in architecture. Although M.I.T. had begun its architectural classes sixteen months before Illinois, M.I.T.'s first graduate, Henry A. Phillips, followed Ricker by three months. No doubt such precedence is slight, but no one can question that Ricker well deserves this notable distinction which symbolized so vividly the opening of a new era in professional education.



Gregory not only appreciated Ricker as a superior student, but he also recognized his great potentialities as a teacher. As an administrator, too, Gregory desired to place the architectural program on a sound and permanent basis. Therefore, shortly before the end of the winter term, he had offered to appoint Ricker as instructor in charge of architecture, on condition that he spend the next six months

in travel and study in Europe. The proposal was gratefully accepted. Since Gregory himself had just been named U. S. Commissioner to the Vienna Exposition to be held that summer, Ricker sailed at the end of March as a member of the Regent's party. Landing in England, Ricker proceeded directly to Berlin, where he registered in the *Bauakademie*, the Prussian college for engineering and architecture which Hansen had attended. At the time it was justly famed for its systematic instruction. There for three months Ricker attended lectures, observed teaching methods and equipment, and read voraciously in its extensive library. He also took full advantage of the opportunity to inspect outstanding buildings, both old and new. Vacation trips to Dresden and to Vienna and its exposition, and the return journey by way of Cologne, Paris, Rouen, London, York, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, filled out his experience and stimulated a keen interest in architectural history. In September, 1873, he was back again in Urbana ready to begin a career which for length and usefulness has rarely been equalled in the annals of architectural education.

(To be continued in August)

JULY, 1953



New Sullivan Letters

By Willard Connely

The author is completing a new life of Sullivan, incorporating a few chapters that, with this one, are to appear in the JOURNAL. Besides the letters there is other material acquired from the Sullivan family.

TWO INTERESTING LETTERS from Louis Sullivan, to his brother Albert, have just come to light. The first is dated from Paris, not long after the young architectural student, aged eighteen, had passed his entrance examinations for the Beaux-Arts. Sullivan comments upon two Thanksgiving Days, his first one in Paris, and the Thanksgiving of the previous year (1873), which happened to have been also his first day in Chicago, whither he had resorted, to rejoin his parents, after bolting from the office of Furness & Hewitt in Philadelphia. Apart from observations upon his life in Paris, this letter reveals the enthusiasm with which both Sullivan and his brother participated in athletics. Charley Downes was a sprinter and shot-putter; "Bill" was William B. Curtis, the famous Chicago gymnast and organizer of athletic clubs; "John" was John Edelmann, the first fellow-drafts-

man to exert a lasting influence upon Sullivan:

Paris, Dec. 7th, 1874

Dear Al

I have arisen from my peaceful couch too late this morning to make it worth while to go to the atelier before breakfast, or rather dinner as you would call it at home, as it comes about noon; so I might just as well [use] the spare time by writing you a little letter.

Saturday night I went with a friend to the first masquerade ball of the season. It did not let out till 4:30 A. M., and then we went and took supper, getting home about seven o'clock yesterday morning. This bust was to celebrate Thanksgiving Day, which we had forgotten, and was quite an enjoyable affair. Only about half the people present wore costumes; but they were as grotesque and outlandish as could be imagined, and to see them dance the cancan in such rigs was very appropriate and exceeding amusing. The cancan in costume is as good as a play;

but in ordinary clothes it is simply disgusting, as I may have told you before.

Sunday (yesterday) I slept from seven in the morning till 4:30 in the afternoon, so that it is the only day in my life that I didn't see daylight. It was very funny; when I went to bed the street lamps were burning, and when I got up they were burning, so that it really seemed like one awfully long night. (That word "awfully" slipped out before I knew it. I have got into the habit of using it a great deal, in a facetious kind of way).

We are having the God-damnedest kind of weather here that can be imagined,—cold, wet and chilly. I have caught a hard cold on my lungs, and have got the diarrhoea so that it takes all my strength away; and as you can imagine, the way I am cussing and swearing is enough to make hell shiver. I have just bought an overcoat about an inch thick; but I can hardly keep warm even in that.

I am crawling along slowly at the atelier. It is the damndest pigstie I ever got into. First it's cold, and then when you light the fire it smokes so that it nearly puts your eyes out, and you have to open the windows, which makes a devil of a draft, which is not to be recommended for people troubled with a cold. I am working along steadily on my project, which is to

be finished the 28th inst. I shall begin on the "remainder" [?] of my plan tomorrow; it is to cover two sheets of "double-capping."

I am much obliged to you for sending me a review of the [athletic] "Season," which interested me very much. I congratulate you on your remarkable progress, even if you did get beaten at New York; and I hope that next year you will clean them all out. When I get back to Chicago I shall make it my business to see how closely I can press you on the 110 yds., for I can't stand having you beat me by 6 yds., though when I ran Charley Downes I certainly did not do my best, for I thought he was playing with me, and so I did not let myself entirely out. But the chances are that by the time I get back to Chicago (and it won't be for some time, you bet), I won't be able to run in 15 [seconds]. Still my legs are keeping in very fair condition, and are yet quite hard. When you write, send me a good long letter and keep me well posted in athletic and general news.

What sort of a time did you have Thanksgiving, anything like the Thanksgiving of 1873, my first day in Chicago? My congratulations to Bill [Curtis] on his success, and tell him that I hope on my return to find him the possessor of the "Diamond Scales."

John [Edelmann] certainly did

JULY, 1953

not make a very brilliant showing in the athletic line; but his progress in architecture has filled me with satisfaction and delight. But nevertheless, John is going to make a good oarsman one of these days, you see if he doesn't. I judge you and he must have had some little fuss, by the supercilious tone of your remarks. If such is the case you ought to get over it, for he is one of the smartest and most honorable boys I have ever met, and you can make up your mind that my reputation as an architect will always be inferior to his.

I received mother and father's letters Saturday and will answer as soon as possible. The old gentleman seems to be rather pleased at my success at the examinations, and well he may be, Great God! It makes me weak to think of them.

My love to the family triangle, and don't forget that way over in this quarter of creation there exists a brother who calls himself

LOUIS H. SULLIVAN

It will be remembered that Albert Sullivan was four years older than Louis. There were no other children in the family. Throughout the lifetime of their parents (Patrick Sullivan died in 1884, his widow in 1892) the brothers remained intimate, and bore each other much affection. Both were

men of remarkable ability. Albert, an officer of the Illinois Central, grew as eminent in railways as his brother did in architecture. Until 1885 the two young bachelors, living in Chicago, shared the same friendships, interests, and social life. Then Albert was appointed Division Superintendent of the Illinois Central, with offices at Cairo, Ill., and Louis resumed exchanging letters with him as from Paris ten years before.



The second letter tells the story of the first great coup in Sullivan's life, the award of the contract for the Auditorium, from which design his fame took rise, when he was yet only thirty. The "professor" was William Ware, his old master in architecture at Boston Tech, who had been invited to Chicago by the majority of a "Board" overruling the views of Ferdinand Pike, the promoter, dandy, and impresario, to judge Sullivan's plans for the building. Today it may seem odd that Ware, who had designed Memorial Hall at Harvard, was accounted an arbiter of art; but some of the directors thought Ware the last word in both taste and practicability. Pike accepted Sullivan's seasoned partner Adler as

an engineer, but was not sure of the radical young Sullivan as a designer. Nor, perhaps, would Pike have consented to call in Professor Ware to meet the Board had he known that Ware was Sullivan's former teacher, and was bound to be somewhat prejudiced in favour of an old pupil.

Office of
ADLER & SULLIVAN
Architects

Room 56, Borden Block, Chicago

Jan. 20, 1887

Dear Al

The professor has come and gone. The contract for excavation has been let, and work is begun. The Board has directed a payment of \$10,000 to be made to us on account. A first assessment of 10% has been called on the capital stock. It has been voted by the stockholders to increase the capital stock to \$1,500,000, and for the moment peace reigns in the camp. Ware's written report covered five pages of legal cap. He very kindly read it to us at lunch before taking it to the Board of Directors,—which was very considerate. He asked us if it was satisfactory. It was. Couched in very conservative and judicial language, it was nonetheless a very strong and sound endorsement. He suggested modifications only in minor details. (These suggestions,

he said, have commended themselves to the architects, A. & S.)

Very good. But the opposition, as you will see, had built up fond hopes upon this forthcoming report. At three o'clock Monday, Ware appeared before the Board of Directors, and was quietly delivered of the report. At the conclusion of the report aforesaid, as read by the professor, Mr. Pike rose, and then the following dialogue ensued:

Mr. Pike: Professor Ware, I judge from the tenor of what you have just said, that you have confined your effort solely to estimating the artistic quality of the present designs, and to a search for a means to improve them in detail,—assuming always that these designs are a finality in the eyes of this Board.

