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WEEKLY BULLETIN

Journal of The A. I. A.

MICHIGAN SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS AUG 6 1947

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Volume 21

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 5, 1947

No. 31

New York Plans for Future Construction

MAX H. FOLEY, PRESIDENT OF NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS
ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR YEARS AHEAD

A comprehensive labor-management program to stimulate a high level of home building and commercial construction has been launched in Metropolitan New York as a means of forestalling any possible business recession. Sponsored by the New York Building Congress, in conjunction with the Building & Construction Trades Council, A. F. of L., and the Building Trades Employers Association, the campaign is designed to stabilize building costs, increase labor productivity and efficiency and to dispel the "wait and see" attitude of investors who are holding off construction work in anticipation of lower prices.

Through the joint efforts of the three groups, representing every phase of the building industry, it is hoped to demonstrate in New York what may be successfully accomplished in other cities, thereby setting a pattern for strengthening the national economy.

In announcing the program, Max H. Foley, A.I.A., president of the Building Congress and chairman of the sponsoring committee, revealed that a new and unprecedented pledge of cooperation and higher productivity had been given management by leaders of the

building trades unions. Howard McSpedon, president of the Building & Construction Trades Council, A.F. of L., said the pledge of cooperation will be effective for all types of building—homes, commercial structures and institutional buildings.

The pledge reads:

"Our trades stand willing and ready to join with our employers and all others in our industry to go ahead with all jobs and help bring about a reduction in building costs by pledging again as our agreements now provide for until 1950:

"1—No limitation on a man's output, because we have always agreed a

fair day's work for a fair day's wage.

"2—No strikes or stoppages for agreement or jurisdictional disputes, because all our agreements provide for mediation or arbitration of such disputes.

"3—We will man all jobs with sufficient labor and we expect cooperation not only of our employer, but also the awarding authorities in scheduling their jobs so that we can plan with some degree of certainty.

"4—We again emphasize the right of the employer to hire or discharge any man he sees fit and, as our present agreements and laws provide, we will discipline any member who violates our agreement in this respect."

"This forthright pledge by the leaders of the trade unions will mean higher productivity, fewer work stoppages and smoother flow of on-site construction," Mr. Foley declared. "It will bring about consequent reduction in building costs once the full import of the pledge is accepted by the individual craftsman.

"This, we are confident, will be forthcoming when it is clearly understood that only through increased man-hour production and a conscientious day's work for a fair day's pay, can we hope to stimulate a high rate of construction."

Pointing out that dissatisfaction in the construction industry with the rate of recovery progress is based principally

on the smallness of current volume in proportion to the potential demand, Thomas Holden, president of the F. W. Dodge Corporation and also a member of the sponsoring group, declared

"According to a recent survey, about a billion and a quarter dollars' worth of new construction is presently needed in Metropolitan New York alone. Of this amount, some \$175,000,000 is said to be actually on architects' drawing boards ready to start.

"The construction market is now in process of price and cost adjustment. Material price adjustment is being effected by increased production and supply. Most materials today are reasonably priced at wholesale levels, as compared with the general rise in living costs and most basic commodities.

"Best prospect for cost reduction lies in the elimination of the many excess costs that arose in the period of acute shortages. Neither builders nor building labor could develop full efficiency at a time of unusual procurement difficulties, irregular deliveries, frequent stopping and restarting of projects, stretched-out completion time. These inefficiencies and excess costs are now tending to disappear.

"To regain investors' confidence and to make substantial headway toward catching up with construction shortages, the industry should convince investors and the public: (1) that construction costs cannot be expected to return to prewar

SEE FOLEY—Page 2



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FOLEY—Continued from page 1

levels; (2) that construction labor is prepared to deliver a full day's work for a day's pay; and (3) that builders will soon be prepared to make lump-sum bids and to give assurances of job-completion within reasonable periods of time."

In hailing the cooperative attitude expressed by union leaders, Mr. Foley called on management for ever-increasing efficiency and immediate abandonment of the "loose ways" of wartime construction "when speed rather than money was the thing that counted." He also demanded an end to the practice of raiding rival contractors' jobs with offers of overtime and bonuses to attract workmen.

In a strong warning to suppliers and manufacturers of building materials and equipment against rising costs, he urged their full cooperation in the construction campaign, and expressed the hope that "there will be a determined effort on the part of the suppliers of materials and equipment to stabilize prices while there are still buyers."

Mr. Foley asserted that he saw no possibility of a drastic reduction in building costs in the near future. At the present time, he emphasized, it is more important to stabilize costs. "It is to be hoped," he said, "that we can stabilize at a somewhat lower level at which a builder can give an owner a cost estimate on a building operation with a remarkable expectation that it will not be exceeded."

"We must, through the cooperation of labor and management, convince investors that now is the time to actually start construction on the many projects on the planning boards. In that way, the construction industry can take up the slack if the general level of business declines and do much to forestall a serious depression by providing a high level of employment."

The impetus for the concerted effort on the part of the building industry was provided by Francis Cardinal Spellman, who, in a speech at a New York Building Congress luncheon on May 27, announced that the Archdiocese would expend \$25,000,000 in the construction of institutional buildings. At that time, Cardinal Spellman issued a direct appeal for a general increase in building. He declared that "many people feel it imprudent to make commitments for capital expenditures because of rising costs of both labor and materials, and as a result a great number of projects, involving hundreds of millions of dollars, have been abandoned or postponed. I believe if this policy is continued and extended it can lead only to the stalling of the wheels of our domestic economy, resulting in stagnation and depression . . . To delay longer or retrench will not alone impede prosperity, but invite inflation, deflation, stagnation and defeat."

In the face of this challenge, leaders of the three major organizations in the construction industry in New York formed a representative voluntary committee to follow through on Cardinal Spellman's appeal.

Members of the committee sponsoring the program are:

Max H. Foley, of the firm of Voorhees,

Walker, Foley & Smith, architects, and president of the N. Y. Building Congress, chairman;

Howard McSpedon, president of the Building & Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, A.F. & L.; Carl Brandt, vice-president of the George A. Fuller Company, and president of the Building Trades Employers Association;

C. George Dandrow, treasurer and director of the N. Y. Building Congress and vice-president of the Johns-Manville Sales Corp.;

Thomas Holden, president of the F. W. Dodge Corp. and former president of the N. Y. Building Congress;

Thomas A. Kelly, consultant, Archdiocese of New York;

John J. Brennan, secretary, Building & Construction Trades Council.

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SEES IMPETUS TO CONSTRUCTION

"Development of the nation which depends on construction can proceed without artificial governmental restrictions now that the Housing and Rent Act of 1947 has become law." H. E. Foreman, Managing Director of The Associated General Contractors of America said today.

Commenting on the significance to the construction industry and to the nation of the act, he said that "the transition back to peacetime production of needed goods and services will be materially aided by the removal of federal limitations on industrial and commercial construction." He added:

"The provisions of this law mean that construction, with the exception of amusement and recreational projects, can now go ahead without restriction. Work can begin on many projects vital to the reconversion of American industry and business to peacetime production, a change-over that is by no means complete as yet.

"In our judgment, the freeing of industrial and commercial construction from federal control will not interfere with necessary residential construction. Housing, which never could be considered independently from other types of needed construction, will go ahead with other work that is necessary for the development of the Nation.

