CITY PLANNING AND BLIGHTED AREAS

Address of Charles W. Killam, F.A.I.A., at a Meeting of Detroit Chapter, A.I.A., and M.S.A., November 30, 1943

I appreciate the honor of the invitation to address you.

The subject is large, my time is short, and I will not discuss past centuries nor guess too much as to the future. The danger of guessing too far ahead is exemplified by a letter which I saw the other day. It was written by a very great electrical engineer and inventor in 1900. He was writing about power for automobiles. I quote in part. “We use no boiler which can possibly cause trouble by explosion, and we do not believe postwar American problems cannot be solved by too much dependence upon the experience of prewar Europe. We must show some originality.

Income and cost surveys of particular neighborhoods have been made in many cities and have been the bases for demands for slum clearance projects because the neighborhoods were found to pay less in taxes than the cost of the municipal services supplied to them, and because poverty, disease, delinquency and substandard living conditions were found in them. It was assumed that new housing would greatly improve conditions. It does improve some conditions, but not all. The improved housing does not increase wages nor does it reduce the great costs of schools, welfare and debt service which make up so large a part of city budgets. For instance, in Cambridge the average cost for public school maintenance (not including capital expenditures) is $136.77 per pupil. A man with half a dozen children in the public schools and who pays little or no real estate tax is a heavy burden on the city for education alone, not to mention all of the other services that the city must supply him. And this is true whether he lives in an old slum or in a new project. These spot surveys may or may not lead to a new housing project and thus end the matter. The “deficit district,” the one which pays less in taxes than it costs in city services, is

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the only one which is generally considered. The treatment of the “profit districts,” the ones that pay more in taxes than they cost in city services, and which thus subsidize the deficit districts, have not been adequately considered and these profit districts deserve attention. In order to gather more complete information so that we can plan to conserve, and perhaps to increase, the taxpaying capacity of the profit districts the income and cost survey for the whole city, the division of the profit and deficit districts must be compared. As far as I know, Boston is the only city which has extended the income and cost survey to cover the whole city, taking each one of the 127 census tracts separately. It is of interest to us as architects that Wm. Stanley Parker, now Chairman of the Boston City Planning Board, was the motivating spirit back of this city-wide survey. The report was issued by the Boston City Planning Board in 1935 and is entitled: “Report on the Income and Cost Survey of the City of Boston.” Among the observations included in this report were the following:

About 88½ per cent of the population, using about 90 per cent of the gross area, fail to pay taxes enough to cover the services rendered their residential areas. Of the total assessed value (per cent of the total area of the City) pays 72 per cent of the deficit and the High Rental Residential and the Miscellaneous Residential Tracts pay the balance of 28 per cent.

While some of the Industrial Areas showed a profit totaling $341,635 others showed a net cost of $1,372,816.

Adding my own comments, the survey took no account of some minor taxes and fees nor of the City’s receipts from the Federal Government, the State and the County. The profit districts not only pay this large share of direct municipal taxes but the high-rental residential districts pay an important part of the State income tax, part of which is paid back to the City. Nor did the survey take account of the private welfare money, largely collected in the profit districts, but spent in the deficit districts.

The survey would seem to prove that the introduction of new industries is not necessarily a solution, especially if such industries attract more low-wage employees to live in the City. Nor do federally subsidized low-rental housing projects at a distance from the business center solve the problems of the business center. Nor do these subsidized projects help the high rental residential districts to pay their share of excess taxes. Nor is it a solution to siphon off congested population, paying less in taxation, without leaving the city to decay. That method is unfair to the tenant, the owners and the municipality. And a good many people prefer to live in the city anyway. The treatment of the business center itself and the close-in slums and blighted centers must be faced or we shall have more slums with less income from the profit districts to support them.

If close-in land could be re-built for occupancies which could pay their fair share of taxes it would help the City to collect more taxes to help pay the costs of the deficit areas. The Federally subsidized projects in the areas further out, on the other hand, throw an additional burden on the profit areas. If assessed values, land and buildings, in the principal business streets run from $100 to $200 per sq. ft. such streets are not likely to be widened. Widening in the outskirts on cheaper land only might find it desirable to reduce the present allowable heights. It would be instructive to see a report on the costs and effects on assessed values of street widenings in, say, fifty different cities. It would also be instructive to see the figures on increased assessments of property adjacent to federally subsidized housing projects in, say, fifty cities. Time spent in getting this constructive information would be much more productive than the time spent in any futile counting of houses which lack bath tubs.

There is generally no room between important high-value streets for demolition for parking lots. Land within any convenient distance of the busiest streets may still have values running so high that demolition for parking lots in normal times seems unlikely. Present parking lots left by unplanned demolition may be badly located and too far from the shopping and business districts. Convenience is the keynote of the parking problem anyway? How many retail store customers drive to downtown stores in their own cars? How many business and professional men need to drive to the business center in their own cars? How well are the important centers served by the present transit facilities? How could these facilities be improved?

A compact business center is desirable for efficient trans- action of business or other conveyances, the building long would not be spread out to allow “ample” parking lots near by. It is easier to do business in a city with moderately high buildings close together than in sprawling Washington with its relatively low Government buildings. Skyscraper office buildings a quarter of a mile apart, as imagined by some perspective renderers in advertisements, would not help the kind of business and professional activities which require personal contacts. It is difficult, for instance, to accept the program described in “The Boston Herald” of Sept. 25/43 which states that a committee of engineers will report to the
Special Committee on Postwar Highway Planning “A program intended to give Boston the finest system of traffic control in the States with respect to highway and space for thousands of motorists to park and shop leisurely in the downtown area.” The parking lots of the Sears–Roebuck stores in Boston and Cambridge give some idea of scattered buildings separated by busy motor traffic which this plan would involve. The large areas given up to parking lots in some cities surely do not show economical city planning as far as the transaction of business and economical supply of city services is concerned. Has the convenience of existing parking lots to the adjacent buildings allowed any increase in assessments on such buildings or has it slowed down the decline in their assessed values? In the shopping district it is difficult to imagine that convenience would be increased by more vacant spaces between buildings. It would require too much walking to shop in a number of different stores.

A point of view which contrasts strongly with the “park and shop leisurely” theory is presented in “The American City” for Sept. ’43 in an article entitled “Tacoama Looks Forward” which states that “Automobile parked and automobile traffic in business streets is to be cut to the very necessary minimum. Automobile parking is to be provided conveniently outside of these districts.” The Committee proposes that “the centrally located retail shopping district prohibit all automobile traffic and that the pedestrian be permitted to use the streets for crossing at any point in the pedestrian area thus encouraging shopping.” Tacoma has a population of 107,611, Boston, 770,816.

The general question whether we should rebuild our cities radically to accommodate motor traffic, particularly private cars, or whether we should regulate motor traffic and perhaps increase bus facilities to fit existing conditions, it is difficult to say whether we should find some reasonable means between the two, or too complicated to be covered here but it is also too serious to be settled by the offhand decision that everything should be planned to allow more people to drive into the business center in their own cars and helicopters.

Two numeric examples are worth consideration. Assuming 25,000 cars to work in Rockefeller Center, 125,000 to visit it each day, assuming one car to each eight persons and each car to need 200 sq. ft. of parking space, it would require 86 acres of parking space, or seven sub-basements covering the gross area of the Center (12 acres) to provide that kind of “ample” parking space. How many people in Rockefeller Center are important enough to be thus accommodated to the detriment of traffic facilities which must serve others?

Los Angeles furnishes another example. The total curb parking space in the central business district will accommodate less than 1,000 cars. The total off-street parking facilities in the same area (including parking lots and public garages) is only 22,802 vehicles, or a total of 25,802 cars which can be parked at any one time, contrasted with 1,000,000 cars in the county. As it is now, 50 per cent of the ground space in downtown Los Angeles is devoted to parking lots.

These examples raise the question whether “space for thousands of motorists to park and shop leisurely in the downtown area” is practicable or desirable.

The large increase in the use of buses in New York City in recent years raises the question whether Boston buses, instead of serving mainly as feeders to rapid transit terminals, could run into the business center, as they do into the New York business centers, and thus serve business men and shoppers well enough so that they would not need to drive their own cars downtown. The use of buses and the further control of automobile might well improve traffic conditions without requiring expensive rebuilding. Some street widening for new thoroughfares may be needed, however, between railroad terminals and docks for trucking.

Whether we plan to demolish and rebuild upon an expensively large scale, or upon too small a scale, or upon some reasonable scale, it is essential that we should decide first just what activities should be located in different parts of a city. If any of the activities are not located where they can live a good life to the best of their minds, we repeat that large scale demolition of relatively modern buildings in or near the business center to give more open spaces or to allow street widenings or to provide ample parking spaces, is not likely when such land with improvements is assessed at from $100 to more than $300 per sq. ft. It is therefore important to consider what activities should be the guiding principles in the use of land in or near the business center so that expensive changes can be avoided except where clearly shown to be necessary. Any redistribution of activities should respect existing values as far as practicable and yet should lead to the evolution of a good city plan.

A good city plan is one that helps the citizens to earn a living in its business centers and helps to provide good living conditions in its residential areas, or in adjacent suburbs, for people in different income levels. A good city plan should also allow the municipality to provide public services more economically. Current city planning discussions pay too little attention to the latter need. Boston maintenance costs in 1937 were $80.80 per capita while the 42 other cities and towns which make up the official (not the census) Metropolitan District averaged $54.80 per capita. We cannot allow all kinds of occupancy on this land and we cannot allow city planning which makes maintenance costs too high. Some discussions of the subject seem to prove that the activity which is exclusively large scale, or upon too small a scale, or upon some Filling stations 7,560 69,000. Business properties 287,000...
may well be considered as one possible way of encouraging better buildings on high-value land. This is one form of the single tax. A committee is gathering information as to the experience with the single tax in Western Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. In some cases it has been in effect for many years. This subject should be studied so that it may be put on the agenda of any a city. I have myself been in correspondence with an architect in Melbourne and with a New Zealand official but they have a nearby war on down under and are busy with that. In this country we spend too much time in repeating that taxes are too high but we don't do any more about it than we do about the weather.