Professor: Certainly. I understand it was for that purpose that I was called here.

Mr. Pike: Very good. Now let me ask you this question. Assuming that you yourself, instead of Messrs. A. & S., had from the inception of this project been engaged to design this building. Would you, in your opinion, have arrived at a result substantially similar to theirs, or do you believe that you would have produced a result somewhat or a great deal better?

Professor: Had I been entrusted

JULY, 1953

with the designing of this building, I do not believe I should have reached the same result. But had I reached such a result, I should consider it the inspiration of my life!

The Board was electrified, and stared at each other, at the professor and at Pike, who was completely knocked out. A. & S. stock rose into the hundreds.

To the question next put as to whether there was any reasonable probability that by calling in the services of other prominent architects, a sufficiently better design

could be secured, to justify the board in such action, the professor replied that while there was no telling what might be done, he thought it extremely problematical, and that in his judgment the board would not be justified in waiting a couple of months for such purpose.

The professor remained over the next day, pocketed his little \$1,000, and spread his wings for home. The atmosphere is considerably cleared, and I am considered an artist, it seems. Poor fools!

Yours,

Lou

The Triumph of Mind Over Materialism

By Roger Allen

I AM FAST BECOMING AN EXPERT on the sales letters, brochures, mailing pieces and other literary efforts utilized by architects to attract clients. This was involuntary on my part. I am against the whole idea. I take the dimmest of views of this distressing propensity of my professional colleagues to inform my customers, by inference, that they had better give Allen the old heave and entrust their building projects to somebody with a head full of brains. Meaning them.

There is, however, one advantage to it. My clients invariably turn

these communications over to me, along with a few ribald words of self pity. It is unfortunate, they point out, that they are stuck with a character like me, whom they keep around more for a pet than anything else, on the off chance that I might think up a couple of remarks that would relieve the tedium of their existence, when it is obvious from the sales pitch of Mr. Elwood K. Bagbottom, let us say, that his organization is equipped to give complete architectural, engineering, curriculum correcting and site planning service, accompanied, no doubt, by a

three-minute car wash. Then they laugh like crazy and we go out for a cup of coffee.

It is regrettable that most of the brochures mailed around Michigan by Mr. Bagbottom and his ilk (all my life I have wanted to use the word "ilk" in a piece, and now I've done it, and I'm glad I did it) bear a strong family resemblance to a high-school annual. I keep thumbing through them for the Class Prophecy, but they have no prophecy and very little class.

In my large file of such incunabula (Gad, men, that Allen knows some big words) there is one that I love to look at. It starts off with a large and unkindly accurate photograph, full page, of Mr. Bagbottom. This is a mistake, as Mr. Bagbottom is not as pretty as I am. And as architects all over this great republic can testify, I am not too pretty. From Bedford Springs, Pa., to Colorado Springs, Colo., architects have been given an opportunity to learn at first hand that, while Allen has a useful face, which is generally open, he is not pretty. His wife is. She is younger, too. Earlier in my married life, strangers used to mistake me for her father. I am glad to say they no longer do this. They mistake me for her grandfather. (I

bet this is one piece of mine I can get her to read without holding a gun on her.)



Speaking of Springs, Bedford and Colorado, as I was; reminds me that in 1953 Watertown, N. Y., will stage a celebration of the centenary of the bedspring. Let us all go down there and put on a pageant, shall we? I can hardly wait to see the publicity stills of Miss Bedspring of 1953.

One depressing result of all these brochures telling the laity how many different experts in all branches of knowledge are contained within the farflung (which should be flung ever further) organization headed up by Mr. Bagbottom is that they have got clients, especially school boards, doing the same thing. They now send out questionnaires to architects, asking them to Tell All. I got one the other day that was a pip. It did not request a copy of a recent urinalysis, but this was the only thing it missed. One question fascinated me: "Do you have your own soil-testing engineer?" It was a wrench for me not to reply, "No, I do not have a soil-testing engineer. I rely on the neighbor women to dig up the dirt."

Well, okay, if you like brochures I will give you brochures, kiddies. I am preparing one now. This announcement has filled my associates with dread and apprehension. "Lookit," they say to me, "what happened the last time you sent out a sales letter containing a few remarks about architecture and a lot of remarks about the Lord knows what and a table of the phases of the moon and what time it would be high tide at Boothbay Harbor, Maine? What happened? We got a lot of jobs and everybody had to work like dogs but you. What are you, a friend?" This is too bad, but I can't help it. I am going to get out a brochure. Don't miss it if you can.

The whole thing will be kept on a very dignified plane. None of this stuff about the vast facilities of the mighty Allen organization up to and including curb service embalming of clients who die on the sidewalk. No; I visualize a frontispiece of an extremely handsome man, with the caption, "ROGER ALLEN as he would druther look if he had his druthers." There will then be several thousand photographs of buildings we have designed plus a view of the Pyramid of Cheops by moonlight. I did not design the pyramid of

Cheops: I was out of town that week. I just happen to like the looks of it.

At intervals, say every other page, there will be a solid page of comment on what I think of stuff. Some of the things I think of stuff would make Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright sound far, far more conservative than Mr. Westbrook Pegler.

When I have completed the brochure, I may get around to an even more vital prospect; the preparation of a questionnaire to send to people who send me questionnaires. Clients, or potential clients, I mean. I am not referring to the kind of questionnaires from advertising agencies who are anxious to know what I think of the idea of putting chlorophyll in concrete to make your driveway look like a putting green. This questionnaire for questionnaire-senders will start off with simple dignity as follows:

Question 1: "How much money you got and how fast can you send it?"

Questions will follow up to No. 100. Then there will be a legend in 18-point Caslon Bold type reading: "The answering of Question No. 1 is mandatory: Questions 2

to 100 inclusive may be omitted in the interest of brevity. How fast did you say?"

Do not think I am bitter about this matter. I would be, except for the fact that when I get a little fatigued reading how bright everybody but Allen is, I get invited to go some place and lecture to architects. I am gratified but mystified by the willingness of chapters and regional conventions to pay me quite a lot of money and my expenses to go to some attractive spot

in this republic or Canada to deliver a dry and dusty discussion of such minor topics as money, architecture, women, the International Style, fruit flies, how to tie a running bowline and the fecundity of wire coathangers. I do not know why architects and their wives wish to hear such technical stuff, but it is gratifying.

After a diet of too many brochures, these invitations cheer me up. I feel that they represent the triumph of mind over materialism.

The R.I.B.A. Conference at Edinburgh

By Robert C. Weinberg

Having other commitments in France and Germany in the summer of 1952, the author followed up a casual suggestion of International Relations Chairman Ralph Walker that he represent The Institute in attending the British counterpart of our A.I.A. Convention.

THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL (London) for July 10, 1952, ran an angry editorial entitled: NOW LET'S HAVE A CONFERENCE. Its editor had returned from a week of what he admits as being "most hospitable, kindly and generous entertainment" arranged by the Scottish architects on the occasion of the annual gathering of the R.I.B.A. which took place last year in the ancient capital and most delightful modern city of Edinburgh. The edi-

torial complains, nonetheless, that the reading of two papers in two working days "did not constitute a conference"; and that the "gathering was nothing more than a leisurely, entertaining, mildly instructive interlude in the lives of a well-regulated professional body of men." Rather than wasting time in these serious days on "such a jollification . . . held purely for the purpose of having a good time," he asks, "has not the moment been reached when the archi-

tectural profession could copy other professions—or even [sic] The American Institute of Architects—and have two or three papers on each of a variety of subjects?”

This earnest, puritanical call for “a little more intense effort put into lectures and field work” falls on deaf ears so far as this correspondent is concerned. I liked the R.I.B.A. conference just as it was, and perhaps just because of the ways in which it differed from the A.I.A. conventions. Entertainment arranged by the host “chapter,” The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, was indeed of the very best; never once did it play down to the taste of a fancied lowest common denominator among the membership but, rather, catered, in every detail, to that of the scholars and professional men who had gathered to spend a few days in the most delightful surroundings, to view architecture and countryside under pleasant conditions and to exchange compliments, both formal and informal. These were as free from the high-sounding moralizing of pleaders for special causes as they were from the cheap vulgarity of the back-slapping, chamber-of-commerce type of conference manners which

so unfortunately characterize the actions and programs of many of our supposedly professional gatherings.