"Postwar plant expansion programs and plans for new commercial construction that will provide additional employment opportunities can now be undertaken without regard to an arbitrary federal quota on the amount of new construction work that would be approved. Needed community facilities such as schools, hospitals, and new public utility structures can be built without seeking authorization. It seems certain that residential construction, as well as industry and business in general, will benefit by the return to a free market in which we can get on with reconversion at top speed.

"The construction industry is in a posi-

tion to do all types of vitally needed projects more quickly, more efficiently, and more economically now that governmental restrictions and controls have been substantially removed."

IMPROVED OUTLOOK

The removal of Federal controls over all types of building except places of amusement and recreation will result in a substantial increase in the volume of construction, including housing for sale and for rent, according to Tyler S. Rogers, president of the Producers' Council.

"Production of materials will be increased as a result of Presidential approval of the decontrol bill because a balanced production of all types and grades of materials and equipment now is possible," Rogers said.

"In addition, manufacturers and other branches of the industry now will be able to chart their future course without being restricted by the confusion and uncertainty which have prevailed throughout the period of control.

"Substitute materials should be available in ample quantity to replace any products which may temporarily be in short supply, although the additional volume of industrial and commercial building which will result from decontrol will not take any substantial quantity of the less plentiful materials essential in home building.

"The removal of rent controls over new residential construction is certain to stimulate a larger volume of badly needed rental housing for veterans. While there probably will be some increase in the number of larger homes and rental units built in the immediate future, each net unit will free an existing home for veterans.

"Prices of building materials which have remained virtually unchanged during the last three months are expected to decline gradually as full and free competition comes into play."

HOTEL TO HAVE NO CORRIDORS

The Panama Canal is going to have a rival as a tourist attraction. It's a 300-room hotel, 12 stories high and with nary a corridor for stay-out-lates to stumble down.

Designed by New York Architects, Edward D. Stone Associates for a hill overlooking Panama City the novel hostelry will be only as wide as its one-room suites.

Each suite will comprise a 14 by 16-foot room, an eight-foot-square dressing room, bath, and a balcony terrace 16 by 8 feet. Entrance to each suite will be from a second balcony, on which an elevator will open.

Instead of windows and walls, many rooms will have jalousies. (These are shutters with horizontal slats, designed to let air and light in, keep rain out.) The hotel will have features that are not unique, like a restaurant, night club, gymnasium and shopping arcade.

It'll be 1948 before the first guests ride up to their cantilever balconies in the El Panama Hotel.

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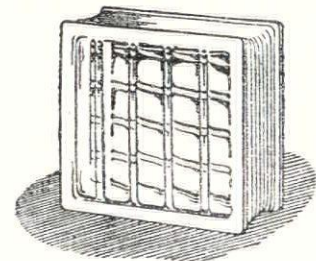
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General Requirements:

Applications must be made on an official blank which may be obtained at the offices of this Commission, 16th Floor, Water Board Building, 735 Randolph Street, Detroit 26, Michigan, on or before one week prior to the date of the examination. All applicants must be of good health, habits and moral character.

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All examinations will be public, free and competitive to all citizens of the United States who conform to the specific limitations as provided. Applicants will be admitted to the written test only upon presentation of the official notice obtained through acceptance of application.

In addition to the written test, this examination will include an evaluation of experience and training based on investigation and/or personal interview. Recency of experience may be considered in the evaluation. Medical and/or physical examination may be required of all candidates who are successful in the other subjects of the examinations.

Subjects and Weights of Examination

1. Tests in knowledge of subject (written test) 50%
2. Practical or academic education and training 30%
3. Character, reputation, veracity, physical condition, etc. 10%
4. Experience in this or similar work 10%
5. *Military service (1 to 15%)

*Persons with legal residence of two years in Detroit are entitled to added points based on length and character of their service in the Armed Forces of the United States in time of war.

Duties Statement:

Under general direction, to plan, coordinate and supervise the work of the several design sections of a city planning division engaged in preparing and administering a master plan and preparing landscape design plans and other similar activities; and to perform related work as required.

Typical Examples of Work Performed:

In accordance with established policies, subject to review of results, but with considerable responsibility for procedures, progress, adequacy, and technical competency of the work:

Planning, supervising and coordinating the work of the landscape design, master plan, current planning, and other similar sections each of which has a defined sphere of activity and separate staffs with supervision, by:

Assigning work, establishing objectives and schedules for each section; establishing standard policies and methods common to all sections; explaining to section heads the nature and scope of assignments, possible lines of approach, order of procedure and phases that must be currently emphasized; conferring with section heads as problems arise and the work progresses, suggesting sources of information, seeing that duplication and conflict is avoided, that plans prepared by the various sections are properly coordinated and that they progress so as to be of greatest mutual benefit to each section requiring the work of others; reviewing the planning assignments, studies and reports in process and on completion for adequacy and conformity to policies and established standards; comparing performances with schedules; evaluating and reporting on performance of subordinates; approving requisition of materials and supplies for the division; reporting on progress of the sections as the work requires; shifting subordinates between design sections as necessary; recommending additions to or reduction of force; taking minor disciplinary actions giving talks on the nature and progress of the master plan; conferring with public officials, business and civic groups on various aspects of the work of the division.

Minimum Entrance Qualifications:

Education equivalent to graduation from a university of recognized standing with specialization in fields relating to city planning design; reasonable experience in administering the preparation of design plans, preferably in preparing a master plan for a large municipality, considerable familiarity with management principles and practices;

a reasonable understanding of economic, sociological and physical sciences and of engineering and/or architectural practices as they apply to city planning; considerable ability to analyze management problems, to direct and coordinate several activities, and to secure tangible results on schedule; demonstrated ability to supervise design work; reasonable ability to write reports; good command of English; considerable tact and diplomacy in dealing with subordinates and others; integrity; initiative and resourcefulness in carrying out work programs; no disabling impairments of vision, hearing, speech, or members.

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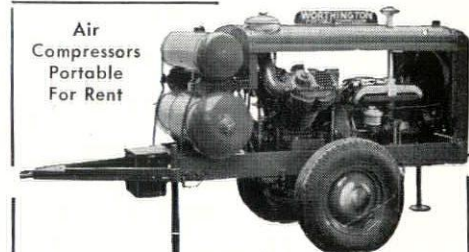
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WEEKLY



BULLETIN

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUGUST 12, 1947

No. 32

"LIFE" JOINS THE "EXPERTS"

Building Outlook Letter of American Builder

"Life" in its issue of June 9 emerges from its preoccupation with the Middle Ages and editorially attacks the building industry. (Page 36) In their efforts to build up a startling case against the industry, certain facts which are generally true have been twisted to support their case and they do injury to innocent and even to the most forward-looking elements of the building industry. They succeed in adding fuel to the propaganda condemning private enterprise housing inspired by public-housers and spread by such left-wing commentators, columnists and other apartment living self-styled housing experts as Drew Pearson, Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., Melvyn Douglas, Walter Winchell, Samuel Grafton, Ed Leahy, Tom Stokes, et al.

A realistic view of the situation will recognize the fact that prices of almost every commodity, (and certainly government) are up over pre-war and also over last year. "Life," for instance, costs 15c on newsstands against 10c last year. A Chevrolet coupe delivered in 1941 at \$808 now costs \$1,403, an increase of 73%. A General Motors official foresees no reduction of prices within the next year. No one attacks the automobile industry as being inefficient. High profits by builders and distributors of building materials are condemned, but we have seen nothing in the press nor heard any complaint on the air of the flagrant racketeering widely practiced in auto circles that finds new cars selling in used car establishments at outlandish prices. Nor have we seen production miracles by auto manufacturers. If the automobile industry attains its goal of 5,000,000 vehicles this year they will produce less vehicles than in 1929. No miracle of production in industry has yet appeared that will lift production to astronomical totals.