In connection with this problem of taxes the subject of tax-exempt property should be considered. I live in a college town and was Chairmen of the Housing Authority when the first Cambridge project was put through. The project, of course, brought up the question of taxation. I have for years heard the tax exemption of the three Cambridge colleges given as the cause of our high tax rate. It has been as high as $40,30 on the thousand in the recent past before the reduction brought about by war conditions. This subject could be studied so that it may be put on the agenda of the City Council in connection with the tax rate.

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In Cambridge, a city with a tax rate half as high as Cambridge, however, other than stores and office buildings the business center is sufficiently crowded to be a drain on the city. It was attracted there by the College. It is likely that any practicable amount of street widening will be necessary for customers to drive so much traffic that it will make it unnecessary for customers to drive to the city. Could buses serve the downtown area much better so that crowding in cars could be reduced which, in turn, might tempt more suburbanites to use mass transportation instead of driving their own cars into the middle of the city? It is to be remembered in this connection that crawling along home in one’s own car in jammed motor traffic is not the ideal end of a perfect day.

As far as vacancies in office buildings are concerned, the auto cannot be blamed as the only cause. Office buildings may have been overbuilt or the activities of business and professional men may have decreased. In the decade 1930-40 some cities and some metropolitan districts made little or no gains in population and some cities, although their metropolitan districts may have gained and very few metropolitan districts lost. Restricted immigration and lower birth-rates must be recognized as elements in the problem. These cities do not need more buildings as much as they need better buildings. Vacant offices in these cities are not likely to be filled unless an increase in industry, shipping or air transport creates a demand for more space.

Other than stores and office buildings the business center contains banks, hotels, amusements, restaurants, City Hall, Post Office, Court House, etc. The business center buildings do not produce taxes and the hotels and restaurants depend upon the activity of business. In New England education and recreation are important activities but do little to enhance the prosperity of the business center of Boston. Buildings in the wholesale districts have been vacated because of changes in the methods of handling of some commodities. Can light manufacturing or even apartment houses be substituted in these areas? These young cities seems unlikely and the best that can be done is to facilitate business as much as possible and all that can be done in this respect is to increase comfortable and rapid transportation and avoidance of any possible increase in congestion. In Boston, for instance, if all buildings in the business center were carried to the maximum height allowed by the building code the congestion would choke business altogether. The maximum height was 125 feet for 50 years and was changed some years ago to 155 feet.

Pew buildings have taken advantage of the increase and we might well go back to the earlier limit and thus keep our heights in better relation to the widths of the streets and to the traffic facilities.

Another way to help business is to reduce municipal expenses but this is unpopular at most city halls. And few citizens are interested enough to appear at public hearings unless their particular toes are stepped on. However, anything we can do in city planning to reduce the expense of municipal maintenance should be done.

Activities on close-in land, that is, in the zone next to the business center, now include wholesale stores, more hotels and amusements, apartment houses, high-rental and low-rental housing, secondary shopping centers, clubs, churches, schools, hospitals, etc. Can any of these be pushed into the business center to advantage or should some of them be pushed further out? Churches, schools and hospitals are tax-exempt. Do they occupy high-value land which could pay high taxes if developed in some other way?

Some activities are now often found in or near the business center which might well be located on less valuable land; for instance, certain kinds of office buildings, as for physicians, dentists and oculists, and the main offices of insurance companies, some retail stores, wholesale business, certain light industries, low-rent housing, etc. Where should markets be located? Jails?

Traffic by railroad, street car, bus and private auto would be less congested if the number of people riding into the center in their own cars could be reduced. Reduction and control of private auto traffic to the center might allow the existing buildings to be more adequately served by the existing streets and thus avoid large-scale demolition.

As one example, the home offices of large insurance companies employ large number of clerical employees. Where can these buildings be best located for the convenience of
the company, the profit of the policy holders, the convenience and economy of the employees, the reduction of traffic congestions, and the high-value land to the best advantage? These offices have not been found where the people who work at the main office and the offices do not need to be located near the business center. Their numerous employees increase the traffic difficulties. Most of these main office employees receive relatively low wages. Must we therefore provide cheap housing, old or new, close in to the center so that these low-wage employees can walk to their work and thus avoid paying carfare?

Taking up this question of the living locations of low-wage workers in a little more detail. It is often stated that workers, especially low-wage workers, should live close enough to their work so that they can walk to work. The business center of a city requires many workers, some of whom, like secretaries, typists, clerical help, hotel and restaurant workers, elevator operators, and delivery men, etc., work for relatively low wages so that it may be claimed that they cannot carfare to carry them to low-value areas and that, therefore, they must live close to the business center and walk to their work. This theory has led to the assumption that old standard low-rental housing must continue to occupy high-value land and close to the business center or that new federally subsidized low-rental housing projects must be built on such close-in land. We cannot afford to demolish close-in slums on high-value land and rebuild on the same sites with new subsidized housing paying only a small sum in lieu of taxes. Therefore the assumption that any change in the use of this close-in land must still provide for low-wage business center employees should not be accepted without further examination in the light of today’s conditions. If we can find a better use for such land and still provide good business and living conditions in appropriate parts of the city we may be able to replace blighted districts with more profitable investments.

How many people who work in the business center actually do walk to their work? A questionnaire to a few large stores and office buildings would give much needed information on this point. Do all of the people who live in the close-in areas actually work in the business center? How many of them work in other parts of the city? If many of them work in other parts of the city? If any considerable number of them are found to be living close in because the cannot afford carfare and must walk to their work in the business center one solution might be to raise the requirements of minimum wage laws. An increased minimum wage might allow them to pay carfare. By their removal they would release valuable land for use more profitable to the city.

It is to be remembered that people who have to work in the business center are not the only ones who like to live close in. Many others prefer to live near the centers of activities and can afford to pay the economic rent for good housing. If they do not have to limit our efforts to satisfying the desires of people who like to live near the center of activities but who cannot possibly pay the costs and who therefore become a burden on the profit districts.

The ideal location for the low-wage group would seem to be on land of relatively low value with low maintenance cost rather than on land measured for $4 per sq. ft. with the most expensive municipal service made available. People living further out, on land assessed for less than $1 per sq. ft., would not have to live in crowded slum tenements and they would not overload the transit facilities to the detriment of people who really have to go into the business center. In this connection it should be noted that the flexibility of bus service greatly enlarges the field of choice of locations for residences and that, in Boston at least, buses have not yet done their share in providing circumferential transportation nor have they provided transportation into the business center without transfer.

What can be done in the matter of mass transportation fares to help in proper locations for different kinds of residential development? For instance, the Metropolitan Transit District in Boston (14 municipalities) has, for some years preceding the recent war conditions, made up the deficits of the Boston Elevated Railway at an annual cost for Boston of approximately $1,850,000, for instance, in 1939, the other 13 communities paying also their share. The fact that the road has no deficit at present, by the way, is worth considering. New York City subsidizes its transit system at a cost of $30 millions or more a year. These subsidies allow people who work in the cities to live at a considerable distance from the business centers. In some cases in other communities. If these subsidies have encouraged well-to-do city workers, who might be called profit taxpayers, to live in other communities the city has suffered by the loss of taxes on their high-value residences. If, on the other hand, these low fares have encouraged low-wage city workers, who might be called deficit taxpayers, to move into other communities the city income has gained. If transit systems were subsidized still more fares might be reduced or eliminated. It might be extended so as to allow more low-wage workers to move into the city. Unfortunately, both high and low-wage groups have thus moved out of the city, the removal of the high-wage group being a tax loss to the city and the removal of the low-wage group being a tax gain to the city. Whatever their taxpaying ability they have left slums or blighted districts behind them. The problem is to re-develop those areas so as to be profit taxpayers.

The question of the decentralization of industry and the living accommodations for employees is too complicated to be covered here. It should be noted, however, that a new industrial plant does something more than give employment and pay taxes on the plant itself and add to the sales of local merchants. The gains and losses to the city due to the plant and employees must be evaluated as a whole. I have discussed this problem in some length in the "Weekly Bulletin" of the Michigan Society of Architects for August 31/43. In general, industrial employees may cost the city much more in services than they pay in taxes. Even the plant itself may not pay enough taxes to equal the costs to the city to service it. Some industries and cheap housing may attract low-wage workers from other communities if those communities have no cheap housing. Brookline, Newton and Winchester, prosperous suburbs of Boston, do not attract workers to their welfare budgets. They do not have cheap rents or industries paying low wages. A comparison of Brookline and Cambridge is instructive in this connection. Brookline, population, 49,786, and Cambridge, population, 110,879. A rough sampling seems to show that Cambridge has more than eight times as many residences assessed for $4,000 or less, than Brookline, and that Brookline has about eight times as many residences (not including apartment houses), costing more than $25,000, as Cambridge. Brookline tax rate $2.20 per thousand, Cambridge $39.90.

What other classes of higher taxpaying activities could advantageously occupy these close-in areas if they can be made available? What activities should be kept out of the business center or even out of the close-in areas with advantages to all and with reduction of traffic difficulties? Hospitals and doctors', dentists' and oculists' offices do not need to be located in noisy neighborhoods with no adequate parking facilities, and they do not need to be located on land on which they pay no taxes and which might otherwise be developed for, for instance, with high-taxpaying property. Doctors' offices, bunched together so many of them use the same entrance, congest parking space so that it is difficult to receive an infirm patient who must come by auto.