Looking over the menu-program of the dinner, it is interesting to note the way in which what we would call speeches are listed as “toasts.” These follow what is apparently an established custom: the “speeches” being actually toasts proposed and drunk and responses made to each. For example, after the customary opening remarks in the form of a toast to Her Majesty, the Queen, by the President of the R.I.B.A., there followed toasts and responses to the City of Edinburgh, to the R.I.B.A. itself, and finally “To The Guests.” (Mention, in the course of this one, of a visitor from the U.S.A. along with guests from other “lands beyond the sea” required from the individual recipients nothing more than a rising bow in response—the only official duty, incidentally, imposed upon the A.I.A.’s representative during the entire conference.) All the “toasts” and “responses” were extraordinarily urbane, witty, and to the point, even though at least one of them contained some barbed shafts implying a certain smoldering animosity between the speculative

builder and the architect. On a high level was the following toast to the R.I.B.A. itself, proposed by the Earl of Home, highest ranking British official in Scotland—equivalent to the Governor-General in Canada—who belied his appearance as a mild and unconcerned member of the local aristocracy by making of his toast (which was, in effect, the chief address of the occasion) the most erudite and witty of discourses on the need for more color in local architecture, treating the subject in relation to, among other things, the reputed "dourness" of the Scottish temperament. This was responded to with equal wit and gusto by the President of the R.I.B.A.

A "toastmaster," by the way, is a real personage in Britain. On this occasion, this portly individual—obviously a professional major domo, engaged for the purpose, rather than one of the assembled diners as he would have been in the U.S.A.—was a huge bewhiskered Scot, attired in formal evening dress, i.e., kilts with a velvet dinner jacket and white tie, who had been in evidence at other events during the conference as official announcer of the names of guests as they appeared at the door at the various earlier functions.

At the formal dinner, he stood behind the speakers' table, made sure that no liquor was touched until the opening toast to Her Majesty, the Queen, had been proposed, and then, one by one, in booming tones announced each toast and response and the name of the person making it. No humor or wisecracks here, simply a traditional usage properly observed.

A word must be said about the "Assembly Rooms" in which the conference took place. I do not need to tell readers of the JOURNAL about the City of Edinburgh itself, especially its extraordinarily beautiful "New Town," that late eighteenth and early nineteenth century extension of the ancient capital which constitutes one of the most complete, consistent and dignified examples of urban architecture anywhere. On stately George Street stands a building, occupying a sizable plot, that was erected in the 1780's from designs of a contemporary and associate of the Adam brothers. This structure—containing on its main floor (one flight up) a series of stately and wholly adequate banquet, ball and assembly rooms, and on the ground floor miscellaneous offices,



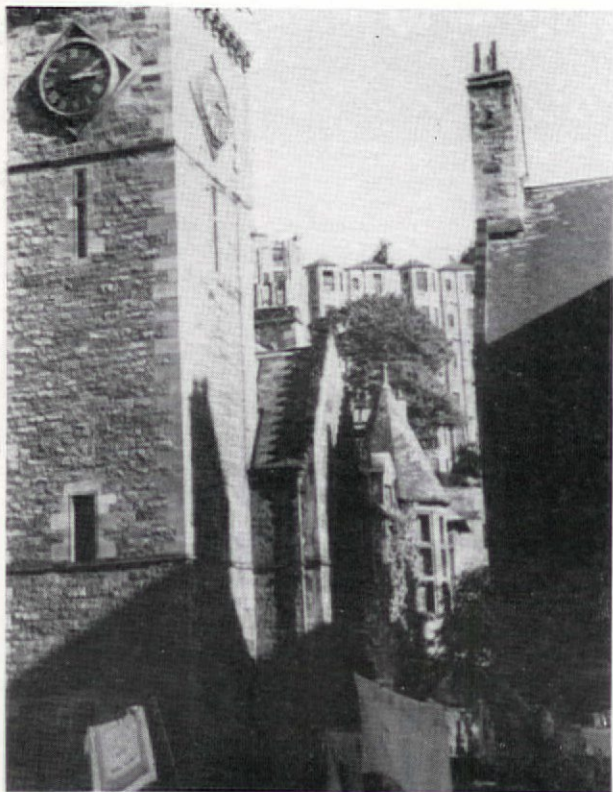
Ancient stone dovecote
Dirleton, East Lothian, Scotland

Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, in
which the Conference meetings were held





"Grey Walls," Gullane, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, now a cocktail lounge



*All photographs
by Robert C.
Weinberg*

Centuries-old
eight- and nine-
story walk-up
tenements in
Edinburgh's Old
Town

kitchens, bar, lounge and exhibit rooms—belongs to the city corporation of Edinburgh and is used by it for every type of conference which the city is willing to play host to, and for which it presumably collects fees and rentals. In other words, it is an official municipal conference hall, of a sort that any American city could envy. Kept in perfect condition over the centuries, and made up to date with the usual equipment needed for present-day affairs of this sort, the Assembly Rooms are happily free of that self-conscious, museum-like "restoration" feeling we associate with Williamsburg, Va., and similar historic monuments. Here for the first time, this correspondent, at least, experienced the pleasures of making use of public rooms done in the eighteenth century, in the very best manner of that age, and which were neither one of those bad 1920-ish imitations nor a precious archeological "reconstruction." The same thought came to mind with all of the buildings in Edinburgh's New Town which are now used for commercial and residential, as well as public, purposes.

As for Edinburgh as a whole, the best analogy I can give to our American cities is to say that it

is a combination of Boston and Quebec, with the New Town laid out with dignity and spaciousness like Boston's Back Bay (but with better architecture), while towering above it—more like the ram-parts of the Chateau Frontenac and the Plains of Abraham than like Beacon Hill—lies the Old Town with the Castle, Arthur's Seat, and Holyroodhouse, where the royal standard, lazily flapping during the days the R.I.B.A. met, showed that the Queen was in residence.

The Assembly Rooms had indeed been designed to fit every occasion; the great hall extending across the front facade has a semi-circular projecting bay, providing an acoustically perfect exedra within for the musicians. At the opening reception, the entertainment included songs by a troupe of "Fishwives" in local costume. On one of the evenings, a formal dance was held in full dress—the Scottish members wearing kilts with colored velvet dinner jackets and lace ruffles, their ladies with their tartans striped diagonally across simple white gowns. Ordinary ballroom dancing was interspersed with the Scottish equivalent of the Virginia Reel and other

local steps. Another event was a party staged by students of the local architectural school, which was attended by many of the R.I.B.A. people. This gave a chance not only to examine the work of the school but also to mingle informally with students and faculty at what was their final pre-graduation social event.

The afternoon at Lauriston Castle, incidentally, was marked by that same freedom from both oppressive formality and unseemly high-jinks which constitutes the principal difference between British and USAnian gatherings of this sort. While the guests were being served excellent refreshments—alcoholic and otherwise—under colorful tents on the lawn and, alternately, admiring the exterior and interior splendors of this castle, which has recently become a public museum, and watching the maneuvers of the Highlanders on the lawn, they were joined by a flock of penguins which one of the members of the host committee had “invited” from the local zoo and set loose among the guests to everyone’s enjoyment.

Instead of making a visitor try to see the whole city in a single three-hour tour, as we had to

try to do in New York, the Scottish program provided for not less than seven alternative outings: 4 half-day and 3 whole-day tours, all carefully worked out to meet a wide variety of tastes and interests.

The whole-day tour we picked took us all over the County of Fife, including the ancient city of St. Andrews with its university and famous golf course where, unlike Danny Kaye, we were welcomed for lunch and, following a perfectly served meal, were given coffee and liqueurs in a glass-enclosed pavilion overlooking the links. Returning to town with plenty of leisurely stop-offs to photograph and inspect modern housing as well as ancient villages, our hosts had arranged for tea and other refreshments at Kellie Castle, a really formidable-looking old place, but, again, no phony restoration. Ancestral home of the Earl of Crawford, it is now occupied by the family of Sir Hew Lorimer, a sculptor friend of local architects; and inside we found a hospitable table spread for us amid flower arrangements and art treasures disposed in ways that happen only where generations of good taste have permeated the very walls.

On an excursion made with our personal hosts after the conference was over, we had a chance to taste the somewhat unexpected pleasures of an ordinary evening's pleasures of an Edinburgh architect, unrelated to a conference. On one of those long evenings that are characteristic of midsummer far north, we drove out along the seacoast to photograph ancient monuments and lush green villages in sunlight that shone to almost midnight. We dined at the equivalent of a country roadhouse, with the appropriate name of The Open Arms, solid and picturesque without but spacious, modern and accommodating within, where we dined sumptuously. Like all the commercial eating and drinking places we were taken to in Scotland, it was filled to capacity, with the best of food and drink flowing freely, yet, unlike such places in continental Europe, almost entirely patronized by local people, not a tourist in sight. We had stopped off en route for a drink in what I assumed from our host's casual comment would be just some roadside "pub." It turned out to be nothing less than "Grey Walls", in Gullana, one of the most stately of the late Sir Edwin Lutyens' "small, albeit dignified holiday

homes" (see page 94 of Weaver's book on Lutyens), whose present owner runs it as a cocktail lounge, serving players at a nearby golf course as well as passing motorists. There was nothing, however, to indicate, either in the well-groomed gardens sloping down to the sea or in its furnishings within, that it was no longer a private home.