Residential Starts Exceed 1929

Housing starts of 1,000,700 dwelling

units in 1946 are not comparable with other peak years because they included 329,800 starts on temporary and conversion units. The latter, it should be noted diverted materials and labor which would otherwise have gone into permanent dwelling units. The starts of 670,900 permanent dwelling units, however, put 1946 among the best residential building years in history and 25% above the 509,000 units started in 1929.

"Life's" opening onslaught states that "In the nation at large 13% fewer houses were started than in March a year ago." Although March starts of permanent units were 13% less than last year, first quarter starts were only 1.8% less than 1946. Preliminary Bureau of Labor Statistics data for April and May indicate that these months will exceed last year, so data for five months will show an increase over last year. Not as good as hoped for, but much better than could be expected considering the vicious tongue-lashing directed at the industry from all quarters. Progress is uneven however. Starts in the South and West show an increase over a year ago, cities in the North and East, cursed by freakish weather, show a decrease. The explanation of the maintaining of an excellent overall number of starts this year is the fact that a critical housing shortage, worse than the Twenties, continues to exist. Most of us are conscious of the fact that there are many factors in the situation that would seem to rule out for the indefinite future any return to the prices prevailing prior to World War II.

In a similar situation the record home building activity of the Twenties was achieved at a price level of 60% to 75% greater than before World War I. This is not to condone gray market activities now decreasingly prevalent, nor the unjust profits of the opportunists, but an indication that many people discount the possibility of an extreme price break.

"Life" Infers Building Industry is Antiquated

"Life" sums up "ancient" building practices in one sentence . . . "—the ancient home-builder simply assembled an appropriate amount of straw, mud, poles or ice cubes." "Life" states that, "In the U. S. the practice is for the home-seeker to get on a bus and take a long ride out to the suburbs. There he finds several hundred crowded and almost identical ready-made houses scattered about an ex-cornfield." Yet "Life" criticizes the industry's traditional lack of standardization.

As examples of this type of operator, Levitt, Kaiser and Byrne are cited. "Life" states that "Their profits may not be the contractor's conventional 25%, but there is absolutely no evidence that Messrs. Levitt, Kaiser, Byrne, et al are starving to death." The facts will not bear out "Life's" assertion that the contractor's profit is a conventional 25%. Ten per cent or less is usual.

It is our impression, from having seen their projects and talked with them, that Messrs. Levitt, Kaiser, Byrne and many others, are making herculean efforts to provide livable low-cost housing by as honest and determined efforts as have ever been made. On terms of \$50 or \$60 a month, our Research Staff is impressed with the fact that these terms come close to the median weekly wages of manufacturing which are now \$47.28 per week, as compared with \$23.19 per week in 1939. How close would have wages of \$23.19 per week come to buying housing in a metropolitan district in 1939? "Life" disparages the so-called bonus of an automatic washing machine offered by Levitt, Kaiser's garage and the steel frame construction and radiant heating of the Byre organization. Homes offered by these organizations also include complete kitchen equipment, which was not customary pre-depression.

Are Material Prices Out of Line?

"Life" makes this broad indictment of manufacturers: "The producers of cement, hardware, and other materials, the only industrialized group in the building business, are still just as monopolistic and non-competitive as they ever were.

See "Life"—Page 2

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Building materials are at present costing an average of 86% over 1939. They were too high then." Since when has 1939 been accepted as a "normal" year? In building, it was a depression year, as in many other industries.

The 1947 index of building material prices is largely influenced by the high price of lumber. Few building items have increased as much as the general level of wholesale prices:

COMMODITY PRICES
 Wholesale Prices U. S. Dept. of Labor
 1926 = 100

Paint & Paint

	April 1947	Average 1939	Gain (points)
Combined Index	147.7	77.1	70.6
Composite Building Materials	178.8	90.5	88.3
Cement	114.0	91.3	22.7
Plumbing & Heating Equipment	118.2	79.2	39.0
Brick and Tile Materials	134.5	91.4	43.1
Lumber	273.5	93.2	180.3

Is it fair to indict all producers of building materials because one or two producers are seemingly out of line?

"Life" allots building labor a full share of blame, and devotes a special article (Pages 102-107) to the subject. We feel that builders are doing everything possible to cope with labor demands and restrictive practices, particularly since builders take any losses incurred in disposing of overpriced housing.

More "Experting" Advocated

As a solution to the housing problem "Life" proposes, "Nearly every town has bankers, a real estate board, a building council, a Chamber of Commerce. Why don't their leaders call a meeting, pool their thinking, iron out all the wrinkles they can in their own local housing problem and get something done?"

Would this be any different than action by the Federal Government with the inevitable losses to taxpayers?

What "Life" fails to realize is that building products, like almost all other consumers' goods, move through a national network of distribution channels, and are subject to the same competitive forces. The influence of the community cannot begin until the materials are delivered on building sites. Can communities assume the role of contractor and do a better job? Under "Life's" plan would there not be staunch resistance by local property owners to new housing which might decrease the value of their existing properties?

The housing industry has been tampered with by a procession of well meaning but ineffectual theorists: Jimmy Moffett, Nathan Straus, Dorothy and Sam Rosenman, Phil Klutznick, Chester Bowles, "Miracle Man" Wyatt, and Frank Creedon. It is amazing that the industry has survived this.

Despite Adverse Start, 1947 Shows Great Promise

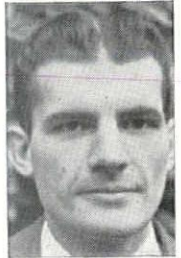
According to the latest estimates of the Construction Division of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the current rate of starts, in spite of adverse influences, is indicative of 800,000 residential units to be started this year, with the possibility that the rate of starts in the latter part of the year will approach 1,000,000. Those who share in this market necessarily will use aggressive selling all along the line.

Everyone has a job to do.

ARCHITECT OF THE MONTH

H. S. Brown

The house plan by the "architect" of the month" now on display in the Civic Center for Home Planners on the ninth floor of the Ernst Kern Co. was designed by Sanborn Brown, A.I.A., graduate of Architect at the University of Michigan and a practicing architect in Detroit since 1931.



H. S. BROWN

The house, which is adaptable to either modern or ranch style, is all on one floor with no basement. The plan is "H"-shaped, enclosing two-yard areas, one opening off the living area as a patio for outdoor living and the other an enclosed service yard or play yard for children.

The exterior walls are a combination of split stone and vertical boards or battens. The roof, which is of heavy cedar shakes, has a wide overhanging eave, with exposed rafter ends, and eliminates the direct rays of the sun in the hot summer months. Heating is of radiant or panel type.

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PARKER ADVANCES GIBSON

The Parker Rust Proof Company, Detroit, Michigan, announces the promotion of Dr. R. C. Gibson from the position of Director of Research to that of Technical Director. Dr. Gibson is in complete charge of all laboratory, development, and pilot plant operations.