A study of assessed values of buildings compared with the values of the land which they occupy shows profitable and unprofitable uses of lots in residential neighborhoods as far as tax-earning capacity is concerned. In Boston, the apartment houses show much larger assessed values per sq. ft. than the single houses in the same general neighborhood. An investigation would probably show that though the apartment houses require somewhat more city services than single houses in the same neighborhood the increased taxes from the larger buildings more than make up for the increase in service costs, particularly as high-rental apartment houses...
dwellers are likely to have few children in the public schools. A comparison of residence values in the high-rental districts as compared with building values on land of about the same value, shows that the lower residential values, in the low-rental districts shows the desirability of higher, larger and better buildings in the latter neighborhoods.

If slums and blighted areas are cleared what kind of development should take their places? It is often stated that the cleared areas should be used for greenbelts, parks, playgrounds, parking lots, etc. But we cannot afford to use much close-in land for non-taxpaying or low-taxpaying purposes. The building values are too high to justify such uses. The needs of the occupants of these close-in districts are not necessarily the same as those in other parts of the city. There may be very few children in these close-in areas and therefore playgrounds are not needed. Parking lots may seem to be the only reasonable use for such land but they give a very small tax return to the city. The land values are too high to allow use for subsidized low-rental housing projects which pay little or no taxes. Here again apartment houses suggest themselves for such areas.

In spite of all the advocacy of home ownership, there are many people whose employment tenure is so uncertain that they should not tie themselves to investment in a house. There are also many people financially able to own their own houses who prefer to live in an apartment. They include unmarried people, widows, couples without children, and old couples like these who have grown roots. They do not like to bother with the maintenance of a house. They have no use for a garden. They prefer, other things being equal, to live near to business, shopping and amusement centers. They have a better right to ready access to those conveniences than lower wage groups who pay far less in taxes than they cost in city services.

It may be argued that the demand for new apartment houses is too small to fill up the areas now occupied by slums and blighted neighborhoods. But the new construction need not necessarily house more people than the buildings demolished. The new construction would, however, give much better living accommodations because, planned in larger units with large light and air spaces instead of numerous small back yards and courts. The better class of buildings would command higher rents and could pay higher taxes, more in keeping with the value of the land. In regard to the question of the demand for apartments in general, it may be said that there has been a trend toward apartment house life in recent years. The decrease in the number of children and the increase in the percentage of old people is expected to increase the demand for small living units more rapidly than the increase in the demand for large units in general. Many people value the opportunities that close-in living gives them and do not expect the extravagant use of space that advocates of the front yard and lawns believe to be necessary.

Close-in land cannot afford to be only residential land. A larger use of roofs and setbacks would give them a sufficient access to light and air.

Apartment houses on close-in land cannot afford to be only three or four stories high and leave 70 to 80 per cent of the ground unused as was the case of many of the PWA and USHA projects. As to financing the new construction, we should all that we can within reason to encourage investment by insurance companies and banks under the provisions of the new Urban Re-development Corporations Laws in the states. Many people value the opportunities that close-in living gives them and do not expect the extravagant use of space that advocates of the front yard and lawns believe to be necessary. The new construction need not necessarily house more people than the buildings demolished.

In order to prepare for possible urban re-development it seems to me that the studies like your Myrtle-Trumbull-Henry-Fourteenth Street investigation are of the greatest practical usefulness.

In Boston the City Planning Board has gone somewhat further in studying a definite site. The study is presented in two reports: "Building a Better Boston," published in Oct. '41, and "Rehabilitation in Boston," Vol. 2, published in May '43. The Board took as a sample a badly blighted residential district about three-quarters of a mile from the center of the business district. The Income and Cost Survey shows that the present annual loss to the City from this particular area is more than $200,000. Four studies were made and a fifth will follow.

The report concludes that, with no more help or subsidy than the power of condemnation and the proposed adjustment of the tax assessment, no corporation would undertake a reconstruction project, whether on built-up or on vacant land, for tenants not able to pay more than $8.00 per rentable room per month. This sum in many cases would not carry even the taxes plus the maintenance and management. The draft of
a bill included in the report fixes the annual taxes for the project as being $10.00 per thousand on the fair cash value of the complete project plus 5 per cent on the gross annual income, provided, however, that such tax shall not be less than the previous tax on the project. This provision would require a tax payment of $15.50 to $35.00 per thousand in the case of the development for $17.50 to $35.00 rent and a tax payment of $19.50 per thousand in the case of the $35.00 to $55.00 rent. This would result in a tax rate of $1.15 to $2.27 per thousand. The rate on Boston's non-taxed property is $4.10 per thousand. The respective differences measure the amount of the subsidy and it is to be noted that this is a permanent subsidy instead of tax exemption for a limited period.

Some re-development studies have shown the need of zoning revision and this brings up the question of competition between the city and the nearby suburbs as to the distribution or encouragement of building activity by strict or loose provisions. In the Boston area, for instance, Boston, Cambridge and Brookline are all hoping to attract high-rental apartment house development. The zoning laws of the three communities are not uniform. Cambridge is now revising its zoning code. Should its requirements be so much more severe than the Boston or Brookline provisions that, although they might compel attractive developments with much more light and air and services in the rural communities, their very severity might discourage development altogether? What is the duty of those drafting the revision? Should they write it so that development will be attracted away from Boston and Brookline to Cambridge or should they take a metropolitan point of view? To have different zoning codes in Boston, Cambridge and Brookline is no more reasonable than to have different codes in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park.

In the matter of zoning residential areas it may be questioned whether rigid uniformity in building heights and number of families per building is always necessary. A single-family neighborhood is not necessarily damaged by allowing apartment houses, providing the coverage is carefully controlled. Children brought up in a certain neighborhood, and getting married, may be glad to live in a small apartment in the same neighborhood, and some couples, growing old, may feel the same desire. And there are people who prefer apartment house life but would like to have more light and air than high-value close-in areas can afford.

The consideration of zoning also brings to mind the suggestion of those who would limit the life of non-conforming uses to some reasonable period of years as has been done in the recently enacted Boston Building Code. If retroactive zoning can be found to be constitutional we can take a long step forward by providing that old buildings, which have already served a long life and have become a detriment to the neighborhood, shall be demolished without compensation to the owner just as fruit or meat which has existed too long is now destroyed without compensation.

On the other hand, the suggestion that we should limit the life of a new building to some such period as twenty or twenty-five years is less reasonable. The industry, if it is to give the country its money's worth in buildings, cannot afford to be served by a law which would end the life and have become a detriment to the neighborhood, shall be demolished without compensation to the owner just as fruit or meat which has existed too long is now destroyed without compensation.

I would even raise questions in regard to the current advocacy of planning to create neighborhoods, and for this heresy we would be cast out of the planner's union if I had ever been in the union. As a boy I lived in a neighborhood that naturally developed in those days. The children went to the same grammar school but the adults went to different churches and the children, growing older, went to the one high school. Such a neighborhood was natural, not designed, and contained families of different races, color, religion and some were different incomes. Traffic dangers were negligible then and greenbelts uncalled for. Neighbors talked about each other, a fact which was not without some disadvantages. As a young man I moved into a large city and belonged to a neighborhood improvement association. This neighborhood was large enough to include not only its own grammar school but a variety of churches and shopping facilities. We could not know all of our neighbors but became acquainted with some of the neighborhood people through the improvement association, the activities of which brought us together. These activities were, however, likely to be rather selfishly confined to the interests of our own neighborhood. We tended to be isolationists.

Later in life, living in a smaller city in a metropolitan district, I have found the neighborhood idea to be totally unworkable as far as the great majority of the people are concerned. We form friendships in school, college, church, business, politics, clubs, etc. and we live anywhere in the city that we like and can afford. The auto allows us to visit our friends miles away. The family across the street or in another apartment may be of no particular interest to us. The back-slapping type of neighborliness is likely to be confined to a few people who get that way and to politicians running for office. The idea of creating neighborhoods artificially by mingling of all groups in a democratic society runs counter to the desire of most of us to live where we please and to refuse to be settlement workers. Too much emphasis on the neighborhood idea may lead to selfish grasping for favors for the neighborhood and failure to take a city-wide point of view, much less a metropolitan point of view as so often urged by city planners. I live in a city where I have been able to watch these forms of city charters at work and have helped to get them on paper. I am afraid of further improvement. Now we have a small city council elected at large, instead of by ward, and can thus vote for the best man wherever he lives and then he does not need to be a selfish advocate of favors for his neighborhood but can take the city-wide point of view. Neighborhood units, if organized as neighborhoods, may act just as narrowly and selfishly as a ward councilman or an isolationist senator. We need more breadth and less shortsighted selfishness in our national affairs as well as in our national affairs. The neighborhood idea has definite limits, especially in built-up cities. A practical ideal would be to have, in the first place, playgrounds for small children in the interior of each block and playgrounds for larger children in the interior of each neighborhood. There should also be separate primary and grammar schools for each neighborhood and all of these playgrounds and schools should be accessible without crossing busy traffic thoroughfares. Neighborhoods may be of such a size that some of them may naturally house a considerable variety of races, religion, color and income levels but not necessarily in every case. In built-up cities it will be impracticable to demolish a ring several hundred feet wide around each neighborhood in order to form a greenbelt area; the public utilities such as busy traffic thoroughfares, railroads, rivers, ponds, existing parks, cemeteries, etc., may serve. The advocates of the contrary policy, that is, of building up a built-up city into neighborhoods separated by greenbelts should work out the costs of such a major operation for a few different cities and let us examine the results to see whether, on the whole, they seem to make good cities to earn a living in and to live in and whether we can afford them.