Dean of the Scottish architects, beloved and respected by all, is Sir Frank Mears, son-in-law of Patrick Geddes, who resembles in manner and appearance, even to mustachio and spectacles, our own Robert D. Kohn. We called on Sir Frank and Lady Mears at their home at Inveresk, a tiny village about an hour from town, where they have one of those old, many-times remodeled houses that present a modest front flush with the sidewalk of a narrow village street but opening, in back, on a spacious walled garden of several acres. In his darkly panelled and flower-laden study Sir Frank was telling us about his work of restoring the Old Town of Edinburgh while at the same time, like his famous father-in-law, he continues to lead the up-hill fight for the acceptance

of modern concepts in community planning and housing in Scotland. Around the tea table, huge and laden (as we found all Scottish boards to be) with every sort of delectable food, the conversation ran to and fro in French and Hindustani as well as in Scottish and American accents, so that one wondered whether one had not wandered into a scene from Lewis Carroll or Bernard Shaw; while from the hostess, between passing out scones and honey right and left, came inquiries such as "how is our dear Lewis Mumford doing?" and "When is Clarence Stein coming to see us?"

In the meanwhile, some of us had rejoined a small group on the street outside the house, which we had noticed on arriving. They were waiting for the Queen to pass by, as she had, that afternoon been visiting an uncle of hers who lives nearby. Presently the Queen's Rolls rolled slowly down the lane and Elizabeth II flashed her prettiest smile at the little knot of beaming subjects. "Isn't she sweet?" murmured the usually impassive Scottish villagers. To which this reporter could only answer, "Aye, aye!"

These notes recounting the pleasures of attending an architects' conference in Britain are not to be construed as criticisms of our own way of doing things, arising from any subconscious Anglophilism on my part. We all have good times at our own conventions in our own ways, and I must agree with the editor of *The Architects' Journal* that, from the strictly professional point of view of attending a conference in order to increase one's technical knowledge by listening to papers carefully prepared by one's colleagues, this British conference may have fallen short. But it was a happy and festive occasion and they do do things somewhat differently over there.

What the visit taught me was that the traditional forms of the pomp and splendor can really be the most suitable framework on which to hang informal, easy-going entertainment; and that, while avoiding the extremes of either utter seriousness or uninhibited low comedy, hosts and guests alike can enjoy themselves in a manner compatible with the perhaps not wholly discarded idea that architects can behave like scholars and gentlemen.

The Plastic Ethic

By "Hubertus Junius"

VERILY, MY SON, thy tongue is like unto a sword and will protect thee from thine enemy in time of deep trouble.

If thine enemy creep into thy territory crying, "four percent," cringe not nor waste thy tongue on dull recrimination, but treat thine enemy as a brother and say of him, "The fee he asks is his estimate of his own worth; I would not have placed his value so low."

And if perchance he offers sketches free to thy valued client, then thy tongue shall ask in amazement, "What then are these

sketches worth that may be scattered like leaves in the wind and for which no man is asked to pay?"

These things thou may do, my son, without offense to thine honor, for he who places low value on himself cannot walk with those who have tasted the pride of accomplishment, and can claim no higher esteem from his fellowmen than he of himself professes.

Be thou of good will and give this man generously of thy pity. This in the presence of thy valued client.

Book III, pp. 28-9

The Design of Industrial Plants

By George B. Allison

An address before a meeting of the Institute of Industrial Plant Design, Los Angeles, Calif., February 20, 1953

WITH seven per cent of the world's population, this country produces forty per cent of the world's goods.

The revolutionary advance in American industry has been ascribed to intensively specialized study of its problems. You look through a microscope at a bit of matter and find that its component parts and

its structure are far different from what normally meets your eye; and that procedure is being constantly applied in all phases of industry. Through our great sciences, amazing strides have been made in abstract research from which comes application in the form of productivity. The principles of specialized study, if applied to the solution of

plant modernization problems, can similarly accomplish what this topic bravely calls "the best and most economical methods."

Carried on into the smaller industrial field, we find that the principle of making the best mouse trap in the world has been developed in instances to the point where demand far exceeds facilities for supply. American-made products are wanted, and wanted badly, all over the free world.

Western Industry Magazine has printed several articles recently having to do primarily with examples here on the West Coast. In most cases they are specific. they relate to a particular industry or operation and represent recent projects. And I've also looked over a book written fifteen years ago, in 1938, by George Nelson, about the famed industrial architect Albert Kahn of Detroit, whom I had the privilege of meeting one time, who did probably the most tremendous job to that date in building facilities for American industry. In one particular year he handled 19% of all architect-designed industrial buildings in the country; he handled work for Ford, Chrysler, General Motors and other big-scale industrial development projects. And this book

deals with our topic—technical procedures. It was said of Albert Kahn as follows: "He drilled into his organization the dictum that the client's analysis of the problem is the first move toward its solution," and systematically and unrelentingly endeavored thereafter to translate the client's purpose into every successive step in the creation of the building. Now, it's true he had good clients; and they were intelligent, and thus they shared both credit and responsibility for the superlative jobs he did; but we learn further that these big manufacturers customarily had certain rigorous demands; they wanted to deal with businessmen and they were suspicious of artists, as many of you are; they wanted fast work; they wanted no mistakes, and they wanted flexibility to provide for inevitable change; and to all this, they added the prime requirement of economy in first costs and minimum maintenance. This class of work was geared to American mass production, and in that light it should be qualified when compared with smaller operations.

And here is the summary of the technical procedures in Kahn's factory-construction programs. First,

functional design; the whole purpose of a factory building is to facilitate production; it should house the manufacturing equipment, the process machinery in such a manner as to enable that equipment to function most efficiently. To this end, the general scheme is all important, and it should provide straight-line activity; various departments for successive operations are located to effect direct production flow so that transportation and material handling will be minimized. There should be no crossing or retracing of production line, with consequent congestion, and to this is added provision for handling emergencies in case of a slow-down or a breakdown during the production process.

Second is flexibility; departmental layouts sufficiently elastic to permit re-arrangement resulting from changes in production methods and changes in departments without disorganizing the existing scheme. It is interesting to note here that most of these buildings had large-bay spacing, minimums of columns. Even though heavier framing resulted, space and volume were prime requisites. Clear ceiling heights were adequate for the work to be performed, and floors

and roofs strong enough to meet all present and foreseeable loading requirements.

Properly located utilities; elevators, stairs, lockers and toilet rooms located where they can best serve the purpose and not interfere with the flow of production—frequently located in mezzanines above the working-floor area. Adequate natural and artificial illumination, properly distributed, was a demand; and adequate ventilation and air movement sufficient for human needs and to meet special problems created by the manufacturing process.

Skillful design and efficient use of materials resulted in annual economies, both in initial and maintenance costs. This point bears careful scrutiny before your industrialist concludes to build the very cheapest kind of structure here in California.



Now, in addition to the functional design, equally important criteria dealt with businesslike execution. After the scheme was established, a preliminary cost estimate was developed sufficiently accurate to obviate extensive over-running of the manufacturer's budget. Under today's fluctuating

building market, this is particularly difficult to control, and it demands close collaboration of those who are in a position to know what they are talking about. The next factor was speed, because no manufacturer wanted to build until he had to; the work in its entirety from the preliminary-design stage to the turn-key job had to be carried out with dispatch. Complete and accurate contract documents; specifications and drawings and terms prepared in such detail and with sufficient care to provide an equal and proper basis for competitive bidding by responsible contractors and to minimize, if not eliminate, extras within the architect's control.

Here you notice that much of his work was handled on a *competitive* bidding basis. You gentlemen who decided on the package deal of design-plus-construction are not in a position to know what competition would have given you in the nature of final costs of your final project. As the architect, Albert Kahn furnished experienced advice on the selection of the contractors qualified to do the work; and while his work was not open in the way that public work has to be, yet it had a sufficiently broad base in the bidding stage to indi-

cate that it was the market value of the project that was listed in the construction contract—and not some open-end figure against which there was no actual basis for comparison.

And as a rule, any contractor who bid on Albert Kahn's work was qualified to handle the job, and this is a point of equal importance with the competitive approach. The building industry, like some other phases of American business, has a few fly-by-nighters . . . mostly in the sub-contract field, but the responsible general contractor as a rule does not become entangled with an irresponsible sub.

And that brings us to the construction phase of the operation, and here Kahn insisted on adequate supervision. During construction, there was extreme care in execution, close control of problems that arose during this phase in such a way as to expedite the work; and since many thousands of dollars were involved in the day-to-day use of these huge plants, strict compliance with completion schedules was usually required. Time *had* to be of the essence.