Dr. Grant C. Bailey, formerly with the Research Department of the Phillips Petroleum Company, Bartlesville, Okla., has been appointed Manager of the Research Department and Mr. Gaillard W. Dell, formerly

with Bohn Aluminum and Brass Company, Detroit, has also joined the research staff of the Parker Rust Proof Company.

RE CEMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Henry R. Luce, Editor-in-Chief
LIFE MAGAZINE
9 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:
We have read with interest the article on housing and the editorial "How Do We Get Housed?" in the June 9 issue of *LIFE*, which includes the following numbered paragraphs:

"(2) The producers of cement, hardware and other materials, the only industrialized group in the building business, are still just as monopolistic and noncompetitive as they ever were. Building materials are at present costing an average of 86% over 1939. They were too high then."

"(3) There seems to have been little if any improvement since the days when Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover discovered that manufacturers were keeping open stock on 139 sizes of paint brushes and 19,238 sizes of valves and pipe fittings . . ."

The first sentence in paragraph 2 refers specifically to cement. Accordingly there is a natural assumption or inference that the balance of paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 also apply specifically to cement. Such assumption or inference is erroneous.

For cement prices we refer you to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics which uses 1926 as a base, which converts the prices to index numbers and whose latest available data are for the first quarter of 1947 as follows:

	Index Number
	Cement
1926	100
1939	91.3
1st Quarter 1947	110.2

The foregoing data show that during the first quarter of 1947 the delivered price of cement (which includes increases in freight rates) is 18.9 points or 20.7% above the 1939 figure. The data also show that the 1939 price of cement, which you infer is high, actually is 8.7% below the government's 1926 base figure. These facts regarding cement are at variance with your inference regarding the large increase of 86% above 1939 and your statement that "they were too high then."

Your paragraph 2 says that cement and other building materials "are just as monopolistic and noncompetitive as they ever were." In the two notable cases concerning cement that have been adjudicated and that involved charges or inferences such as you mention, the defendant cement companies were vindicated in the U. S. Supreme Court decision of 1925—268 U. S. 588—and again more recently by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals at Chicago, September 20, 1946—157 Fed. (2d) 533.

Your paragraph 3 refers to the standardization initiated by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover and the lack of improvement since then. Cement was and still is so standardized that the American Standards Association (which Mr. Hoover stimulated) selected cement as its Standard Number 1. Previously and currently all portland cement conforms to the standard specifications of the United States Government and of the American Society for Testing Materials.

I would be interested in your views regarding the foregoing and in any corrections you may publish regarding this in a subsequent issue of *LIFE*.

Universal Atlas Cement Co.
Yours very truly,
/s/ M. A. Berns
Publicity Manager

A.I.A. OPPOSES HOUSING PLAN

The American Institute of Architects opposes the President's Reorganization Plan No. 3 which would consolidate all Federal housing activities into one agency, according to a statement filed yesterday with the Senate Banking and Currency Committee by Edmund R. Purves, Director of Public and Professional Relations.

Mr. Purves pointed out that the Institute favors the establishment of a Federal housing council to coordinate the governmental agencies dealing with housing matters but feels that the Council should be the directing organization in the determination of national housing policies and that it should not be made subordinate to any single individual.

"A study of Reorganization Plan No. 3 leads us to believe that the Plan is not consistent with the foregoing policy. An inference may be drawn from the vague wording of the Plan that the new Housing and Home Finance Administrator may set himself up as a dictator of the housing policies of the country, and that the Council may be subordinate to the Administrator," Mr. Purves said. "It appears to us that the wording lends itself to the carrying out of any policy which the Administrator might cause the Council to pursue.

"It is our belief that a document so vaguely expressed as Reorganization Plan No. 3 will not necessarily support the true intent and true purpose of a coordinating Housing Council. The possible flexibility of interpretation inherent in the Plan is such as to make it undesirable.

"We would prefer that any plan for the coordinating of housing programs of the Federal government be clear and unequivocal in meaning. The duties of the various officials and the functions of any over-all housing agency, should be defined and limited in an unmistakable manner. We fail to find the desirable clarity in the Plan as written.

"For the foregoing reasons, we advo-

cate the favorable consideration of House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 which calls for the rejection of the Plan."

MACKINAC POST GOES TO HOTEL OPERATOR

Gov. Kim Sigler has appointed James F. Cable as resident commissioner of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission to succeed W. F. Doyle, whose term has expired.

The new commissioner is a native of Mackinac Island, and with his brother, Gail Cable, owns and operates the Lakeview Hotel.

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TRAFFIC CONGESTION COSTS NEW YORK \$500,000,000 ANNUALLY, SAYS SENATOR

Traffic congestion costs New York City half-a-billion dollars each year, estimates New York State Senator Thomas C. Desmond. "That's more than enough to meet the annual subway deficit, finance adequate airports, buy some new school buildings, give the teachers a decent salary, or provide substantial relief for Mr. Taxpayer," Sen. Desmond declared in a recent article.

He compared the New York City motorist to a ballplayer who has been caught in a nighmarish triple play: "he cannot park—but no additional parking lots or garages have been provided. Private garage and lot operators have been provided. Private garage and lot operators have raised their rates 20 to 30 per cent."

Drastic Action Needed

Unless drastic action is taken soon, the

senator pointed out, "our current parking problem will seem like that of a small upstate village."

One recommendation for untangling New York's traffic snarl came from ex-mayor Fiorello La Guardia. He proposed rimming the city with parking lots. Commuters would drive their cars to these spots and then transfer to public transit vehicles.

Challenge to Traffic Experts

New York is not the only city with a perplexing traffic situation according to a recent survey by Robert Mitchell, vice-president of the Institute of Traffic Engineers.

Of 199 cities polled, disclosed Mr. Mitchell, "all of them are worried about the traffic problem."

He said that when auto production swings into high gear, conditions will get worse.

"Off-street parking facilities must be provided and more people must use street cars and trackless trolleys," Mitchell emphasized.

AMERICAN MIRACLE, the story of war construction around the world, by Van Rensselaer Sill. The Odyssey Press, New York, \$4.00.

This book tells the amazing story of America's gigantic construction achievements during the last war and of the people who performed them. For the most part, these were the "little" people, the millions of workers whose skill and toil and sweat made victory possible. This book is their story, here adequately told for the first time. It is a record of achievement that taxes belief; but it is true and it should give us courage for the tasks of today and sure confidence in the future of America.

The great drama of the world conflict commanded and held attention; but behind it and in it the scenes of a no less stirring drama were being enacted, of which most people were seldom aware. Therefore, the feats of construction described in this book will be a revelation to most Americans. The American worker completed a construction program of such incredible size that it tipped the scales of war in our favor. This was the "American Miracle."

The area of American construction was the world itself. Roads in Asia, Arabia, Alaska, to mention only a few, cut through icebound reaches of forbidding terrain or jungle forests and miasmatic swamps, the work frequently prosecuted within range of enemy gun and bomb, made possible the transportation of supplies and ammunition. Airfields spotted over the world, in all latitudes and nearly all longitudes, added to our striking power and remain evidence of the ingenuity and purpose of countless unnamed construction groups of engineers, architects, builders, and simple workmen, all united in a huge and powerful team for defense and for offense.

Enormous housing projects—complete cities in themselves—factories, shipyards, storage depots, and all the other facilities needed for creating the sinews of war were thrown up in days, when years would ordinarily have been used to complete them. Speed was essential—they had to be made quickly; materials were scarce—substitutes were found. The complete story is the greatest demonstration in history of knowledge and the determination to use it for a common cause.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Are you remodeling schools or planning to build new ones this year?

