



NORTHWEST ARCHITECT

WHERE DO WE EAT?
DOOR CLOSERS
IMPRESSIONS OF MEXICO
DESIGN FOR BEAUTY

Convention Plans
Minnesota Association of
Architects
Duluth
August 22-23

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A PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The increasing volume of day labor construction, even in private industry, may be taken as indicative of the need of a public relations program.

The AGC has considered the problem in detail at several recent national conventions and is now laying plans for a definite program.

Such a program is planned to go beyond the industry's immediate sphere to businessmen in general and beyond that field to the public as a whole. It will naturally stress the merits of the contract system, as well as the interdependence of all elements in the industry.

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Editorial Comment

PACKAGED PULLMANS FOR PROFIT

THAT of course is not the whole of this month's special story, but it is one objective of a twenty-year laboratory study reported here only in part under the title "Where Do We Eat" (and be comfortable).

This detail drawing was only one of the steps in the proof that good planning is not a clever arrangement of spaces and objects, but an attempt to keep things out of people's way.

"A place for everybody and everybody happily in place"—architects often seem to forget that men and women must actually live in their arrangements.

Reports of Mr. Purcell's studies of Pullmans and kitchenettes have appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 1925, and in the "Small Home" of the Architects Small House Service Bureau, 1931. The *Monitor* article and this drawing were used as an approved example of "descriptive writing to accompany an explanatory drawing" in a textbook of college English entitled "Modern Feature Writing" by Dean Harrington of Northwestern University.

(Advertisers please read note at the bottom of page 6 of my stuff).



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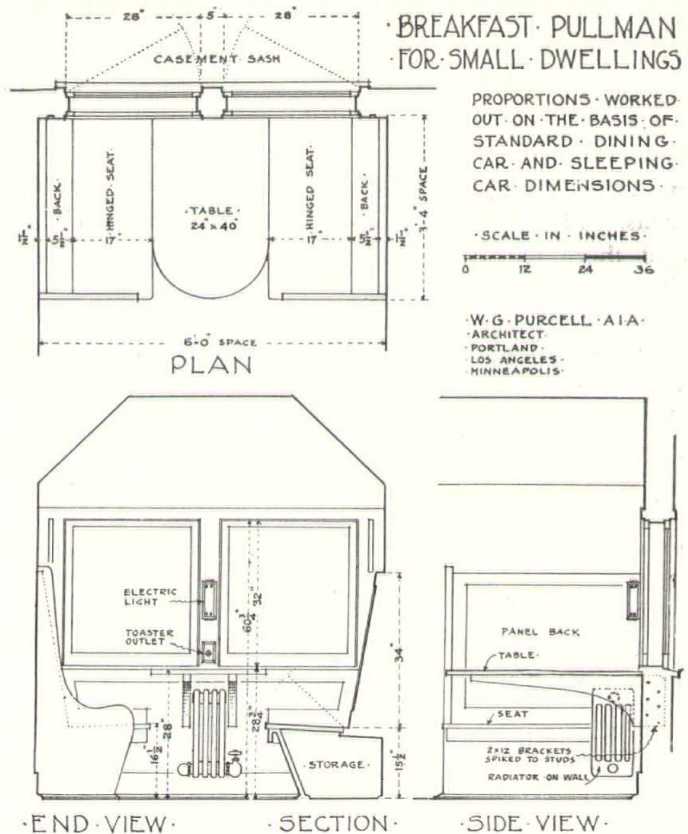
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See "Where Do We Eat" on Page 4



LEST WE FORGET

Statics and Dynamics of Architecture

The works of man are delicately related to himself, and elaborately a part of himself. They conform in their essence to the same cosmical program as the mind and the soul of man.

An art work may be defined in terms that correspond with life itself, as divided into its two phases—the Static and Dynamic. All art work may be so classified.

The Statics of Architecture concern the quiet powers within the structural forms of the pier, the column, the lintel, the arch and dome, as well as the minor kindred forms directly descended from these. These indwelling powers are universal and do not change.

The Dynamics of Architecture concern the play of the human heart, soul and impelling will upon the purely Static forms, and *change*, eternally *change* as human beings vary.

George Grant Elmslie 1912

During something less than a decade now we architects have become so much absorbed in a sort of crossword puzzle approach to a world of putting buildings ingeniously together, that we have lost sight of the dynamics of our art.

The world of living man and his better nature never called in greater anguish for what the architect was created to do. Let's not muffle the next era as we did the last one.