The comments about Albert Kahn were prepared 15 years ago. What about 1953?



TO GERRIT J. DE GELLEKE, F.A.I.A.
of Milwaukee, Wis.

THE EDWARD C. KEMPER AWARD FOR 1953

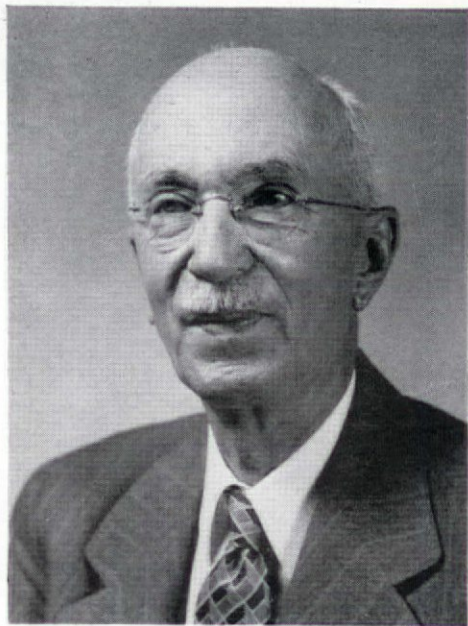
*Journal
of
The AIA*



FRANK R. CREEDON, engineer, of Washington, D. C., an able and widely experienced administrator with sympathetic understanding of the architects' professional problems

ELECTED
HONORARY MEMBERS
OF THE AMERICAN
INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

GURDON MONTAGUE BUTLER, educator and mining engineer, an active and dependable friend of the architectural profession over many years, particularly in his home state of Arizona



Industry *still* is a complex teamwork of men and machines. The economics of industrial building still command importance exceeded perhaps only by employee problems, for productivity is *still* the stern yardstick by which the success of industry is measured.

As before, the group of experts who establish the production flow, the process engineers, the production department, continually seek to streamline that flow. Techniques continue to change and therefore adaptability in the highest possible degree in the physical aspects of the plant is desired more than ever. An adaptable plant is easily converted from peace-time to war-time production, and is a more salable article when the time comes to sell.

Now, we are primarily discussing modernizing structures with floors, walls and roofs. And in these, we aim for adequate bay sizes, adequate height, and a clean, articulated floor plan. Then we anticipate facilities to minimize worker fatigue.

Literature on equipment and materials has informed us of the amazing results to be achieved, for instance, in the changing of the lighting within an industrial plant from a few footcandles at task

level to qualities which are comfortable and stimulating. We are told that carefully engineered ventilation, dust control, filtration of atmospheric pollution, all increase worker productivity. Not only the worker's eyes and his nose can be eased of the burden of fatigue, but likewise his other senses, his hearing, wear and tear on his feet and on his hands, and the surrounding temperatures which affect his bodily comfort.

Some large companies carry this principle of worker comfort far beyond minimums. Employee car parking is provided; and, where possible, pleasant landscaping schemes, trees, shrubs and lawns are developed. We find many companies provide cafeterias and top-quality rest-room facilities, and we are told that some organizations have gone so far as to supply in-plant recreational facilities for employees as an incentive to reduce personnel turnover. Of course, some have full-time medical staffs to care for workers. Safety codes must be rigidly observed, and the National Safety Council seeks to broaden its already wide field of activity. The safety engineer as a rule has an excellent basis for his recommendations. We have heard

much talk and seen striking evidence since 1938 about the effectiveness of proper color in buildings and structures; in my opinion, application of this principle varies widely, but it has pregnant possibilities. In a nutshell, the objective of the future industrial plant can be dreamed of as the "daytime home of the employee," to quote from *Western Industry Magazine*.



Now, in order to draw out discussion, I would respectfully propose that several hypothetical problems be placed before you here for us all to tear apart, and these are but a few of many which merit detailed consideration on any plant modernization or any new plant project.

First, is it better economy, in the long view, to—

- (a) try to rebuild or remodel your old plant;
- (b) leave it as it is but extend it by means of a modern up-to-date addition; or
- (c) tear down the shack, remove it, and start all over again from scratch?

Second, let's review details of lighting and ventilating your plant. We know that saw-tooth and monitor top-lighting and sky-

lights are expensive both in initial and in maintenance costs. Therefore, is it better economy, in the long view, in the lower-annual-cost point of view, to—

- (a) build saw-tooth skylights with fixed sash, supplemented by some artificial lighting, with a simple system of ventilation, or
- (b) use monitors instead of skylights because of their easier control of directional light at task level, or
- (c) use only vision strip windows at eye level to combat claustrophobia on the part of the worker, or
- (d) develop a windowless design, relying entirely on controlled artificial lighting and transfer the cost of that natural overhead lighting to installing a better ventilating system.

Third, from the point of view of the economist, what is the maximum percentage of total costs of annual plant production that should limit a dollar-capital outlay for plant building or plant modernization? Where is the dividing line between providing bare necessities and providing good working conditions, and how is this division related to annual production costs?

Fourth, your company's books

may list valuable units of equipment which are actually obsolete from a competitive point of view; therefore, they are negative producers when compared with newer units which would produce far more per annum. At what dividing line do these units become liabilities rather than assets?

Fifth, what is the maximum economic distance for an employee to walk from a working area to a toilet facility?

Sixth, in rapidly changing times, how far should you standardize and stockpile for replacement? And to what extent should modular design control your planning?

Case history of an attempt to serve the small-house field

Architect and/or Builder

By Talbot Wegg

FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SMALL HOUSE PLAN BUREAU

EXPERTS OPINE that as many as 90% of the nation's homes are built without benefit of architects. Whether the actual figure is somewhat more or less, the obvious preponderance has led the architects to seek some relation (Morganatic, if not legitimate) with the home builders. A cautious courtship is in progress which, the brass of The A.I.A. and N.A.H.B.

officially hope may lead to marriage and happiness ever after.

Many U.I.P. (or Un-Important Persons) in both camps are skeptical of the permanence of this high-level romance, since there are so few examples of lasting felicity on the local level where the success or failure of the noble experiment will be determined.

Although obvious, it may be

JOURNAL OF THE A. I. A.

well to restate that no such alliance can hope for permanence unless both parties derive a tangible and continuing benefit from it.

The architect who can not see potential self interest in association with the builder is either myopic or not very bright. But what about the builder? Whether he's right or whether he's wrong, the builder is likely to feel that he's been doing fine so far on his own, and the one sure consequence of any relationship with architects will be a touch where it hurts—in the pocketbook. Thus, the builder naturally tends to view any advances by the architect with at least suspicion, if not downright hostility.

Unless the average local builder can be convinced that association with architects is to his immediate, most selfish interest, all the worthy preachings of his national leaders will be wasted and the courtship will die a-borning. So, how can the builder be drawn into alliance with the architect, willingly, and perhaps even with enthusiasm?



What follows is an account, objective as one major participant can make it, of an association of local architects and builders over

a five-year period. It is a case history with, alas, an unhappy ending, but one which established an environment with possibilities of permanent felicity and one which flourished for several years.

The time is 1946. The locale, Seattle. The setting, an impending boom in residential construction, to be built under municipal ordinances one of which requires that all building plans shall identify their author and that authorship shall be limited to 1) owners, 2) licensed structural engineers and 3) licensed architects. (In few communities, do architects rejoice in such an initial advantage.)

As a practical matter, under this ordinance, builders had to turn to licensed architects for plans, if they were to build within the city limits. Tentatively, the Seattle Master Builders (local chapter of the N.A.H.B.) met with the Washington State Chapter of The A.I.A. to establish a *modus vivendi*. Out of these early meetings, the builders came to realize that the architects were not merely esthetic cake-frosters, and the architects were forced to admit that the builders were not bad Joes. Which is all to the good.

And thus it was not surprising that someone (whether architect or

builder is now immaterial) should propose a plan service where the Little Man or the Little Builder could buy good Architecture at a nominal price and the common-wealth could be advanced thereby. The hour was propitious for such a proposal. Many young architects, long on talent, short on reputation and cash, had just finished their stint for Uncle. The Master Builders had space in their office to house the service. A local bank, seeking mortgage loans, offered prize money for a small-house competition.

With the stage thus set, the Small House Plan Bureau opened for business under the administration of a seven-man board: four architects (one of whom was ex-officio chairman) and three builders.

The competition developed a portfolio of about fifty houses, complete with pretty perspective, working drawings, and specifications. For \$50 the public could buy good design, meeting City and F.H.A. requirements. Any necessary adjustments for site or other conditions were furnished on an hourly drafting rate. The \$50 was split down the middle, half to the architect, half to the Bureau, which paid the Builders for halftime serv-

ices of a competent secretary, rent, light, heat, and phone.