A pamphlet, "Dear Mr. Architect," has been written by school librarians to give you some of their on-the-spot suggestions for school library rooms. It is not concerned with detailed floor plans, but with provision for good library service. If you would like copies of this pamphlet, you may obtain them by writing Louise F. Rees, School Library Consultant, State of Michigan, Lansing.

The State Library also has a small file of school library floor plans which are available for your use.

The school library consultant and others of the staff will be glad to talk with you or with school boards and superintendents about school libraries or in any way possible, give service with their problems.

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Volume 21

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, August 19, 1947

No. 33

ROBERT MOSES AS ARCHITECTURAL CRITIC

New York Councilman, Stanley M. Isaacs, writes this letter to the Herald Tribune.

Your Sunday magazine, "This Week," included, as you describe it "a blistering attack on modern design" by our "peppery Park Commissioner." After mentioning the Gracie Mansion, Commissioner Moses adds: "The view to the north and west is obscured by two of the most hideous waterfront structures ever inflicted on a city by a combination of architectural conceit and official bad taste. One houses part of a municipal asphalt plant and the other a waterfront sanitation dump. Neither is honestly functional. Both are an affront to a primarily residential neighborhood. Obviously, the men who put them there had no regard for the Gracie Mansion, the surroundings and the view from the river."

It seems only fair to those who planned these structures to mention the important fact, which Commissioner Moses preferred to omit, that there were located at this point on the waterfront for a generation or two a decrepit and insanitary dump of the Department of Sanitation and a noisy asphalt plant, an eyesore in the neighborhood, which belched forth smoke, fumes and rock dust whenever it was operated. To put it mildly, neither of these city structures was free from noxious odors.

As President of the Borough of Manhattan, the problem was under my control. Recognizing that the neighborhood was becoming more and more desirable for residential purposes, I decided to replace the old asphalt plant with a new and attractive structure, soundproof and air-conditioned; and the old dump with a new building, the first riverfront plant of its kind, designed to load the scows under cover, to drench their contents with water before they moved out into the stream, and in that way to overcome the varied nuisances created by most of the then existing waterfront dumps.

Under the supervision of Walter Binger, Commissioner of Borough Works, the structures were planned in our own office from the engineering viewpoint — the dump, of course in co-operation with the Department of Sanitation. Mr. Harvey Stevenson, a well known architect, was engaged to design this structure and Messrs. Kahn and Jacobs equally distinguished, were engaged to design the exterior of the asphalt plant. Despite Commissioner Moses' assertion to the contrary, both buildings are truly functional

in design. In both cases I kept cost in mind because I knew only too well the financial condition of the city.

It was essential to continue both of these plants in this location for practical reasons which need not be detailed here. I believe today both buildings add to the attractiveness of the neighborhood and Commissioner Moses' strictures are unjustified. Fortunately, your article included a picture of the asphalt plant labeled hideous by Mr. Moses, and I leave it to your readers and to your editorial staff to judge between us. Incidentally, the Museum of Modern Art included it, in their exhibit held a few years ago, among the handsomest structures of the decade.

I defy any one to name a more attractive garbage-disposal plant anywhere in the city—or one better designed from the point of view of efficiency and, still more, from the point of view of a complete safeguarding of the neighborhood from the odors and general unpleasantness of the prior method of ridding the city of waste. I am sorry that your article could not include a picture of that structure as well, so that you and your readers could judge between Commissioner Moses' conventional ideas and the products of two sound, modern architects. Frankly, I am proud of the fact that my office was responsible for the design and construction of both of these buildings.

Incidentally, the planning of these structures and the concentration of the truck route to both on Ninety-first Street (not a residential block) was the immediate cause of the sale of the block south

of the asphalt plant for improvement with apartments of most attractive design, from which the city receives substantial taxes. The re-planning of the neighborhood, I believe, was one of the reasons for an award to me by the Fine Arts Federation, of which I am very proud. Possibly these facts can be considered a defense against Commissioner Moses' attack.

FAMOUS ARCHITECT MAKES COMPARISONS

In a letter to the Boston Herald, Royal Barry Wills, famous architect and home designer hits the nail on the head.

Who said the building costs were high? "I," said the butcher. "My 50-cent beefsteaks are only selling for \$1.15."

"I," said the baker. "My 25-cent cakes are only selling for 50 cents."

"I," said the shirt-maker. "My 98-cent shirts are only selling for \$2.95."

"I," said the carriage-maker. "My \$700 automobiles are only listing for \$1600."

After all, you might as well be fair about it. Building costs are relatively no higher than anything else.

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**HALLIDAY VISITING
 BROTHER IN ENGLAND**

John W. Halliday, electrical engineer, since 1920 with Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers, Inc., has just sailed with his wife, from Montreal, aboard the S. S. Empress of Canada, for a three-months' visit with his brother William in England.

Before sailing, a transatlantic telephone conversation enabled the brothers to hear each other's voices for the first time since 1930, when John stopped in England on his return from Russia, where the Kahn organization designed buildings valued at half a billion dollars, and where he lectured to Russian architects and engineers on American engineering methods.

The brother, William R. Halliday, recently retired British Government official, had been decorated with the Order of the British Empire, for outstanding work with the War Preparations Commission, following World War I.

John first came to the United States in 1910. He is registered as an engineer in the State of Michigan, a member of The Engineering Society of Detroit, Army Ordnance Association, Society of Professional Engineers, and Detroit Electrical Association.

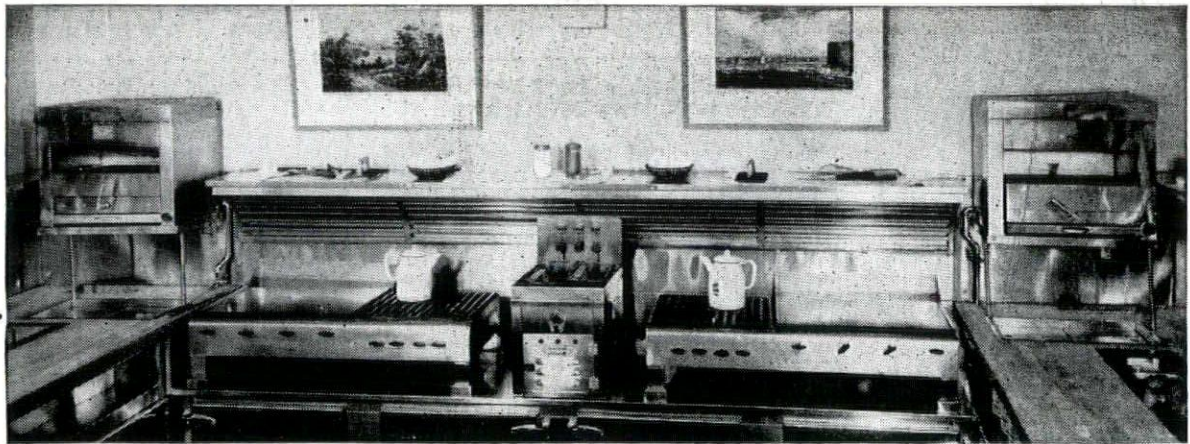
The Hallidays expect to return to their St. Clair Shores home in September.