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WHERE DO WE EAT?

by William Gray Purcell

★ IDEAS at work—that's life. Life, in turn, produces ideas. They are seeds. Seed ideas fall into need fields and there they sprout. Wise people work to provide them a chance to grow.

But the joy riders mistake speed for need. Thinking hurts. They just look at an idea and give it a whirl. They always mistake the looks for the works. So they bang along destroying the good life which grows up around men with ideas at work.

The breakfast nook idea, along after the first World War, fell into a big need. For housekeepers it changed waste effort into work with art in it. In only a few years most new houses, big and little, built across America, acquired special places for casual meals which for obvious reasons came to be generally known as "Pullmans."

What Began It All

Well, more interest in automobiles, fewer good maid-servants, simplified ideas of living, social unwillingness to surrender to the old shirtsleeve eat-in-the-kitchen idea, a short cut which constantly pressed on the hur-



"VISTA AVENUE, 1920"

After building this one we revised our breakfast nook layouts on the basis of measured drawings made in 1922 of Pullman trains. Here the seats are too far from the table, the window glass line too high above it and the mullion between the sash is an obstruction. The jade green glazed tile table top has proved very satisfactory. It is carried on wood cantilevers still firm after twenty years' hard use.

Don'ts

DON'T plan breakfast nook seats with backs to window.

Food only looks attractive when first served, and everyone likes to look out the window, especially first thing in the morning.

DON'T get the window too high.

Glass line 2½" above the table—not more! People tend to look out and down, want to see flowers, and the breakfast birds without craning their necks.

DON'T make a narrow window.

People's heads turn easiest on a horizontal axis—they best like to look "around" unhindered.

DON'T make a tall window.

It's usually restless in feeling, brings in too much cold sky light. The housewife will instinctively cover the top half of any tall window with curtains or a window shade and you will thereafter heat a lot of window that's never used.

DON'T plan your breakfasting place in some dark inside corner of the kitchen and expect an electric light to supply your emotional vitamins.

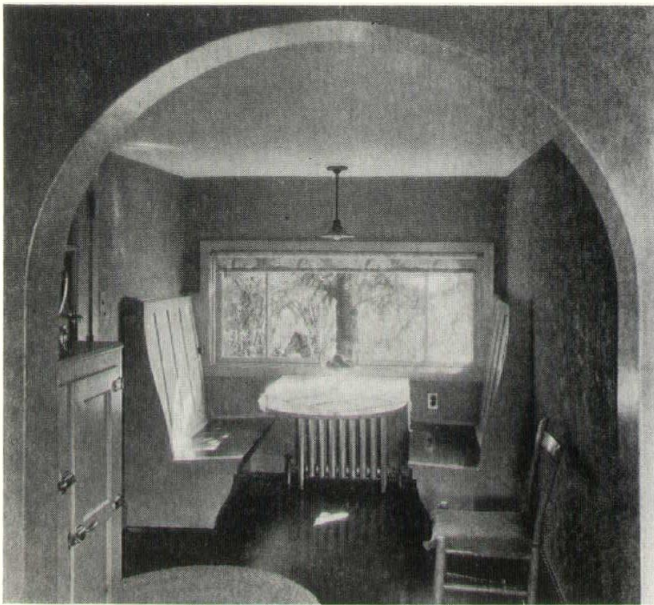
ried housewife. From all these circumstances of the new day and many more, undoubtedly came the idea of bringing the efficiency and the romance of our American dining car into the home. With so obvious an origin it is surprising that so much that is useful in the dining car arrangement, or in the proportions of the Pullman sleeping car "section" with its portable table in place, should have been entirely missed in the tens of thousands of these little formal annexes to the equally modern kitchenette which we propose to discuss in our next story.

The writer has visited a very large number of new houses in the Middle West and on the Pacific coast and has been continuously surprised at the absence of any careful thought about the "breakfast nook." If only the mechanical elements of table, seats and an electric light could be accounted for, that seemed sufficient whether these utilities would work together or not.

Careful Measurements Made

In our office we had been studying these Pullmans and adjusting their conveniences with much care, but upon viewing such a procession of unsuccessful ones everywhere we resolved to check up on both requirements and possibilities, and so improve on our breakfast nook design and detail. Thus it came about that back in 1922 on our next trip west by Standard Pullman

NORTHWEST ARCHITECT



"LAKE OSWEGO, 1927"

This Pullman corner shows the influence of the railway train. It follows our first detail standards except that the table is larger, the seat arms eliminated for more comfortable access, the window much improved. The electric light is not good, the fixture was planned for a tubular translucent fabric skirt about 10" x 24" attached to ceiling for spotting the light down on the table.

train, measured drawings were made of the sleeping car "section," and seating unit of a dining car.