The whole operation was given generous news coverage at the start and, during the first few months, its income exceeded anticipations of the Board. If the public seemed to favor well rendered, unpremiated designs, and to ignore the prize winners, nevertheless they were buying architecture by licensed architects, and the corporate architect was pleased with the enterprise. Hundreds of prospective home owners visited the Builders' offices, who might otherwise not, and many built homes, and the corporate Builder was also pleased with the enterprise. If the case history could have been stopped at this point, it would have had a happy ending. But it didn't.

Not too many months passed before business began to dwindle off, and the Bureau was forced to put its fixed overhead on the cuff. It became discouragingly clear that civic spirit, quality merchandise, and bargain-counter prices were not enough. If the arduous, unselfish efforts of the architects and builders were not to be wasted, the public must be made more aware of its great opportunity. Publicity, of course, was the answer

and it was not difficult to obtain free space in the Sunday real-estate section of the local morning paper for a picture and blurb. This coup sustained the Bureau for a year, during which the sales graph spurted up on Mondays and Tuesdays, leveled off on Wednesdays, and sagged on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays.

By the year's end the Bureau had grossed about \$6,000, and was in the black again. The Builders were satisfied with the experiment and urged a continuation of the service. Their enthusiasm, however, was not matched by the architects, who had grossed about \$3,000 for about \$500,000 worth of construction, or six-tenths of one per cent. A substantial majority of the designers had received nothing for their labors and the best sellers among house plans were, alas, those which most closely approached the quaintsy-waintsy style, so dear to magazines devoted to Home and Mother.



However, the architects voted to give the Noble Experiment another year's whirl. More experienced (and perhaps cynical) they launched the second year with another \$1,000 competition, pre-ar-

ranged newspaper publicity to last the whole year, and even finagled a free book illustrating all houses in the Bureau's portfolio, on which the Bureau received sales royalties. The second year's business was good and exceeded, however slightly, five figures.

But the pattern duplicated that of the first year. The conventional, the mediocre houses sold best. Prize winners and any which showed unusual imagination only gathered dust on the shelves, and again the majority of architects labored gallantly—for nothing. Toward the end of that year there was rebellious muttering in the Chapter meetings. Not yet open mutiny, but the disaffection could hardly be ignored.

Although a third year's participation by the Chapter was grudgingly permitted, most architects boycotted the third competition, and the bulk of competitors, including most of the prize winners, were students who were forced to associate with a licensed architect in order that their plans could be sold by the Bureau. For the first half of the Bureau's third year, its operations were similar to previous years. Then, in the Spring, a national home magazine with circulation in the millions happened to

publish a Bureau-sponsored house in its fir, laurel, and rhododendron setting, with strong shadows and fat white clouds. The Bureau, its location, price of plans, etc., were mentioned. The consequences were almost overwhelming; in one month, more plans for this one house (pleasant but not remarkable) were sold than of all houses in the first half year. Orders rolled in from Pasadena, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Atlanta, and way points too numerous to mention. The Bureau was on the threshold of Big Business! While the Master Builders rejoiced in this windfall and regarded it as the first light of a beautiful new dawn, the A.I.A. Chapter saw it quite differently. It was a spark to ignite the full flame of long-standing dissatisfaction. They made it clear they wanted no part of a large-scale, cut-rate, competitive enterprise and ordered their representatives on the Board to restrict activity and publicity of the Bureau to the local scene.

Although its effect was not immediately apparent, this decision of the Chapter proved to be the Bureau's *coup de grace*. It lingered on fitfully for another year and finally succumbed, mourned by the builders, scorned by the architects.

No such experiment, carried out with diligence and good will, could fail to produce valuable lessons, regardless of its success or failure. Within its immediate objective, the Small House Plan Bureau demonstrated that:

1. The public will buy pretty good architecture, if offered at a nominal rate.

2. Virtue is not its own reward. Sales depend almost entirely on continuous, saturating publicity.

3. For the architect, such a service may give social satisfaction, but precious little monetary reward.

4. For the builder, it gives prestige, draws potential customers and creates an undeniable, though hard-to-measure market.

5. If the architects' enthusiasm for the project had matched that of the builders, it might have been continued indefinitely.

At first glance, these lessons would appear to justify the architects' decision to call it off. That is, if there was inherent in the enterprise no more than the modest objective of selling architects' house plans.

In retrospect that decision seems to this observer to have been unwise. For, regardless of motives or objectives, the Small House

Plan Bureau established exactly what The A.I.A. and N.A.H.B. have (with indifferent success, to date) been seeking, a friendly alliance of architects and builders. It generated strong bonds of respect between the local leaders of the two professions which, in time, might have been extended beyond the small-scale operation of plan sales into the main-line, large-scale operations of the builders, to the lasting benefit of all concerned.

There was an illuminating hint of what might be in the Bureau's last year of operation at a moment when the F.H.A. was trying to promote the construction of minimum-cost housing. Discussing this program in a Board meeting, the directors developed the idea of a competition among teams of architect-builder in which the talents of each would be merged as completely as those of, say, the Levitt organization. Ten architects, ten builders agreed to team up and try out the idea. Each team worked out, in private, the terms of its association without standardization, but it is believed most builders paid the architects a flat fee with additional royalties for repeats on the house as designed. The design process, in all cases, was collabora-

tive, the builder taking an active part in drafting specifications, advising on use of economical and available materials and construction methods, the architect determining the form, the plan, the esthetic design. In construction, naturally, the roles were reversed, with the builder in the saddle, the architect in the advisory role. The houses thus produced were an immediate success, and no builder will deny that sales were influenced by the fact that Joseph Doakes, A.I.A. was proclaimed as architect.

Here was what might be likened to a commando raid on the beach-head which The A.I.A. hopes to take and hold. Whether it could have been reached by more direct or easier means is beyond the scope of this observer's speculation. Let it stand that, by means of a devious and not altogether satisfactory device, the objective was reached and briefly held. As a consequence of the Small House Plan Bureau's demise, no further collaborative projects have been attempted.

As of mid-1953, the local chapters of A.I.A. and N.A.H.B. have committees on collaboration which meet apathetically from time to time, somewhat in the spirit of divorced persons whose spiritual

bond is broken but whose temporal relations must be continued.

And meanwhile 90% of the na-

tion's homes continue to be built without benefit of architects.

Which is where we came in.

Calendar

July 11-August 24: Creative Art Workshop and conducted field tour for the study of art treasures of France and Italy, under the direction of Andre Racz.

September 18-19: Great Lakes Regional Council Meeting and Seminar, Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich.

September 21-27: 3rd U.I.A. Congress, Lisbon, Portugal. Details obtainable from Union Internationale des Architectes, 15 Quai Malaquais, Paris.

September 29-October 2: National Electrical Industries Show, 69th Regiment Armory, New York, N. Y.

October 4-25: Exhibition of "Contemporary Swiss Architecture," assembled by Alfred Roth, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Mass.

October 6-9: International Churchmans Exposition, Chicago, Coliseum, Chicago, Ill.

October 14-16: Convention of the Architects Society of Ohio, with the Eastern Ohio Chapter, A.I.A., as host, Youngstown, Ohio.

October 14-17: Convention of the California Council of Architects, Coronado Hotel, Coronado, San Diego, Calif.

News from the Educational Field

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, College of Architecture and Design, announces the winner of the George G. Booth Traveling Fellowship Competition for 1953 as Edward Warren Hammarskjold, of Ann Arbor. The winner plans to travel in England and Europe.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA announces the broadening of its graduate programs in community planning through the organization of an interdepartmental graduate fac-

ulty in planning. From 1927 the University has offered courses in city and town planning. In 1948 there was established a graduate program in planning. This program, now broadened, will lead to the degree Master of Science in Community Planning, and will require a minimum of six years of post-secondary study. It will be open not only to graduates in architecture but to those of other disciplines as well.

Books & Bulletins

AN APPROACH TO URBAN PLANNING. Edited by Gerald Breese and Dorothy E. Whiteman. 160 pp. 5¼" x 7¾". Princeton: 1953: Princeton University Press. \$2

The fact that this volume is sponsored by Princeton University's Bureau of Urban Research is evidence of the authority of the contributors of various chapters: Hugh R. Pomeroy, Norman Williams, Jr., Charles K. Agle, C. McKim Norton, and Walter H. Blucher.

THE WHITE HOUSE: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL LIST. Compiled by Ann Duncan Brown. 146 pp. 7⅞" x 10¾". Washington: 1953: The Library of Congress (Available from Card Division) 95¢

A mimeographed record of the references to the White House that are to be found in the Library of Congress.

PLANNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS. By N. L. Engelhardt, N. L. Engelhardt, Jr., and Stanton Leggett. 280 pp. 8¾" x 11½". New York: 1953: F. W. Dodge Corp. \$12.50

The name of Engelhardt is well known among architects who have

laid particular stress on school building design. These educational consultants have necessarily gained a wide knowledge of what has worked out well, and vice versa, in the recent rapid development of school design. Here are the concise conclusions of their experience and observation.