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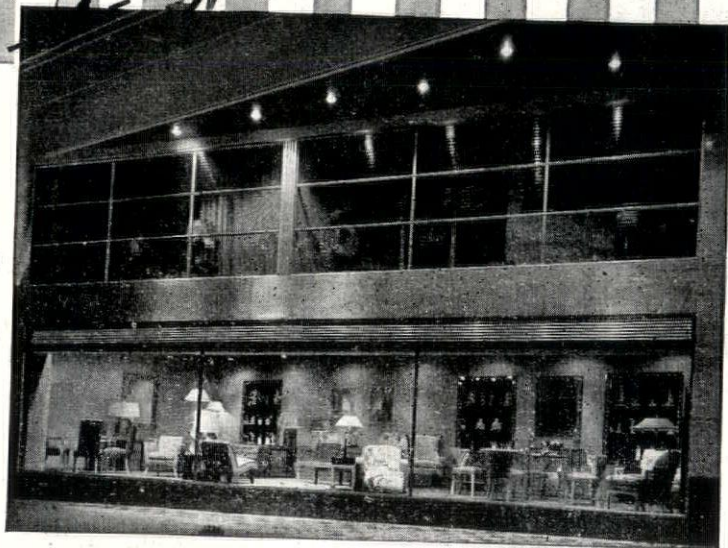
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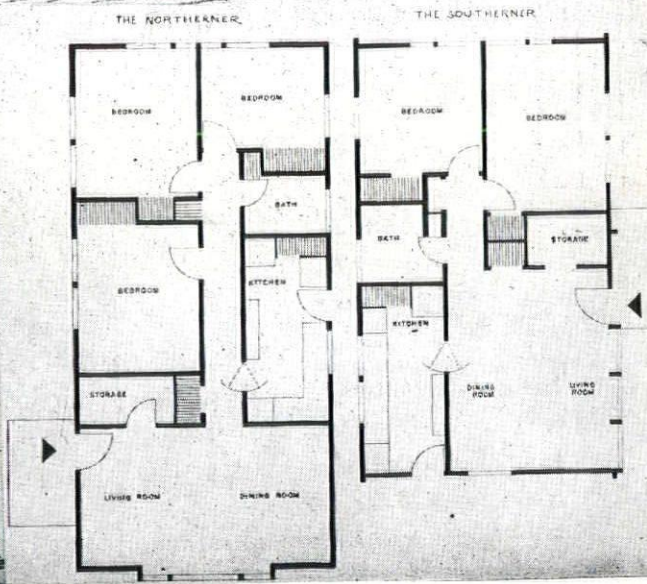
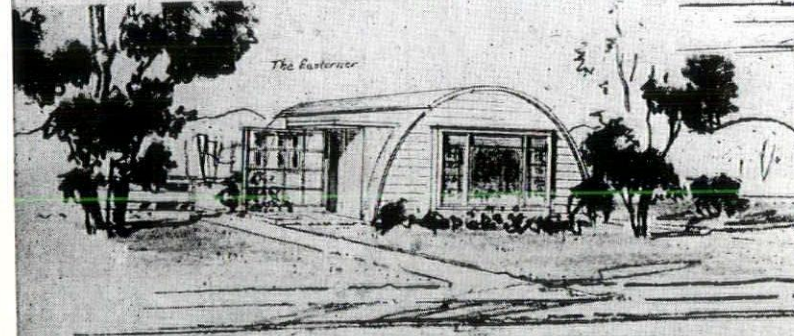
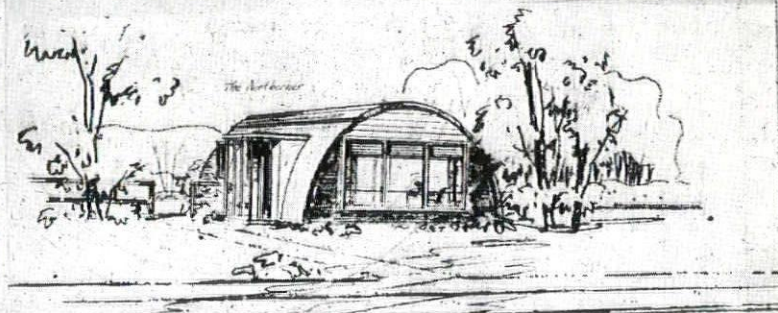
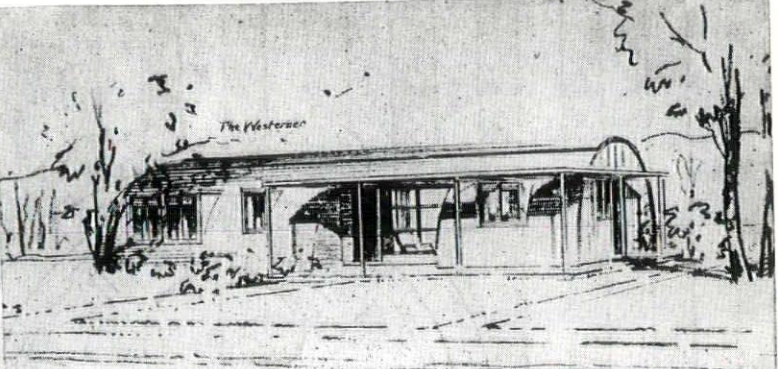
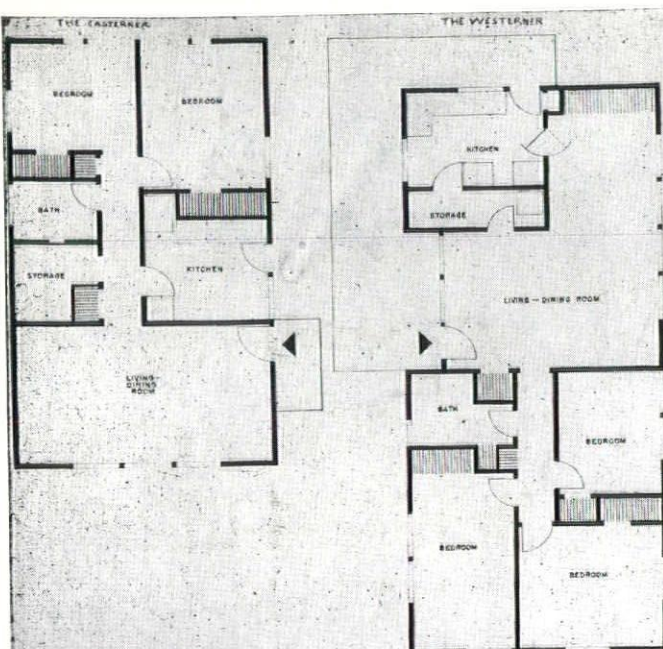
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LONDON LETTERS

Bulletin:

I am glad you received the photographs and I will be sending you the perspective of the Pressed Steel plant in a day or so. This matter got overlooked in the shuffle.

Mr. and Mrs. Frantz and their two delightful children arrived in England and I have had the pleasure of showing them the sights and having them to my home for dinner. At the moment they are on a little sketching tour but expect to be back over this weekend. I hope that the Simpsons, Stantons, and Saarinens give us the honour of a visit as I would like to see them all.

I am sure your little "convention" at Mackinac will be a wonderful affair and I certainly would like to be able to attend although I am afraid I would make a poor showing as a feature speaker.