The first essential is to secure a satisfying sense of window relations and this rests on practical acknowledgment that the window is a "sitting down" window. To keep the romance of train travel, the window sills must be level with the table and the window heads must not be high. The windows should invite one who is seated to look abroad and down at the yard and flowers. It is not necessary "to see out" while one is standing up and in practice it takes away from the charm and coziness to give that much height to the windows.

Seating Difficulties Overcome

The next essential is that the benches, if any, have the proportions and comfort of a standard dining chair and bear the same relation to the table edge as that naturally established by a person when he unconsciously draws his chair to a satisfactory position at table. With the benches where they should be for seated comfort, there is a resulting awkwardness in getting in to be seated. This is corrected by rounding the end of the table, a detail that has proved very practical in a variety of breakfast place arrangements.

The glare of the electric light should be kept out of the eyes and softened with a shade or lantern. It should not hang in the line of vision between the several persons at the table.

In a number of instances we have made these table tops of square tesserae in glazed tiles, three-quarter-inch squares, with a slight variation in color and with either a round tile moulding or a narrow strip of oak to finish off the edge. The top may also be finished with linoleum, or made of one slab of terrazzo. Black or white glass may also be used, but not marble, as it tends to stain.

Practical Details

The legs under the usual breakfast table are a great nuisance, and in both photographs a method is shown

by which the table is supported on projecting wood brackets. The absence of legs makes for great convenience in mopping and dusting under the table. If securely bolted to the structural studding of the house through tight bored holes, so as not to split the thin edge of the curved heel of the cantilever plank, this projecting bracket can be made sufficiently strong to support a person sitting on the end of the table.

We also found that if the dressed 2" x 12" stock from which the tapered brackets were to be cut, were first bolted between two properly spaced studs, and this 2" x 12" stud plank afterwards sawed and shaped

Do's

Plan both tables and chairs an inch or so lower than standard. It makes for intimacy.

Design the seats or benches, if any, in chair proportions so people will relax at meals.

Develop the ceiling of the nook or arch leading to it to give a cozy sense.

If you want a larger Pullman make the table wider and longer and the seats longer, but keep the table edge in the same relation to the seat edge.

Make the Pullman the decorative accent of your kitchen color scheme—but if you like red—be careful. A little paprika on your beans tastes fine—too much spoils the dish. Red is a good zip but the brighter it is, the smaller will be an acceptable spot of it.

Of peach	plenty
Of coral.....	not quite so much
Of chinese red.....	some
Of tomato.....	still less
Of magenta or cerise.....	a touch
Of fire engine red.....	none

In planning places for casual meals do remember that the lift to your feelings is more important than saving extra steps. It was the fun of eating in a dining car that woke up America to how practical it all was.

to a tapering curve as shown, there was thus no danger of the heel splitting off at the bottom.

Incidentally, we have found these structural brackets very useful in many ways. We use them for supporting beds in sleeping porches and for double decker bunks in mountain cabins. If the springs be raised to standard hospital bed height, 32" to the top of the mattress, there is an ample floor space free of obstructions under the bed or bunk for blanket and bedding chests on rollers, quickly available at night. The always troublesome

under-bed area, thus clear of bed legs and convenient for the daily dust-mopping, makes a small porch or bunk room seem larger and so much less cluttered up with furniture. Where there are double-decker bunks the upper one being bolted to the wall is not in contact

with the other bed, one sleeper does not tend to waken the other. And the 32" high beds are not only very agreeable for both sleep and daytime siesta but people do not sit on the freshly made bed, bete noir of all good housekeepers.

Here is an Idea

Here is an idea for our friends the builders, the manufacturers and those who sell building materials.

The "Vista Avenue" type of breakfast nook could be factory made of light plywood construction by assembly line methods, sold as a ready-to-use unit and delivered to customers by truck. If thoroughly insulated, conventional foundation walls could be dispensed with and the entire unit rested on a single concrete pier and footing combination precast and delivered by truck. Or the buyer could make his own pier.

The roof over the low octagonal ceiling as shown in the photograph would be low enough to come under most bungalow eaves.