As to gathering information for urban rebuilding. The census reports are soon out of date. It is to be hoped that we are not doomed to future WPA's to furnish personnel for detailed surveys which, again, can be made only at infrequent intervals. Anybody who has studied real property inventories, income and cost surveys, and some of the activities of the Bureau of the Census, and who is also familiar with the typical annual reports of municipalities, may well wonder whether the annual reports could be made more useful to city planners and to many others if city officials would report as far as is practicable on the matters covered by these surveys by some reasonable extension of their regular work. The "Housing Analytical Maps, Block Statistics" of the 1940 census, for instance, give certain information for each block separately.

It would be a great help in city planning and other city activities if this information, along with statistics on infant mortality, some diseases, juvenile delinquency, police cases, assessed values, and perhaps other information, could be

WEEKLY BULLETIN
reported every year, not by areas as small as a block and not by areas as large as a ward, but perhaps by census tracts or voting precincts. Such annual reports of city officials would be nearer up to date than infrequent real property inventories, income and cost surveys, and census counts, and would cost much less. I have seen many city reports of several hundred pages which wasted far too much space on pictures of children wading in pools or of lineups of garbage wagons. We need more definite information about sore spots in our cities and we should do less bragging about the bright spots, if any. It would be a help to better understanding of our taxation problems if assessors would analyze the returns from different classes of use in some such way as I have tried to do in this paper. Such analyses might correct some of the current misunderstandings as to the advantages and disadvantages of new industries and the employees whom they attract, the extravagance of allowing certain developments on high-value land, the advantages and disadvantages of vacant land and tax-exempt property of different kinds, etc. City reports which give comparisons with other cities' maintenance costs are too much to expect but they would be of more use to citizens than many pages of figures telling how many people had each different kind of disease in each month and in each ward and how many gallons of water we had pumped each year in the last half-century.

Effective publicity is of course important. If the general public is to become interested in city planning we must not only enlist the cooperation of as many different people as we can from the beginning, but we must also interest the much larger number of people, who cannot thus cooperate but who must eventually vote, by concise publicity in the non-professional press. Few people have time to read the long reports of the National Resources Planning Board, the Urban Land Institute or the Temporary National Economic Committee.

I have not said a word about beauty which is so largely in the province of our profession in the matter of city planning. I have not attempted to discuss it because of lack of time and because others can urge its need better than I. It is an essential component. A few misguided wretches speak of a home as a machine for living but normal people try to make it much more, a place to gather around us the people and things which we love and enjoy. We make it as beautiful as our taste, our efforts and our means will allow. We are in control in our homes. When we go out into the city we no longer control. The physical city is the product of many different forces, we as individuals or as a profession having little effect on the composite result. This result is too often not even a good machine for living; it offers many insults to our best taste. Architects must prove to city dwellers that a city should not only be a good place to earn a living in but a comfortable and beautiful place to live in.
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Urban Land Institute President Sounds Warning Against Rapid Decentralization

HUGH POTTER TELLS MUNICIPAL LEADERS THAT ORDERLY POST-WAR BUILDING MUST CONSIDER REBUILDING OF WORN OUT DISTRICTS

From Real Estate and Building

Post-war building will result in "decentralization" of American cities if it follows the trend of recent building spurts, Hugh Potter, President of the Urban Land Institute, warned the American Municipal Association in its meeting at Chicago last week.

The noted Houston, Texas, developer told the Association that post-war urban building must take into account "rebuilding of worn-out districts" within our cities. Unless a sensible pattern can be established for necessary redevelopment of blighted areas within American cities, he declared, another period of intense building activity "can complete the disorganization of our cities begun in recent building booms." As an alternative, Potter urged adoption of the urban redevelopment program worked out by the Urban Land Institute which has been incorporated in the neighborhood development bill introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York.

Mr. Potter is chairman of the post-war planning committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce and a past president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce; he is a district chairman for the Committee for Economic Development; past president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards and former chairman of the City Planning Commission of Houston.

Run Away Decentralization Threatens American Cities

"Post-war building will inflict an era of run-away decentralization upon American cities if it follows the trend of recent building spurts," Mr. Potter said. "Sound building cannot be directed into a sensible urban pattern if all of it takes place on the outskirts of the community, because building at the edges with a proportionate abandonment of the established areas is simply not a sensible pattern. It is the kind of trend that destroys more in old value than it creates in new value. This means that orderly post-war building must take into account rebuilding of worn-out districts to standards of neighborhood attractiveness and livability that equal or surpass suburban counterparts."

Our Cities Are Down At the Heels

"Siphoning of new home building to outlying areas during the last two decades has had the effect of running established city areas into a 'down at the heel' condition. We can expect a flood of new land development in the immediate post-war years, and the most pressing urban problem we have is to find the means of retaining this flood within the cities. We must induce the developers to develop the worn-out areas. Another period of intense building activity can complete the disorganization of our cities begun in recent building booms, unless we find some practical method of channeling this new development into those vast areas of urban land that are so obviously ripe for redevelopment."

"Fortunately our communities have not been subjected to sudden destruction as has been the recent fate of so many cities throughout the world, but the encroachment of disrepair and dinginess that has crept over them during the past two decades truly approaches the effect of war's destruction. If you put black dots on the map of any large urban area to indicate the sites of recent construction, you will be drawing a circle around the city. You will have a diagram of an explosion that has literally ripped our communities at the seams and cast large segments of the population to the outskirts. It is hardly accurate to describe the process as 'decentralization.' Rather, it has been a process of disorganization and haphazard disintegration.

"It has left our cities at the edge of a precipice. Another period of intense building activity without control or orderliness will topple them into the chasm of bankruptcy and complete decay. And we surely can expect a high volume of building in the immediate post-war years. The picture is indeed a gloomy one if we assume that there is no alternative to a continuation of the development trends of recent decades."

See POTTER—Page 5
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WEEKLY BULLETIN
Neighborhood Development Bill

"Whenever private builders have attempted to clear slums and put attractive residential development in their place they have invariably been defeated in their motives by land costs that were too high to permit building the kind of neighborhood conditions that the public wants and insists on getting even when it must go into extremely remote areas. The Urban Land Institute has proposed a method by which this land may be acquired, cleared, replanned and sold to private builders on a basis that will permit them to provide the public with attractive neighborhoods. This proposal is now before the United States Senate in the form of a bill known as the Neighborhood Development Bill (S. 1163), introduced in the Senate by Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York.

"It would provide a fund of one billion dollars that could be lent to municipalities for the purpose of acquiring land in deteriorated areas. Ability to show that redevelopment of a particular area would conform to the city plan made by local authorities—not by a Federal Bureau—would constitute eligibility for a loan. Having received the loan under the action proposed in the Wagner Bill, the city would acquire the land, clear it, replan it, and sell or lease building sites to private builders in strict conformity to the city plan."

"In this way all levels of government would be brought into cooperation with private enterprise in doing a constructive work that is economically sound and civically necessary. The cities would employ their powers of initiation, of planning, and of regulating the character of development. The states would exercise their power of operating by extending the necessary authority to the cities and by expanding eminent domain laws as necessary. The Federal Government would be supplying a source of credit. Thus the role of the three levels of government would be supplying a source of credit. Thus the role of the three levels of government would be confined to the reclamation of the land. No part of the funds proposed to be authorized by the Wagner Bill could be used for construction. That part of the task, the actual work of building, would be done by private enterprise."

"Private enterprise and private funds can rebuild these worn-out areas, but they cannot, unassisted, finance the acquisition of land for that purpose. Whatever financing is devised to assemble this blighted land in areas sufficiently large to permit the creation of a new environment must of necessity include a procedure of devaluation. The terms and interest rates of private credit cannot be expected to undertake that kind of financing. Nevertheless, it is of tremendous municipal and civic importance that it be undertaken, and some use of public credit is the only alternative. Most of us, I am sure, would prefer to see some form of municipal or state credit used for this purpose, but unfortunately that is simply not within the realm of possibility. We must realize that out of every one dollar of taxes we pay, seventy-five cents of it goes to the Federal Government. Federal credit is the only source of public credit that can be called upon for such an undertaking."

De-valuation Needed

"The key to private rebuilding of old city area must be sought in a process that can equitably assemble this land and re-establish its value in conformity with the use to which that land is best adapted. To assume that a marketable type of rebuilding can take place on land that costs more than it is worth is to invite an increase in congestion and intensity of use, or to hope that builders will turn their backs upon cheap land in the ever more distant periphery of the city in favor of overcostly land in the run-down areas. There is no realism in such an assumption. The post-war builder is going to find the overwhelming part of his market in the medium price dwelling field, and he is going to find that he can build to this market only if he can give the public the opportunity of living in residential arrangements and the general environmental character that characterizes him at the outskirts of the city. He will be forced to seek sites for the houses he builds at prices he can pay. If he cannot find them in the areas that need to be redeveloped, he will find them in areas that ought not to be developed."

POTTER—(Continued from Page 1)

MICHIGAN SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

MEETING

American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers

Horace H. Rackham Educational Memorial
MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1943
DINNER AT 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Ralph A. Sherman, Supervisor, Fuels Division, Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus, Ohio, will address the society on "Fuels of the Future." Mr. Sherman is recognized as a leading authority in the combustion field, having been associated with this work since 1920. He will discuss the known reserves of coal, oil and gas, and some of the possibilities of synthetic fuels such as gasoline.

Architects Invited

LYMAN ASSOCIATE CITY PLANNER OF DEARBORN

Robert Lyman, registered engineer, has been approved by the City Plan Commission of Dearborn, Michigan, as associate planner.

For the past seven years Mr. Lyman has been employed by the Dearborn City Engineer's office, planning parks, boulevards and structures. These years have seen the growth and development of many of the City's parks and recreational centers in Dearborn's new city-wide recreational development program. Previous to his entrance into the City's employ, Mr. Lyman worked twelve years doing structural design and detail, and engineering layouts. Four of these years were spent with Giffels and Vallet, Detroit firm of engineers and architects. This followed his graduation from the University of Michigan Class of Engineering of 1928. Upon his entrance at the university Mr. Lyman was a graduate in Structural Engineering of the Buffalo Technical High School.