Mrs. Crane arrives home today on the "America" and I will be glad to see her as she has been away three months. She has been most lavishly entertained wherever she has been and has had a good time and I am only sorry I couldn't have been along.

Thanks for sending me the extra copies of the "National Architect" showing my offices and I am glad you like them.

I always like hearing from you so write me again soon.—C. Howard Crane, London, Eng.

Bulletin:

Here I am in the land of my forefathers and drinking a certain amount of tea in spite of the rationing and the Boston Tea Party.

I have not starved yet but have to be careful and though I never drink beer

and spirits in the Detroit area, here if hungry I do go into the Elephant and Castle or White Horse to look at the old beams, tables, cheese and beer, and feel so refreshed afterwards.

Had a placid journey on the Queen Elizabeth.

Have not had time to visit Howard Crane yet, social life keeps me busy and I stay in so many friends' homes that when I wake in the morning I don't know which home I am in.

Have seen some glorious *modern* pre-war churches and feel very humbled.

—Lewis W. Simpson.

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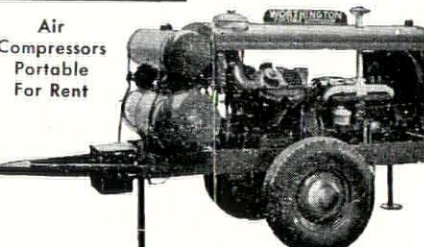
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ELLINGTON APPOINTED
 In a letter signed by Gov. Kim Sigler Harold S. Ellington, member of the Detroit firm of Harley, Ellington & Day, Architects and Engineers, Inc., has learned of his appointment to the newly-formed Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, for a one-year term.
 The Detroit Commission, which was created by the Michigan Planning Commission shortly before that body became defunct July 1, was established to develop a long-range planning program in all of Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties, and Augusta, Salem, Superior and Ypsilanti townships in Washtenaw county.
 Ellington is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Engineering Society of Detroit, having served as president of the latter organization.

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WEEKLY

BULLETIN

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, D. C.



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Volume 21

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, AUG. 26, 1947

No. 34

PLANNING MAN'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A STATEMENT by LOUIS JUSTEMENT, F.A.I.A.

Perhaps the most important qualification for the successful city or community planner is his ability to combine in suitable proportions two essentially opposite characteristics: boldness and self-restraint. The need for self-restraint arises from the fact that the average individual desires freedom of choice, of self-expression, and chafes at unnecessary restrictions. On the other hand, as the scope of planning is increased freedom of choice is frequently restricted. One or two houses, good or bad, do not make a neighborhood; mediocrity in an individual house can, therefore, be accepted more readily than the dreary monotony of some of our newer planned communities.

Are we to conclude, then, that large-scale planning of housing projects, neighborhoods and cities is inherently undesirable because it tends to repress individuality, variety and creative ability? This is an over-simplification of the problem that would lead us right back to the methods we have used in the past—methods that resulted in an heritage of ugliness, squalor, blight and inefficiency that has become the despair of all those who are interested in city planning, architecture, housing and municipal economics.

During the past three decades we have seen a vast extension of zoning regulations. These have had some value in arresting some of the bad planning practices of the past but they are, at best, feeble devices for building the city of tomorrow. Even the most well-intentioned regulation may produce results that are very far from those intended by the code-writer. I believe that a more hopeful approach can be made by placing a greater emphasis on cooperation and by placing less reliance on restrictive regulations.

How shall we secure such effective cooperation? It is here that the other characteristic of the successful city planner comes into play. I believe that our plans must be sufficiently bold to stir the imagination of others and create in them the desire to collaborate. An able city



LOUIS JUSTEMENT, F.A.I.A.
Washington, D. C.

planner will avoid details as he would the plague, except to the extent that an understanding of the details enables him to develop an adequate comprehensive plan. He must try to develop, to simplify and to dramatize the principal features of the plan so that they can be understood by the people. But those who under-

stand will, in many cases, want to do more than merely help in realizing another person's plan they will want to help in the development as well as in the realization of the plan. This is a desire that should not be frustrated; it should, on the contrary, be stimulated, for the city must be something more than the materialization of a good plan imposed on a docile community by a clever planner. The city we are attempting to build—or to rebuild—should result from the conscious striving of an entire community.

In many phases of our American civilization we have allowed the obvious advantages of consolidation and bigness to outweigh the less obvious advantages of small-scale operations that permit trial and error and a multiplicity of solutions—some good, some bad. Must we, necessarily, choose between the two? Is it not possible that we should deliberately devise a procedure that facilitates large-scale planning for those features—and only those features—that require a unified approach; while, simultaneously, facilitating decentralized planning and a maximum variety of solutions where variety is permissible. It is perhaps time that we, as planners, should learn to plan our work so that it will stimulate the creative ability of the individual where this is possible and yet stimulate the spirit of cooperation and collaboration where this is necessary. The gregarious and yet individualistic modern man will not be happy if one-half of his nature is thwarted for the benefit of the other.

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GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

Kenneth C. Black, A.I.A. Regional Director for the Great Lakes District, has announced a preliminary program for the Great Lakes District Seminars which are to be held in Dayton, Ohio, on October 3rd and 4th. There are to be four separate sessions and the presidents of each of the state associations will act as presiding officers.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM**GREAT LAKES DISTRICT SEMINARS
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
Dayton, Ohio, October 3rd and 4th, 1947
*Headquarters—VanCleve Hotel****FRIDAY, October 3, 1947.**

- Seminar on THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF RETAIL TRADE CENTERS
Presiding Officer, John F. Suppes, President Architects Society of Ohio
- 9:30 A.M. The Effect of Retail Distribution on the City Plan.
Speaker, Kenneth C. Welch, Vice President Grand Rapids Store Equipment Co.
- 10:15 A.M. Designing the Specialty Shop.
Speaker, Morris Ketchum, Jr., of the firm of Ketchum, Gina & Sharp
- 11:00 A.M. Lighting Techniques in Retail Stores.
Speaker, C. M. Cutler, Store Lighting Division, Nela Park Laboratories
- 11:45 A.M. Discussion

FRIDAY, October 3, 1947.

- Seminar on URBAN PLANNING
Presiding Officer, Merritt Harrison, President Indiana Society of Architects
- 2:00 P.M. The Architect and Urban Planning.
Speaker to be announced.
- 2:45 P.M. Present Status of Enabling Legislation on Urban Planning in States of the Great Lakes District.
Speaker, Walter Blucher, Executive Director American Society of Planning Officials.
- 3:30 P.M. Relationship of Housing to Urban Redevelopment.
Speaker, Sherwood L. Reeder, Executive Secretary Citizen's Planning Association of Cincinnati.
- 4:15 P.M. Discussion

FRIDAY, October 3, 1947.

- 6:30 P.M. Banquet
Presiding Officer, A. N. Langius, President Michigan Society of Architects
Toastmaster, Roger Allen, Past President Michigan Society of Architects
Speaker, Douglas Orr, President, A.I.A., Subject, The Present Program and Policies of The American Institute of Architects.

SATURDAY, October 4, 1947.

- Seminar on CONTEMPORARY RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE
Presiding Officer, Fred H. Elswick, President, Kentucky Chapter
- 9:30 A.M. Planning the Contemporary House.
Speaker, Alden B. Dow, Architect
- 10:30 A.M. The Solar House.
Speaker, George Fred Keck, Architect
- 11:30 A.M. Discussion
- 12:30 P.M. Seminar Adjourns
- *Hotel reservation cards will be sent to all architects in the Great Lakes District about three weeks prior to the date of the seminars.