ARCHITECTURAL LETTERING FOR PLANS AND ORNAMENTAL DESIGN. By Arthur E. Burke and Truman C. Buss. 200 pp. 8" x 10¾". New York: 1953: American Technical Society. \$6

Considering the number of books published in recent years on lettering, it would seem that our designers should be thoroughly trained—an assumption that is not borne out by what one sees. Whether dwelling upon the Roman letter or some of our radical modern derivatives, the authors accent particularly the need for as much thoughtful study of the spacing between letters as the forms of the letters themselves.

SEVEN ARTS. Edited by Fernando Puma. 224 pp. 4⅛" x 7⅞". New York: 1953: Permabooks. 50¢

One of the Permabooks, presenting, with 48 pages of reproductions, comment from such authorities as

Thomas Mann, Frank Lloyd Wright, J. B. Priestley, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and others.

STABILIZING CONSTRUCTION: THE RECORD AND POTENTIAL. By Miles L. Colean and Robinson Newcomb. 358 pp. 6" x 9". New York: 1952: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. \$6

Practically the first serious attempt to analyze the complex field of construction with the aim of learning something of the cycle of activity and whether its hills and valleys might be ironed out. A "must" for anyone who would gain more than a superficial knowledge of how the building industry works.

A HISTORY OF DOLL HOUSES. By Flora Gill Jacobs. 336 pp. 6½" x 9¾". New York: 1953: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$7.50

Of interest to architects chiefly in the parallelism between this field of the collector and the architect's activity in making small models.

THE MODERN CITY. By Svend Riemer. 490 pp. 5½" x 8¼". New York: 1952: Prentice-Hall, Inc. \$7.35

The Professor of Sociology at the University of California writes this studious review of urban sociology. The book lays a sound groundwork for those who

intend to devote themselves professionally to some phase of urban administration or urban planning.

THEORY OF BEAUTY. By Harold Osborne. 228 pp. 5¾" x 8½". New York: 1953: Philosophical Library, Inc. \$4.75

You may believe that tastes so differ from man to man that there is no empirical uniformity among the things which inspire emotions of which they approve, but the author will convince you in his carefully reasoned exploration of esthetics that "a work of art is an enduring possibility . . . of a specific set of sensory impressions which is characterized by the quality we call beauty." The author is concerned with painting, sculpture and music, in the last named of which he is particularly convincing.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF BALTIMORE. By Richard P. Howland and Eleanor P. Spencer. 170 pp. 8½" x 11". Baltimore: 1953: Johns Hopkins Press. \$7.50

A particularly sympathetic gathering together of Baltimore's rich architectural heritage, with its too little-known work of Maximilien Godefroy, Benjamin Latrobe, Robert Mills, Richard Upjohn, Stanford White. Dr. Howland is Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts at Johns Hopkins.

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT: PROBLEMS AND PRACTICES. 542 pp. \$7.50

THE FUTURE OF CITIES AND URBAN REDEVELOPMENT. 784 pp. \$9

Edited by Coleman Woodbury. 6¾" x 9½". Chicago: 1953: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Coleman Woodbury, Norton Professor of Regional Planning at Harvard, has collected and edited studies by leading authorities covering the broad question of urban redevelopment. The first volume treats of the planning and adminis-

tration of local redevelopment programs; the second volume presents the underlying factors in urban growth and the objectives that might be realized over the next half century.

DEVELOPMENT INDEX. By K. Lönberg-Holm and C. Theodore Larson. 8½" x 11". Ann Arbor: 1953: Univ. of Michigan. \$1.50

"A proposed pattern for organizing and facilitating the flow of information needed by man in furthering his own development"—if you know what we mean.



Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative



HOSPITAL DESIGN IN BRAZIL

BY JARBAS B. KARMAN, São Paulo, Brazil

Portions of a letter written to Isadore Rosenfield

IT SEEMS TO ME that the public interest in hospitals is beginning to increase here. I learned this through the enthusiastic response we have got from an intensive course on Hospital Planning offered by the Institute of Architects of Brazil, São Paulo Branch, from April 13-18.

Inspired in the courses it was my privilege to attend while in your country, I suggested to the Institute of Architects that we should

offer this one-week intensive course. We had the cooperation of forty of our best-known hospital people: doctors, administrators, architects and nurses. We were planning to house some 100 people, and it so happened that 500 showed up. We had persons from all over Brazil and even a few from some other South American countries.

It was my responsibility, as director of the course, to organize and supervise it. I would be lost

JULY, 1953

if it weren't for all the information, publications and blanks I brought back to Brazil with me. I worked very hard, but I think the results were very much worth while. We hope to offer such a course every year, and maybe for the next one we will be able to count with your cooperation and that of a few other Americans.

We launched during this course a competition among student teams, composed of one student each of medicine, architecture, hospital administration, and engineering. We already gathered the huge amount of \$10,000 to be given out as prizes for the winners. The problem proposed was the planning of a small hospital.

IS OURS A PROFESSION?

BY C. GODFREY POGGI, Elizabeth, New Jersey

WE TAKE PRIDE in the belief that the practice of architecture is a profession, and so it should be. Furthermore, our ethics, like those of all other professions, should be carefully nurtured. We feel that we are on a par with the professions of medicine, law, and dentistry; but are we so acting?

Let's look at the record.

We never hear of a doctor ringing a door bell and saying, "I understand there is about to be a birth in this family, and I am accordingly at your service."

Compare this with what occurs when it becomes known that someone has in mind building. He is immediately besieged by a rabble of architects, morning, noon and night. Does that compare favorably with the ethics of the doctor who modestly waits to be chosen and called in?

What about the attitude of the doctors one toward another. But few doctors will take on a case when it is known that another physician has already been called in. Compare that with the grabbing, pushing, and hauling of the architects, even when it is well-known that an architect has already been consulted and has been giving his time and attention to the problem at issue.

There was a time when an architect would refuse to design an addition to a building previously designed by another architect. In short, it was considered only proper and right that the original architect should have the honor of completing his building.

What has become of that phase of our ethics?

Then again, do physicians sell their instruments of service? Com-

pare that with the damage to our ethics caused by the antics of the plan factories.

The general disregard of our ethics is now so rampant as to become alarming. The general public is already well aware of this condition and has in general placed our calling "in the category of business." Unless we completely reform and return to first principles

we may as well discard the idea that we are a profession, and be honest about it.

We may profess to be capable of planning, designing, etc., but the ordinary merchant also professes to "know his stuff." Any so-called profession lacking a potent code of ethics is not a profession. It is merely a business and no one can make it anything else.

Awards

TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY ENTRIES were sent in by students from eighteen architectural schools in the B.A.I.D. competition for a municipal library. First prize (\$200) was awarded to Joseph D'Amelio of Pratt Institute; second prize (\$100) to Eugene Rawls, Jr., of Georgia Tech; third prize to Heinz E. Zobel of Washington University, St. Louis. Honorable mentions to: R. Schwartz of Pratt; J. Thornton and G. Knowles of Texas Tech; and L. S. Higgins of University of Illinois. The Jury: Louis Justement, F.A.I.A., Louis I. Kahn, F.A.I.A., John C. B. Moore, F.A.I.A., R. B. O'Connor, F.A.I.A., Alfred Shaw, F.A.I.A., Henry R. Shepley, F.A.I.A., Charles Beeston, Harmon H. Goldstone, Morris Ketchum, F.A.I.A., L. Bancel LaFarge, Mor-

ris Lapidus, Jedd S. Reisner, Zareh Sourian, and James E. Bryan, assistant director of Newark Public Library. A brochure with illustrations of the winning designs and the report of the Jury will be issued by the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design.

THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE of New York has announced the awards in the annual Birch Burdette Long Memorial Prize Competition: the Prize (\$200) to T. Tripp Russell; Honorable Mentions to George C. Rudolph, and also to Robert E. Schwartz, winner of last year's Prize. The Jury: Chester B. Price, Chairman, Max Abramovitz, F.A.I.A., Arthur L. Guptill, Robert S. Hutchins, F.A.I.A., and Francis Keally, F.A.I.A.

The Editor's Asides

ONE HEARS many uncertain guesses hazarded as to where a certain convention of The Institute was held, and when. Memories among Institute members are apparently no better than the national average. Our convention cities prior to the seventy-fifth are listed in the next paragraph, with the numbers indicating how many conventions were held in each city. Following that is a list of conventions from the seventy-fifth to date.