In addition, Mr. Lyman has been further fitted for his new position through various courses which he has taken, including a course in City Planning and a course in Rapid Transit at Wayne University.

Mr. Lyman has been registered engineer for thirteen years, since 1930.

Mr. Lyman will carry on the duties of his position under the direction of the City Plan Commission, and in cooperation with the City Engineer. His duties will include research on vital planning needs for the city as it now stands, zoning problems, including desirable changes in present zoning ordinances and post-war plans.

COURT UPHOLDS CITY IN HIRING CONSULTANTS

The right of New York City to hire outside firms to do engineering and architectural work in connection with the city's planning for postwar construction was upheld by the Supreme Court of the State of New York in a decision rendered on October 13. The decision was in a suit brought by the Civil Service Technical Guild to have the court nullify existing contracts for such work and restrain the city from letting other contracts. The guild claimed that engagement of outside firms for this work was in contravention of the civil service sections of the state constitution.

In his decision Justice Pecora of the Supreme Court said: "I conclude that nothing contained in the Constitution of the State of New York or in the provisions of the Civil Service Law prohibits the City of New York from awarding contracts for architectural and engineering services to private concerns in connection with the postwar planning program. This court further holds that the action of the city attacked herein is in line with sound public policy and represents a wise exercise of discretion. The application, therefore, is in all respects denied, and the petition dismissed."

—Engineering News-Record.

DECEMBER 14, 1943
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MILTON MAC MILLAN HEADS OHIO ARCHITECTS

The blueprints will be ready on V-day on those needed construction improvements in Ohio, if the advice and surveys of architects in that State are followed. Reports of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Architects Society of Ohio held in Columbus, Friday, November 19th, at the Deisher-Wallick Hotel, showed that architects in practically every large city in Ohio are working in unison, as they never have before on post-war planning programs. They realize the great opportunity that this post-war program has given the architectural profession and practically every chapter of A.S.O., as well as the American Institute of Architects, to work zealously together with public officials and public spirited citizens in making surveys of the needs of their communities for all kinds of public building and engineering projects.

They still remember the WPA and realize, that if the building industry and general business is not capable of providing a backlog of work projects, large enough to take up the slack of employment for the millions that will be thrown out of work by the end of the war, the bureaucrats will attempt to do the job for them.

At the annual election held at the close of the afternoon session, E. Milton MacMillan, of Cleveland, was elected to the office of President from first vice-president, succeeding Ralph W. Carnahan, of Dayton, who served two terms as head of the organization. Other officers elected were William A. Vogel, first vice-president; Ralph W. Carnahan, second vice-president; Russell S. Pettey, third vice-president; Cincinnati, and Samuel K. Popkins, treasurer, Cleveland. Ralph C. Kempton, the hard-working executive secretary, was re-elected. The latter, who acts as General Chairman of the Convention, received many compliments from the delegates.

The annual report of President Carnahan showed that he visited practically every Chapter of the A.S.O. during his two-year term of office and had much to do with the unification program which has progressed very successfully throughout the State. The Ohio Plan of Unification as advocated by Mr. Carnahan has received recognition and approval of the officers of the American Institute of Architects. Mr. Carnahan was invited to present his Unification Plan to the Executive Committee of the A.I.A. at its meeting held in Memphis, Dec. 1.

The outstanding report of the Convention or the paper, "First Things First," that the delegates seemed to show the most interest in, was that of Howard Dwight Smith, Chairman of the A.I.A. Columbus Chapter Committee on Public Improvement. The Columbus architects have made an exhaustive survey of public buildings of all types, and are working closely with all civic and industrial associations who have displayed any interest in post-war planning. A number of their preliminary charts and surveys were exhibited at this convention.

A solemn warning was given the architects by Clair W. Ditchy, nationally known architect of Detroit, who said that "unless you unite and work together to preserve private enterprise, your profession is gravely endangered and practice might be destroyed by bureaucrats who would do your thinking for you." The address of Mr. Ditchy, who is a former Great Lakes region director of the A.I.A., featured the annual banquet meeting of the convention held in the Hall of Mirrors of the Deisher-Wallick Hotel. Others who made brief talks at the banquet meeting were Charles Firestone, of Canton; Charles Cellhaus, of Cincinnati, Regional A.I.A. Director of the Great Lakes District; Alex C. Robinson III., of Cleveland, Secretary of the A.I.A., and C. Julian Oberwarth, Membership Representative-at-large for the A.I.A., and Ralph C. Kempton, Executive Secretary of the A.S.O.

OVER-ASSESSMENTS IN KAHN ESTATE

The Treasury Department has reported over-assessments and credits of $188,253 to the estate of Albert Kahn including industrial architect of Detroit, $145,037 to Albert Kahn Associates, Architects and Engineers, Inc., and $74,951 to Louis and Beryl S. Kahn, also of Detroit.

Each case covered the calendar year 1941 except that of the Kahn firm which was for the fiscal year ending Feb. 28, 1942.

GRAND RAPIDS CHAPTER MEETING

The November meeting of Grand Rapids Chapter A.I.A. was held Tuesday evening, November 23rd at the Porter Hotel in Lansing, Mich. Besides the 14 members in attendance the Chapter was honored by Kenneth C. Black of Detroit Chapter as a guest.

Preliminary arrangements were made under the recent amendments to the Chapter By-Laws for the unification of the profession in the Lansing, Jackson and Grand Rapids areas of the Michigan Society of Architects. The Institute, in view of the fact that unification in Grand Rapids Chapter is approaching 80 percent of the Architects in these areas of the Society.

Constructive suggestions were made by Mr. Homer Harper, Chapter Chairman of the Publicity Committee and by Mr. Clarence Ross, Chapter Chairman of the Public Relations Committee.

Applications for corporate membership from John Vandenbogert and James Haveman of Grand Rapids were received.

Harry L. Mead, Secretary of Grand Rapids Chapter, was elected as director to the Board of the Michigan Society of Architects for the remainder of the current year under the new By-Laws.

The December meeting of the Chapter will be held in Grand Rapids.

REAL ESTATE TAXATION

How can we end the chaos in taxation which threatens the stability of real estate and the solvency of local government? Here is the proposal of Myers Y. Cooper of Cincinnati, President of the National Council of Real Estate Taxpayers, and a man having direct personal experience in the construction and real estate fields. Mr. Cooper says that "something can be done about it by reforming an archaic tax system which no longer meets present day requirements."

"The yardstick of taxation has been fixed on a basis of public needs rather than the ability of the property owner to pay. High valuation and high rates, confiscatory in nature, head toward State Socialization of all property. Half of the property in many counties of the Union, is on the tax delinquent list, resulting in sales of urban and rural property at 50 percent of the tax value with a tax delinquency greater than the interest default."

Here are Mr. Cooper's practical suggestions to protect property rights and stimulate home ownership:

1. "A fact-finding agency or commission authorized by Congress to investigate the cost of government on the three levels, Federal, State, and local, to discover and eliminate excessive personnel, unnecessary public expenditures, and the confusion and overlapping of the authority of governmental agencies."

2. "Taxation of real property on a basis of value and income rather than public necessity."

3. "Tax limitation on the total amount of taxes to be levied by all taxing bodies."

4. "Elimination of taxes altogether on modest homes."

5. "An occupancy tax to be paid by the tenant or owner, or shared by them. This would mean a direct occupancy tax instead of an indirect tax paid by the property owner. This suggestion is worthy of serious consideration."

"It is conceivable that the suggestion by the Treasury Committee that 'side by side with the 'occupancy tax,' a comparatively small service fee, facilities, fire protection, and the like,' could easily get out of bounds so that we would have tax duplication instead of cooperation in carrying the tax load."

"Simultaneously the suggestion of a 'development of a clearing house for systematizing Federal payments in lieu of taxes,' would simply mean an easy way for the government to escape taxes if past experiences are to be relied upon. All government income bearing property should pay taxes in like proportion to privately owned property."

Your study of these several proposals is invited on the theory that through cooperation of our industry groups coordinated in the Policy Committee, and working with the Indiana Economic Council and other agencies we may find a common denominator before the next legislative session.
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UNIONISM HAS BECOME AN ISSUE IN ENGINEERING

College Dean Suggests the Answer to Young Graduates Should Be, "If You Aspire to Professional Standing You Had Better Not Join a Union."

By CLEMENT J. FREUND
Dean, College of Engineering, University of Detroit

One thing must be clear before proceeding with this more or less delicate discussion. This article is not inspired. There are no secret collaborators. The article does not in any way represent the policy or viewpoint of the Board of Directors of The Engineering Society of Detroit or the editor of "The Foundation." It is nothing more or less than it pretends to be. Nobody except myself can be held responsible for it or any portion of it.

But I protest that I have given thought to the problem of unionism in engineering. I have had to because it so happens that it is my business to train young engineers.

In that business I have often enough become entangled in unionism perplexities.

Unionism is an issue in engineering. There is no question about it, whether you like it or not. Labor unions are penetrating into engineering occupations. The leading technical union is the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians (F.A.E.C.T.), affiliated with the C.I.O. Officers of the Federation boast of more than 8,000 members, although there is no evidence that they have recruited men of unquestioned professional standing. They have claimed significant progress in organizing the Minnesota Highway Department, Briggs Manufacturing Company of Detroit, Pittsburgh plant of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Company, Rankin plant of the Bethlehem Steel Company, Ambridge plant of the American Bridge Company and the United States Navy yards. They have claimed strong locals in California, Colorado, Wisconsin and New Jersey. In the Federation's 1940 convention they undertook a campaign to require a union label on "all drawings, erection diagrams, surveys, plans, shop and field details and laboratory reports." I could multiply figures, names, places and facts.