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Kenneth Black, in planning a two-day conference of architects in the Great Lakes District, announces that Ralph Carnahan, of Dayton, will lead the Committee on Local Arrangements.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING MAGAZINE invites qualified architects in the United States to submit recent examples of their residential work for publication in a new editorial series of "Homes America Wants."

\$500.00 will be paid the architect for each house submitted and published. At least one house is to be shown each month in a continuing program to encourage better residential architecture.

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CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Members of the Governing and Advisory Boards of The Associated General Contractors of America have adopted the following statement:

It is our considered judgment that:

1. Although conditions in the industry vary widely in the different sections of the country, as a general trend construction costs are reaching their peak and becoming stabilized.

2. The efficiency and economy with which the industry can operate will improve at the rate at which adjustments to new conditions are made by the entire economy.

3. During a period which cannot be foreseen accurately, construction costs may decline gradually until they reach what can be considered the new normal levels.

4. In an economy which has been subjected to the inflationary pressures of World War II, construction costs generally cannot return to levels which prevailed before the war unless the nation suffers an economic catastrophe. When prices reach new normal levels they generally will be substantially above prewar levels.

5. The public should not be led to believe that there will be quick or drastic reductions in construction costs. There may be reductions in costs of materials, but they may not be great. Decreases in wage rates are not foreseeable without a depression. Reductions in costs will come through elimination of uncertainties in business conditions, increased productivity of workmen, increased efficiency by management, and development of more economical methods of construction, and other factors. These will come about, but the changes will be gradual.

6. Buyers' resistance has developed throughout the country in construction. In part this has been the result of buyers' resistance to the prices of other services and commodities which has discouraged investment for expanded business facilities.

7. The price of projects completed to specifications of the owner is established by the costs of construction operations for which general contractors have the central responsibility. General contractors fully recognize their responsibility to the buying public to do all within their power to hold costs to the minimum possible for the quality specified so that the public receives the maximum for its investment in construction.

8. Steps which the Governing and Advisory Boards recommend to general contractors throughout the country include the following:

(a) Where it is the normal custom of the contractor, and to the fullest extent possible, firm prices should be quoted to the owner. Contractors should require firm prices from subcontractors, and sellers of materials and machinery.

(b) Fair and just wages should be paid to workmen, and all possible steps should be taken to encourage workmen to produce a day's work for a day's pay, to maintain wage rates for agreed upon periods of time, to settle disputes without stoppage of work, to eliminate wasteful practices, and to permit the training of adequate numbers of apprentices to supply additional skilled craftsmen for the industry.

(c) All possible steps should be taken to improve efficiency of management.

(d) Where possible, owners should be discouraged from demanding the completion of projects at speeds which require overtime work at premium rates of pay, or procedures requiring extra costs.

9. The Associated General Contractors of America calls upon all organizations and individuals in the industry—architects, engineers, general contractors, subcontractors, producers and distributors of material and equipment, and others—to cooperate to help eliminate uncertainties from the industry and to permit operations to be carried on as quickly, efficiently and economically as possible.

10. It will take time for public recognition and understanding of the fact that construction and other costs must be higher than before the war if the national economy can operate at a level which will permit repayment of the national debt. The public should be informed that construction costs have reached their peak, that as readjustments are made in the national economy gradual increases in efficiency and economy can be brought about in construction, and that responsible elements of the industry recognize their obligations and are doing all within their power to carry out operations so that the public receives the maximum for its investment in construction.

Dr. Whittaker, 1427 Jefferson avenue east, is president of the Detroit Historical Society, vice-president of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, a member of the Board of Directors of the Community Chest, and is president elect of the Detroit Academy of Surgery.

Dr. Whittaker's commission term expires March 1, 1948. He will serve without pay. He has been a resident of Detroit since 1920.

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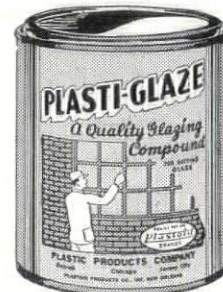
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DR. WHITTAKER ON PLAN COMMISSION

Appointment of Dr. Alfred H. Whittaker, Detroit surgeon, to fill the vacancy on the City Plan Commission caused by the resignation of Dr. Joseph A. Haluska has been announced by Mayor Jeffries.

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ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Excerpts from the Annual Report of the Committee on the Practice of Architecture, Pennsylvania Society of Architects, A.I.A., Harvey A. Schwab, Chairman, 1947.

The matter of junior membership for architectural draftsmen to improve the relations between the practicing architect and his draftsmen and assistants, with reference to the possibility of unionization of draftsmen.

This Committee has carefully considered this relationship, and is fully convinced that it should be and should remain a professional one, as opposed to a possible "employer-union type."

At the present time, the preponderant majority of draftsmen and assistants are preparing themselves for, and are looking to practice on their own account, and thus consider themselves potential professionals. It seems obvious, therefore, that this viewpoint should be encouraged in every possible way, for the good of the profession.

The newly adopted Standards of Professional Practice of the American Institute of Architects provides that:

"The Architect shall inspire the loyal interest of his employees, providing suitable working conditions for them, requiring them to render competent and effi-

cient services, and paying them adequate and just compensation therefor.

The Architect should accept mentorship of the young men entering the profession, leading them to a full understanding of the functions, duties and responsibilities of Architects."

This states in necessarily broad terms the responsibility of the practicing Architect. Any implementation of the broad principles expressed will fall to the various Chapters if indoctrination in the professional viewpoint during pre-practice years is to be carried out.

This Committee has investigated the policies of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers in this matter, and have noted that the status of "Engineer-in-Training" has been recognized in their Registration Act. While our own Registration Act has no such provisions, we believe it in the timely interest of the profession in the Commonwealth to institute "Junior", "Associate", or "Student" memberships of the Society.

Furthermore, the Committee, after careful consideration is of the opinion that a very substantial contribution could be made to the profession by the formulation and adoption of a document defining in some detail the relationship of the architect to his employees. The responsibilities of each to the other, and what constitutes "fair working conditions."

PRICES RECEDING

The trend in building materials prices has been downward since early in May, Douglas Whitlock, chairman of the Building Products Institute, stated yesterday.

"Analysis of the weekly wholesale price index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the upward movement in materials prices ended in mid-March of this year and has been leveling off since then with slight variations," Whitlock said.

"The peak was reached in the week ending May 10 when the index stood at 178.6 per cent of the 1926 average. In the week ending July 12, the index was 175.4, a decline of about two per cent from the peak.

"The building materials price index has shown a decline in six out of the last nine weeks.

"The index of average hourly wages paid in plants manufacturing building materials and equipment currently is about 220 per cent of the 1926 average."

AMERICAN LEGION HOME

The American Legion Home, 401 W. Lafayette, is undergoing extensive alterations and remodeling under the supervision of Harley, Ellington and Day, Inc., architects and engineers, it was announced today by L. Glen Shields, president of the board of trustees of the Detroit American Legion Memorial Home Association.

Rapid expansion in Legion membership necessitated the improved facilities, Shields said.

ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVES, RENDERINGS in any medium—Black and White or Color—F. Orla Varney, A.I.A., 1110 Majestic Bldg., Detroit 26, Mich. Telephone CHerry 1997.

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