New York (10), Philadelphia (4), Boston (4), Cincinnati (3), Chicago (6), Washington, D. C. (25), Nashville (3), St. Louis (2), Detroit (2), New Orleans (2); one convention was held in each of the following: Baltimore, Providence and Newport, Albany, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, San Francisco, Minneapolis, San Antonio, Milwaukee, Williamsburg, Louisville and Yosemite.

1943 (75th) Cincinnati

1944 (76th) Indianapolis

1945 (77th) Atlantic City

1946 (78th) Miami Beach

1947 (79th) Grand Rapids

1948 (80th) Salt Lake City

1949 (81st) Houston

1950 (82nd) Washington, D. C.

1951 (83rd) Chicago

1952 (84th) New York

1953 (85th) Seattle

DEAN SIDNEY W. LITTLE, University of Oregon, has started something which will bear watching. On his recent sabbatical visit abroad he took a two-eye camera and gathered in 500 stereo slides in color. These will serve as a pilot study of visual education in the history of architecture. With projection techniques for stereo developing rapidly, students seated in a classroom can see the architectural monuments of the past in the round and in full color. Perhaps it is too easy—no incentive to save one's shekels, work a passage on a cattle boat, buy a second-hand bicycle and see distant architecture through one's own eyes. What it will probably do in the elimination of the sketchbook is all too clear.

A STATEMENT by the Committee of One Hundred on the Federal City makes sense to many of us who are concerned with a city's traffic problems: A subcommittee, composed of men thoroughly familiar with these problems, con-

cludes that neither the District's proposals nor any others dealing with traffic alone will ever solve them. It maintains that until the city as a whole is treated as a single living organism, and its parts planned in proper balance with one another, its traffic problems can be expected to get steadily worse and their solution more hopelessly expensive.

KENTILE'S PRESIDENT, Mr. David O'D Kennedy, is convinced that the next significant development in house building will be a pronounced trend toward the two-story house.

"It took over 50 years for the American family to tire of the three-story, 10-room, excessively gabled and over-ornamented dwelling loosely described as Victorian.

"Immediately after World War II, all the big suburban developers, who set the style of mass house-building, erected one-story ranch-style houses, and the public bought them. But a ranch-style house must spread over more ground than the average income can afford. Its construction requires twice as much perimeter, foundation basement and roof as a two-story house of equal floor space."

The next step, according to Mr.

Kennedy's reasoning, was smaller rooms, also limited privacy. Then came a shift to the split-level type, and home seekers are buying them as fast as they can be put up. But split-level calls for more ground space and more costly framing and foundation than a regular two-story design, and is almost impossible to convert into a two-apartment job—a popular hedge against the future. There is much more documentation of Mr. Kennedy's theory, but it concludes with the conviction that we are on the way back to the two-story house for the suburbs.



THESE NOTES are being written before the Coronation, and my present uneasiness may be one of those worries about something which never happens. Nevertheless, a whole series of international incidents may result from the fact that visitors from this side of the Atlantic are going to have trouble abroad with their electric shavers. Our flat-pin plug calling for 110-120 volts is going to run up against the English receptacle of different pin spacing, offering current of 230 volts. With such difficulties this age of mechanization takes control of our once-placid lives.

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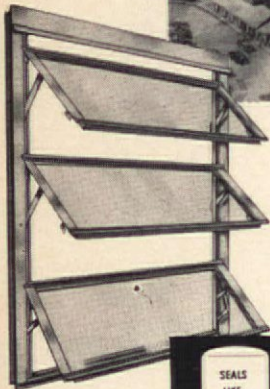
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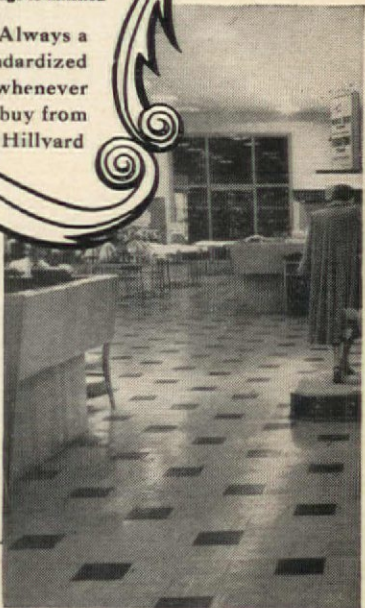
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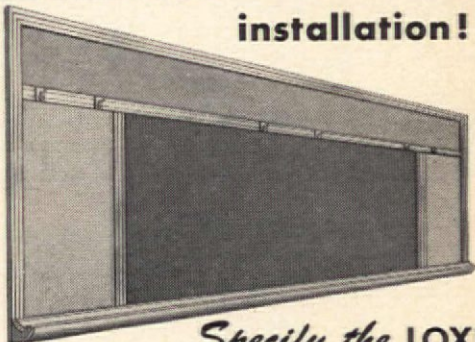
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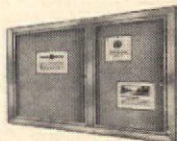
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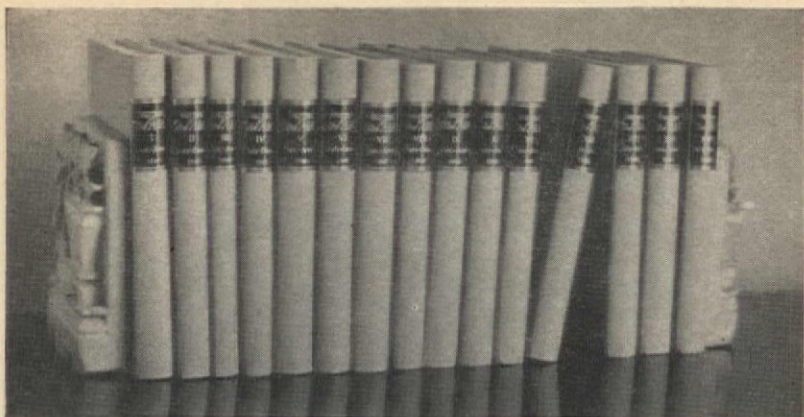
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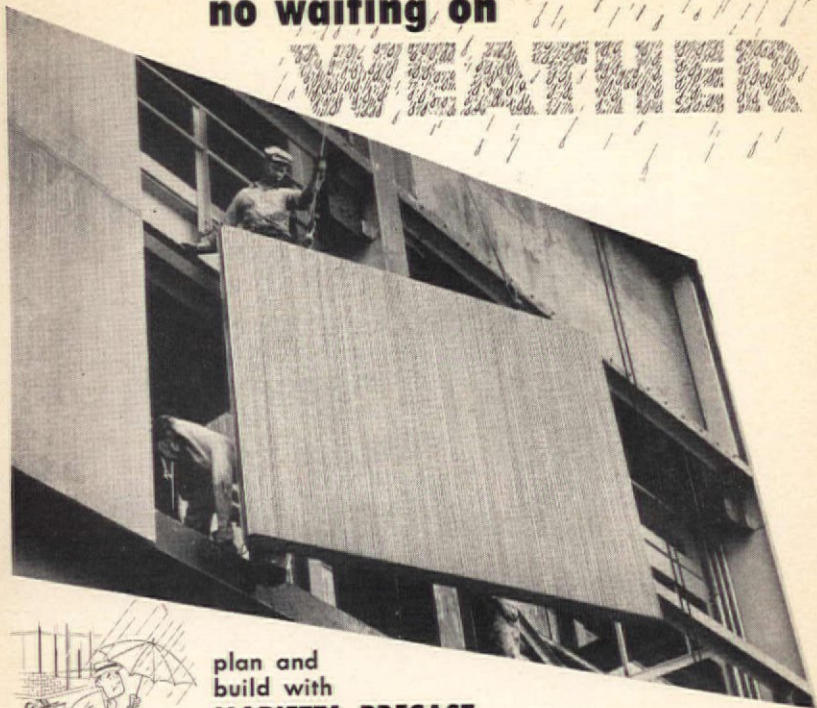
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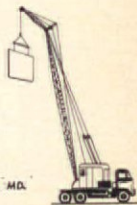
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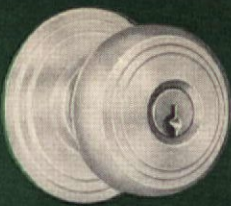
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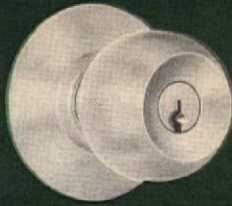
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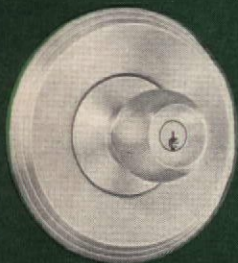


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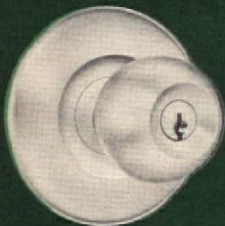


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