I have no quarrel with a legitimate labor union in its proper sphere. If business men have the right to join trade associations and chambers of commerce, then employees have the right to join unions. But that is not now the question. The question now is, what shall be the labor union policy of the engineering profession?

The young engineer who is less than five years out of college seldom has more than a meager income. If he is married and has a growing family, his bills for milk, clothing, groceries and rent may amount to more than he earns. If, then, an alert and aggressive union organizer promises to get him more pay, and right away, the young man will certainly at least listen to what the organizer has to say.

But if he is conscientious he does not join immediately. He is puzzled. He is conscious of the traditions and ideals of the profession. Is it proper for him to join a union? He does not know. It seems to me that he is entitled to an answer and that the engineering profession ought to give him one.

See FREUND—Page 5
A COMPLETE LINE OF ROCK WOOL INSULATION
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NO PERFORMANCES

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Humphrey Bogart — Raymond Massey
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"PARIS AFTER DARK"
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DECEMBER 28, 1943
**E. L. BRANDT**

Ernest L. Brandt, secretary of Engineering Society of Detroit passed away in Highland Park General Hospital at 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, December 14, after a short illness. He had undergone an operation, which was followed by a slight attack of pneumonia. However, he had apparently survived this and his condition was thought to be considerably improved when the end came suddenly.

Perhaps as no other, Ernie Brandt was responsible for the high position held by the E.S.D., as well as for many of its affiliates, of which he was also secretary. He had an almost unlimited and unbelievable capacity for work, and his knowledge of engineering organizations was such that his passing will leave a void impossible to fill.

Ernie took the former Detroit Engineering Society through its most difficult days, during the depression, when all but the most stalwart would give up the ship. He never lost faith, but stuck to it when it moved into Hotel Statler. Then came the opportunity, through the Rackham Foundation, for E.S.D. to have its own home, which stands today as a monument to all that is fine in engineering and education—that splendid edifice in the cultural group of Detroit. It was planned and supervised by the firm of Harley and Ellington, architects and engineers, and Malcolm R. Stirton was the designer. Into its structure went loving care, the pride that makes fine architecture. Somehow it speaks of Ernie Brandt's character, and the meetings we hold there won't seem the same without Ernie. It's too bad that he had only a few years to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

How well we remember the times when the officers and directors of the old D.E.S. debated the question of how they were to keep the organization intact. It is probably a fact that but for Ernie Brandt this would not have been done.

Ernie was 60 years old and lived at 2090 Northwood, Royal Oak.

Through his 20 years service of the Engineering Society of Detroit, and close relationship of that body with the Rackham Foundation, he became resident agent of the latter in the late 30's.

Born in Toledo, he was graduated in engineering by the University of Michigan in 1921, with the degree of bachelor of science in architectural engineering, later serving in the ordnance department of the U. S. Army. His early training was in the office of Warren S. Holmes, Lansing architect.

**R. V. GAY**

Word has just been received of the sudden death of R. V. Gay, A.I.A., of St. Johns, Michigan, on December 16. Details are as follows:

In June of this year Governor Kelly appointed him director of the Michigan Planning Commission, which was considered the most challenging jobs assigned to a single individual in recent years. He lost no time in making the most of his opportunities and worked tirelessly with his commission toward a real post-war construction program. His passing will mean a distinct loss to engineering and to his state.

R. V. had served as chairman of the board of managers of the Michigan Soldiers Home in Grand Rapids. He had been architect for many important buildings throughout Michigan. Following the first World War he spent a year and a half in France, as representative of the University of Michigan, aiding in reconstruction of devastated areas, including the famous Cathedral of Rheims. He had been director of the American Legion state welfare division and active in many phases of legion work.

R. V. was born in St. Johns, Sept. 28, 1895. He graduated at the University of Michigan in 1921, with the degree of bachelor of science in architectural engineering, later serving in the ordnance department of the U. S. Army. His early training was in the office of Warren S. Holmes, Lansing architect.

**KELLY ELECTED IN INDIANA**

John R. Kelley of Indianapolis was elected president of the Indiana Society of Architects at the annual meeting of the organization Dec. 6 in Indianapolis.

Other officers chosen were Richard K. Zimmerly of Indianapolis, first vice-president; Roy C. Worden of South Bend, second vice-president; Theodore L. Steele of Indianapolis, secretary; and Donald E. Compton of Indianapolis, treasurer.

Because of wartime conditions, the conference this year was streamlined into a one-day meeting. Discussions of members were devoted to present problems of the profession and to postwar planning.

**President Ashton Guest**

The meeting closed with a dinner at which Raymond J. Ashton of Salt Lake City, Utah, national president of the American Institute of Architects, discussed postwar architectural prospects. Charles F. Cellarius, regional director of the national organization for the Great Lakes area, was a guest.

Mr. Ashton, before becoming president, was treasurer of the Institute. During that time he was instructed by the Board to raise 10,000 dollars for use in establishing Washington contacts. He refused to comply with the point of view established by that criterion. Instead he proceeded to raise over thirty thousand dollars which has made possible continuation of that important office.

That attitude of mind permeated Mr. Ashton's home-spun philosophy as delivered to his Indiana audience. He has been unwilling to accept half-way measures in dealing with governmental local units or War Department demands on his own personal line. Instead he proceeded to raise over thirty thousand dollars which has made possible continuation of that important office.

His story relating to his personal experience in handling a small town community project linked up with delinquency and other social problems, where the purse strings were held by powerful foreign corporations, was typical of his courage. He demonstrated how he could combine business and social work, and how he became his champions, knowing that they would pay the greater portion of the building cost. This management of personnel and public relations is a big part of the Architects job according to Mr. Ashton, and also one of his greatest compensations.

Another story illustrated his complete willingness to cooperate with the Engineers Corps to the point of extinction (if need be in the war effort) but nevertheless to run his own office without interference if he were to maintain responsibility for the job in question.

Mr. Ashton made an unusually favorable impression. Perhaps that impression consisted mainly of the thought that a professional man working quietly in an area which can seem so remote and unimportant to the press of America, had done an uncommonly good job of managing his own practice with just commonsense methods and ethics.

Salt Lake City produced an architect who has a philosophy of potential value to all his professional brothers.

**DETOUR DIVISION DISBANDED**

Official action was taken last week to disband the Detroit Division of the Michigan Society of Architects and to combine its activities with those of the Detroit Chapter, A.I.A. This became automatic because of Institute membership reaching 80 percent of the combined Division and Chapter membership in the Detroit Division area. This is the first real evidence of unification in Michigan and it is expected to be followed in other areas of the State. Payment of Chapter dues henceforth will include M.S.A. dues and henceforth is only one organization an architect in this area can join—the A.I.A.

**KEYNES TO RESUME PRACTICE**

Hugh T. Keynes, A.I.A., formerly captain in the U. S. Army, has returned to civilian life and will reopen his office for architectural practice. In a letter expressing his appreciation to the Detroit Chapter A.I.A., the Institute, the Michigan Society of Architects and its Detroit Division for waiving his dues during his period of service,
Wishing You . . .

A Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

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FREUND—(Continued from Page 1)

I do not know, of course, what kind of answer the leaders of the profession might formulate, what kind of policy they may some day adopt. But if the young man should come to me and say, "The pressure is on me. Should I join an engineering union?" I think I should counter by asking, "Do you or do you not aspire to professional standing in engineering?" He will demand to know "Just what do you mean by professional standing?"

By professional standing I mean the standing of a comparatively small number of creators and leaders, intellectuals, researchers, organizers and administrators of industries and other engineering projects, who face lay officials and the public, fully conscious that they, and they alone, must answer for what they do. They are universally recognized as professionals. Dr. Wickenden calls them the "inner professional nucleus."

Everybody knows, of course, that there are thousands of men in the broad field of engineering who do not have professional standing, in spite of their skill and excellence. They are the draftsmen, testers, instrument men, checkers, calculators, experimenters, technicians, subordinate functionaries of one kind or another, who do not assume full responsibility but work under direction. Dr. Wickenden has referred to them as "the great engineering fraternity."

Everybody knows, likewise, that college graduates rarely pass from the outer "fraternity" into the "inner professional nucleus" before they are four or five years out of college. Very many of them, unfortunately, never achieve professional standing at all.

There may be no sharp line between professionals and others, as in medicine or law, and many thinking engineers have no desire whatever to draw such a line, but it is never difficult to distinguish those engineers who clearly have professional standing from those who clearly do not have professional standing.

I tell the young man all this, or remind him of it and then say, "If you aspire to full professional standing in engineering and all that it implies, dignity, respect of the community, respect of your fellows, you had better not join a union."

I say that to him because it seems to me that a profession and all that it implies, dignity, respect of the community, is the social and economic reward for the best and most unselfish and public spirited engineer to accept a rate of pay which a union agent who never heard of him has determined for him and a thousand other engineers, in a single negotiation with client or employer? Hardly.

Again, the chief aims of professions and of unions are as far apart as the poles. The principal purpose of professions is to advance the public well-being through the power of the individual, if need be, the power of the well-being in preference to the well-being of the individual member of the profession. The principal purpose of labor unions is to fight for adequate, or constantly more and more compensation for the members, depending upon conditions. There are secondary aims, too, to increase membership, to secure contracts with employers, to exert political influence, to control the workingmen in the steel or shipping or manufacturing or service industry, to organize strikes—but these are merely auxiliary to the primary aim. One may read page after page of union proceedings and union publications without finding a single word to suggest that the officers or members ever give thought to the public advantage.

The F.A.E.C.T. is a typical labor union in this respect. Its concern is for the well-being of its members. Prior to the 1940 convention of the Federation, President Lewis A. Wickenden declared that the majority of technical employees are "beginning to raise questions relating to job tenure, salary, proper classification, discrimination against older men, their relations to production employees," and announced that "Our coming convention will seek to answer those questions and develop a program of action for their satisfactory solution."

News releases from the F.A.E.C.T. have stressed this position from the start. The first news release from the Federation "defeated the unfair wage provisions of the N.R.A." When the Society of Designing Engineers affiliated with the F.A.E.C.T., Mr. John L. Lewis wrote to them that "I feel that considerable advantage in bettering the economic position of the technical worker will accrue from this consolidation."

The F.A.E.C.T. boasts of wage increases in Los Angeles, New Jersey, the Queensborough Housing Project of New York City, and in the W.P.A.

All this is as it should be, for a labor union; this sort of activity is the principal business of labor unions. But there has certainly been little or nothing in the history of the F.A.E.C.T. to convince anybody that the organization has, in the words of Mr. James H. Herron, "any serious concern for the public welfare, or at least not that type of concern for the public welfare in preference to the welfare of the professional group welfare which is a characteristic of any vocation which pretends to be a profession."

It is unlikely that the officers of the F.A.E.C.T. will ever invite Dr. Vannevar Bush to speak before a convention of the Federation and tell the members, as he told the American Engineering Council in 1939, that "In every one of the professional groups, however, will be found the initial central theme intact—they minister to the people. Otherwise they no longer endure as professional groups;" and that "engineers go along heartily in developing a professional consciousness, a code of action, a philosophy which implements a desire to be a truly professional group, oriented primarily toward the advancement of the public health, safety, comfort and progress;" and that engineers should strive for "heights of true professional
attainment...where the watchword is that old, old theme which has never lost its power, and which may yet save a sorry world, simple ministration to the people.

Can an engineer be a labor union member, attend meetings regularly as a good member should, listen repeatedly to discussions about wage rates, pay increases, strikes, strike votes, strike benefits, picketing contract arrangements, membership campaigns and organization projects, all having to do with getting more and more for the members (however badly they may need it), and still cherish as the paramount objective of his work, his profession and his life, the well-being of the public, "simple ministration to the people?"

A few exceptional men possibly can, the preponderant majority cannot. The majority must devote themselves exclusively either to the union, and union aims and purposes, or to the profession, and professional aims and purposes.

At this point my young man may interrupt to say, "All that may be true as far as professional engineering is concerned but I'm no professional engineer, and won't be for a long time. I'm not in responsible charge. I work under direction. Don't you think I should join the union now for what it has to offer? I can use more pay, you know. Afterwards, when I become professional I can quit the union. Why shouldn't I now have what the union can get for me?"

I am sure I should reply, "That seems possible in theory but you can't make it work out in practice. While in the union you would, and quite properly, lean on the union, and permit union officials to fight your battles for you. You would inevitably acquire habits and viewpoints of dependence as a result, and you could not be utterly dependent and at the same time build up the kind of personal, individual reputation for engineering competence which professional status calls for. Do you think you can suddenly discard habits and viewpoints of dependence when you are thirty-five years old, resign from the union, trust to your own resources for the first time in your life, and begin that late to build the personal reputation which you should have been building, and which your contemporaries have been building for fifteen years? I think you could not. The union will not help you build a reputation. The union is not interested in personal reputations, the union is interested in the bargaining power of hundreds like you, massed together.

"If you desperately need a larger income, if you and your wife cannot possibly exist on the salary which you can independently obtain, and if you have abundant evidence that the union men actually obtain for you the greater income you must have, then join the union.

"But let me warn you that the price which you must pay for these immediate advantages is almost certain exclusion from professional status later. You cannot be a union man now and a professional man later; you must now choose one or the other. I appreciate that it may be a terribly difficult choice, but you must choose.

"Likewise join the union if you have no desire whatever to become professional, if you lack the confidence to strike out for yourself, if you feel most secure in a group of your fellows, if, perhaps, you are secretly afraid that you will always belong to the multitude.

"If, on the other hand, you and your family can somehow struggle along through the lean and early years, if you can stretch and stretch again to make ends meet, if you are eager to become professional, if you know you can excel and if you are making progress, then you should certainly stay out of the union."

But the young engineer may continue, "It's easy for you to talk that way but you don't know what I'm up against. I am making progress, my pay can make ends meet and I want very much to become a professional engineer. But our drafting room is practically a closed shop. I don't care about the union, but I can't stay in the place unless I sign up."

I can think of only one answer. That one answer is, "Quit your job and find another just as soon as you possibly can. Oh, yes, I know that that is a harsh thing for me to say, and probably a hard thing for you to do, for many reasons, but I say it because I am most firmly convinced that professional progress and union membership simply cannot go hand in hand."

Conclusions
I do not see how engineers, the engineering profession and labor unions can possibly evade the following conclusions:
1. Draftsmen, testers, technicians, instrument men, calculators, inspectors, operators and others in engineering type occupations will find it practically impossible to achieve full professional standing if they belong to labor unions.
2. Labor unions are just as appropriate among draftsmen, testers, etc., who do not aspire to professional standing as they are in any other high class, skilled craft.
3. If great numbers of professional engineers everywhere affiliate with labor unions, either because they choose to or because they are forced to, engineering occupations may continue to flourish at the profession of engineering, as such, will most assuredly disappear from the face of the earth.

OCCUPANCY TAX
By Bror G. Dahlberg, President, Celotex Corporation

When the planners complete the blueprints of Tomorrow's Town, transplanting them into reality is a job for the building business. Because it is a business it would be well for us to remember that: (1) the building industry recovers and not before; (2) because the building industry is a business and not an eleemosynary institution it will function when it can see profits; (3) it has been dying under the blows of its own beneficiaries—business, labor and government—and has been living for the last ten years on public charity. If I were king I would like to say there will be no Tomorrow's Town unless something is done about the city's share in crippling the building and housing industry.

A city is not a mere governmental unit, it is a huge operating utility company. Just as the power company furnishes heat and light, the city operates schools, lights and streets, collects wastes, runs hospitals, clinics, health activities, playgrounds, recreation, police and fire protection and other services. It may send you a bill for your water, but it turns out the water other services and charges you for them as taxes. The cost of all these services is passed on to the real estate industry as part of its operational cost. We would not expect the light and power industry to add to its bill the cost of all the educational, health, charitable and other services operated by the town. Yet we force the businessman who operates the housing enterprise to add all these costs to his operational budget and charge them as part of the cost of a house to live in.

There is such a thing as the incidence of taxation. That describes the point at which the tax hits, the spot which it burdens. By focusing the entire burden of taxation on a given industry it is possible to destroy it even though the taxes are paid by much the same people in the end. This describes the greatest blow to Tomorrow's Town, transplanting them into reality is a job for the building business. Because it is a business it would be well for us to remember that: (1) the building industry recovers and not before; (2) because the building industry is a business and not an eleemosynary institution it will function when it can see profits; (3) it has been dying under the blows of its own beneficiaries—business, labor and government—and has been living for the last ten years on public charity. If I were king I would like to say there will be no Tomorrow's Town unless something is done about the city's share in crippling the building and housing industry.

What must be done? (1) Some of these costs which peculiarly benefit real estate by adding to its intrinsic value, such as fire protection, may be charged against the property. (2) Other service charges of the city might well be collected as a charge against the owner of the property. The great bulk of the taxes should be spread around upon other energies of the city's life—either through taxes on other industries as well as real estate or excise taxes or sales taxes. This is not just a matter of making it easier for the landlord. The object of this is to arrange the city's taxes so that a great industry whose health is essential to the life of the city and the nation may be released to go once again into production and expansion. Reforming city taxes will not, however, do the whole job. Business, labor and State and Federal Government must make their contributions as well.

MRS. KELLY HEADS HOUSING GROUP
Mrs. Harriet D. Kelly has been elected president of the Detroit Housing Commission to fill the unexpired term of Ethan W. Thompson who died last week. She will serve as president until the annual meeting the first week in February when another election will be held.
A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As Christmas comes in Forty-Three,
With the World at war on land, and sea;
We battling for Justice and for Right,
And to slay the fiends of greed and might.

Turn we once more in supplicant mood
And prayerfully ask our Merciful God,
To aid us and guide us on,
Until the Cause for Good is won.

The Christian Nations, the world around,
By fealty and in honor band,
Have pledged, their troth and destiny.
To free the world from tyranny;

Let us pledge ourselves to right the wrong,
That greed and hatred may not prolong
The chaos and suffering and dismay,
Loosed upon the world today.

Give us oh God, the grace and strength,
Throughout this Land, its breadth and length,
And the will to do and the power to win;
Let us keep this Land worth living in;

Let us pledge ourselves to right the wrong,
That greed and hatred may not prolong
The chaos and suffering and dismay,
Loosed upon the world today.

Give us oh God, the grace and strength,
Throughout this Land, its breadth and length,
And the will to do and the power to win;
Let us keep this Land worth living in;

Bless Thou our Sons and Daughters brave,
Who have gone forth to Peace to save;
And when the war clouds roll away,
And we see the dawn of that Blessed day,

May Peace and Good Will in all the World abide.
We pray for Thy blessings, this Christmas-tide.
A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

BILL CORY.

A Christmas card from Capt. Neil Gabler "somewhere in the South Pacific" indicates he is in the thick of things. One can readily understand that Neil will give a good account of himself, wherever he may be. Address: U.S.M.G.R., Hq. Sq., M.A. 611, Navy 140, 1st Marine Air Wing, Fleet P.O., San Francisco.

V - - - — mail from Emiel Becsky, in the form of "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Island X, somewhere in the S. W. Pacific" calls to mind that likeable chap so well and favorably known to Detroit architects. Address: CMIC, USNR, 26th Naval Constr. Bn., Co. B, Fleet P.O., San Francisco.

And, through Col. H. H. Burdick, Real Estate Editor of the Detroit Free Press, Sam Kaplan, also well known in architectural circles here, makes known that he is a Technical Sergeant "somewhere in the British Isles," working hard but still interested in knowing what is going on back home. Address: H. & S., 336th Engrs., C Bn., A.P.O. 516, care of Postmaster, New York.
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The WPB recommends that every war plant have an adequate and well-designed lighting system, to increase production, improve workmanship, reduce accidents, reduce spoilage and increase speed of inspection.

Detroit Edison lighting advisors are prepared to cooperate with architects in planning good lighting for war industries, for the most efficient use of materials and electricity.

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Mr. William Edward Kapp, president of the Detroit Chapter of The American Institute of Architects, calls attention to the “Notice—Nominations for Fellowship” appearing on page 20 of the November, 1943 issue of The Octagon. In this notice Mr. Frederick H. Meyer, F.A.I.A., chairman of the Jury of Fellows, The American Institute of Architects, announces that the next meeting of the Jury will be held in advance of the 1944 Annual Meeting of the Institute, and that the closing date for filing nominations of members for advancement to Fellowship is December 31, 1943.

President Kapp solicits privileged communications from Detroit Chapter Members, suggesting the names of members for nomination for Fellowships. The authority and power to advance a member to Fellowship rests with the Jury of Fellows but nominations may be made by vote of the governing board of a chapter. It is to guide the Chapter Board and to carry out the desires of the chapter membership that president Kapp invites chapter members to make recommendations.

Because the closing date for filing nominations is Dec. 31, it is imperative that, if recommendations are to be made, they be received by the Chapter Board within the next few days. These suggestions should be made by letter, to any member of the Chapter Board, and should be considered confidential. However, it would be helpful if at the same time a telephone call is made to the officer informing him of the recommendations in the letter to follow.

The Detroit Chapter now has five Fellows: Messrs. Marcus R. Burrowes, Emil Lorch, George D. Mason, Richard E. Raseman, and Ernest Wilby.

Institute by-laws state that a corporate member may be advanced to Fellowship if he is in good standing in The Institute at the time of his nomination and has been for not less than ten consecutive years, and if he has notably contributed to the advancement of the profession of architecture, in design or in the science of construction or by literature or educational service or by service to The Institute or any chapter or state association member, or by public service.

President Kapp and the Detroit Chapter Board believe that the Detroit Chapter has in its membership some who deserve to be so recognized, and in order to encourage chapter members to take part in chapter affairs this opportunity is extended to make your desires known. The time is short so—

DO IT NOW!

Mr. William Orr Ludlow, F.A.I.A., member of the Institute’s Committee on Public Information urges chapters to issue statements for publication directing the public’s attention to the importance of planning now for post war building.

He calls attention to such a statement issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers, a report of which appears in the November, 1943 issue of The Octagon, on page 6. This statement reads, in part, as follows:

“Every effort should be made by organizations of realtors, by chambers of commerce, by labor organizations, by financing organizations, and by all other business groups serving this particular field to stimulate these potential home buyers to acquire their land and to complete their plans and specifications now so that they will be in position to contract for home construction immediately following cessation of hostilities.”

Commenting further on the statement, Mr. Ludlow says: “The A.I.A. and other organizations have made from time to time somewhat similar statements, but the particular fact that interests us architects at the present time has to a very limited degree reached the public; that fact is that for many reasons those who want to build after the

See POST WAR BUILDING—Page 4
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WEEKLY BULLETIN
THE CASE RECORDS OF A PSYCHOLOGIST

Sense of Humor Is Needed by Many of Our Professional Men

From the EVANSVILLE (Ind.) PRESS

A California newspaper publisher told me of a local surgeon who almost had apoplexy at the thought of having the local medical society sponsor paid advertisements. But this same doctor grew angry because the newspaper didn't have available space to run a half-column article and picture of himself, which he wanted free! Would that our professional men had, a better sense of humor! Read what Mr. Barrett says concerning the Texas dentists.

* * *

By DR. GEORGE W. CRANE

Case A-209: Ted Barrett is the city editor of The Dallas News.

"After jamming a law through the Texas Legislature making it illegal for any dentist to advertise," he wrote, the dentists of Texas have come forth with a scheme whereby "they would get all the advertising they want in the newspaper which the dental society calls ethics." Of course they would, for they are being paid for advertising, but then they want the newspapers to run the same advertising, but then want the newspapers to run the same advertising for free. "This rabbit-out-of-the-hat stunt by which the dentists evade their own law is achieved by the simple expedient of dubbing the promotional advertising "educational service" and thus having the newspapers contribute the space.

"These ethical gentlemen are now making use of the State Health Department to peddle their publicity. "The new dentists' law, which bans advertising on pain of loss of license, a $500 fine and six months in jail, makes the state courts responsible for enforcement of this fastidious bit which the dental society calls ethics."

Editors and Advertising

"Naturally, if advertising is not decent or profitable, no reputable publication wants to take money for it, but it does seem that if honest promotion of the exchange of services or goods is ethical when not paid for, it would be equally ethical and profitable at so much per inch."

"I am afraid that this failure to realize that newspapers must have revenue to keep going, is prevalent on the part of many people besides dentists, and particularly among the other professionals."

Dentists and physicians in past generations have worked themselves up into apoplectic fits about such topics as advertising. They have feigned horror at such desecration of their supposedly sacred professions.

Where Doctors Err

"It is unethical!" they have exclaimed in exaggerated self-righteousness.

Mr. Barrett has properly indicted this "whited sepulcher" form of professional hypocrisy.

Advertising is the modern tool of adult education. Perhaps it has been wrong for individual doctors to advertise, but certainly the dental and medical societies could run group sponsored advertisements with great profit to themselves and society in general.

Indeed, some of the dental societies in several states are already doing this very thing, and other state dental organizations are soon planning to launch similar paid advertising campaigns. More power to them!

No Sense of Humor

When a profession affects such horror at the thought of advertising, but then wants the newspapers to run the same advertising copy for them but as a free bit of publicity, such a profession has no sense of humor.

The rest of the public laughs at this affectation regarding "ethics" just as Mr. Barrett has so ably ridiculed this asinine attitude.
war would do well to purchase property and have plans prepared now.

"Now there are a lot of architects I know in New Jersey, who have clients to whom they would like to get this message, but they feel that a statement of their own in a letter to such persons might not carry very much weight. But suppose they could say here is a statement by the New Jersey Chapter of the American Institute of Architects which is of considerable interest—Etc. So here is a suggestion that the Chapter make a statement such as I have mentioned, perhaps embodying the statement of the A.S.C.E., or of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, get it carried by the press if possible, but at any rate have printed copies available to all of our members to send out to their prospective clients."

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THAT POSTWAR HOUSE

By L. MORGAN YOST, A.I.A.
Associate Editor, American Lumberman

It has been determined that the postwar automobile will be exactly the same as the 1942 model. It has not been determined that the postwar house will be exactly like the 1776 model, which apparently was the model used in 1942.

The automobile long ago sufficed off the resemblance to the carriage that it had in 1905 and few sentimentalists wept. The house could be a real home, full of comfort and convenience, not a mere cast off cocoon of an eighteenth century myth, if we would but design and build with our present knowledge and materials.

We need not wait for the production of new materials and new fixtures to produce a postwar home. It is merely a matter of design. There were homes built before the war by people of imagination that were far in advance of the publicized things that were generally produced. They were built with materials then available, obviously. Those same materials will be available after the war without waiting. Why, then, do we have all the objections in some of the trade press to publicizing the postwar house?

The manufacturers are planning for postwar. It is perfectly true that many of the new products and materials will take some time to get into production. But in the meantime, after the war, it would be the admission of the greatest lack of ability and imagination if the construction end of the industry tolerates the old shopworn versions, alike as peas, of the alleged Kape Kod Kolonial.

A chef mixes brains with the same old ingredients and gets a concoction par excellence. The construction industry can mix brains with the same old ingredients and produce a home par excellence.

The 1942 automobile was advanced and well advertised. Those few real 1942 houses that were advanced were not well advertised. The 1942 automobile will not look new to the public. The 1942 PW house will look new to the public and will have a great advantage in the intensely competitive postwar market. Will the construction industry muf the chance again?

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT DROPS

The current decline in construction will have released about half a million men for other employment by the end of 1943, the War Manpower Commission predicts. Since the wartime peak of 2,190,000 men in the fall of 1942, construction employment has fallen steadily until it reached about 1,066,000 in the same period of this year. Labor market information indicates that the decline will continue to about 600,000 or 700,000 in January 1944, and to 500,000 or 600,000 in July, 1944. These estimated total employment figures for 1944 may be higher since some projects are being held schedule and there is also a possibility that layoffs on many of them are being postponed by reduction of long work-weeks. However, the decline is inevitable even if its full impact is delayed.

Between July and November of this year more than half of 267,000 construction workers released were in areas of acute labor shortages, thereby facilitating their rapid reabsorption into industry. In addition, approximately 19,000 workers were released in areas anticipating a labor shortage, where the demand for male labor was strong.

In areas where the labor supply is adequate the War Manpower Commission is recruiting displaced construction workers for transfer to unskilled construction workers are readily absorbed in a large number of war industries where the need for their labor is urgent. Skilled and semi-skilled workers, the Commission states, can best be utilized in shipbuilding. Recent occupational studies show that 40 of the 90 construction occupations are to be found in shipbuilding and that the rest are closely related.

Many construction skilled can also be used in aircraft plants, foundries and machine shops and for the skilled occupations common to all industries.
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