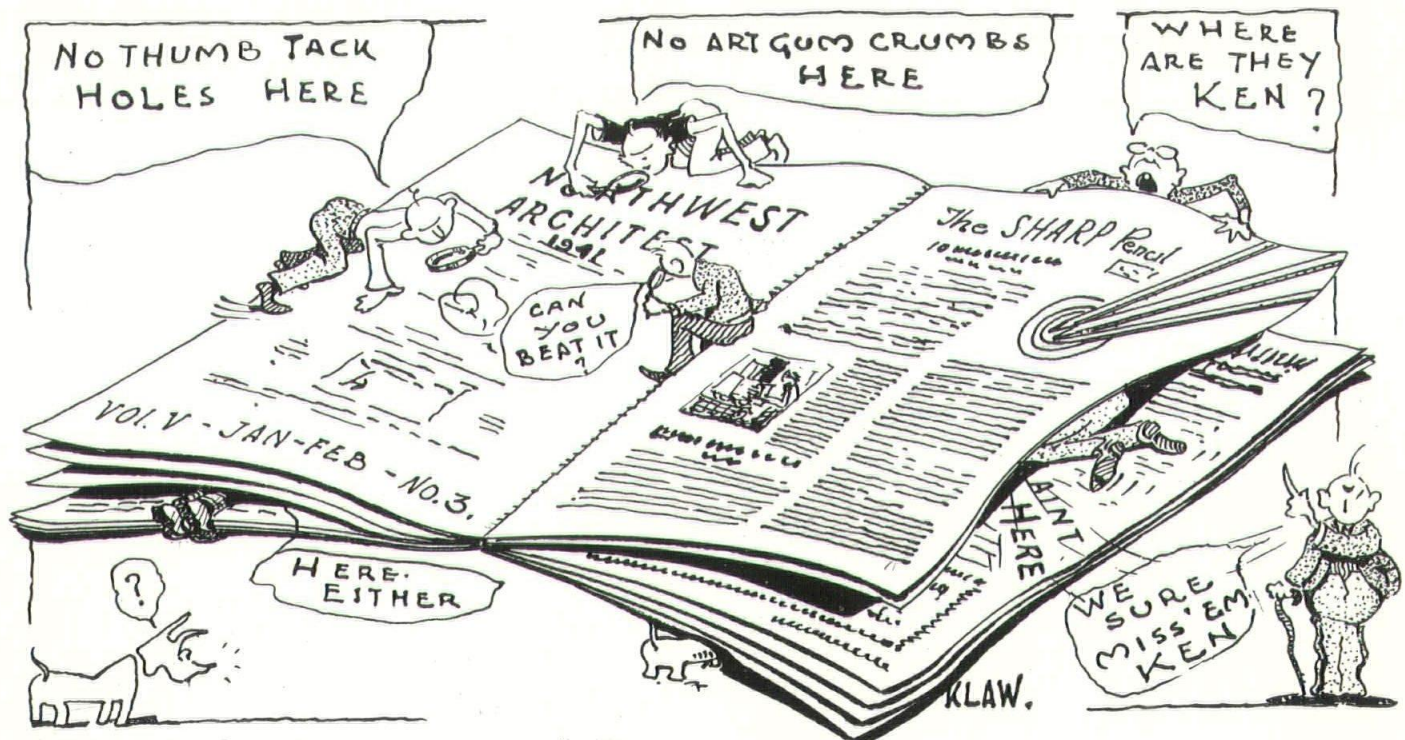
The opening to be cut in any kitchen wall to receive this packaged room would be easily made presentable in completing the joint between the new and the old work but it is likely that in most instances the installation of the unit would include repainting kitchen to match and a new linoleum floor continuity. The unit could be sold painted or in the natural wood. The whole project constitutes a most attractive piece of merchandise. Its sales appeal lies in the "trailer" zone, practical gadgetry as house and home recreation.

It is small enough to be floor sampled in department stores and delivered from warehouse stock.

In view of the very large numbers of old houses with no Pullman provisions or with an unsatisfactory arrangement for casual eating, together with the current emphasis on rehabilitation of residence property due to the favorable F.H.A. loans for such purposes there would seem to be a real need for prefabricated units of this kind.

Many men who like to work about the house would buy the unit and install it themselves. Full directions and dimension sheets can be provided for owner installation, with delivery when opening in wall is ready and supporting pieces ready. Three men and a dolly would easily see it in place out of a delivery truck.

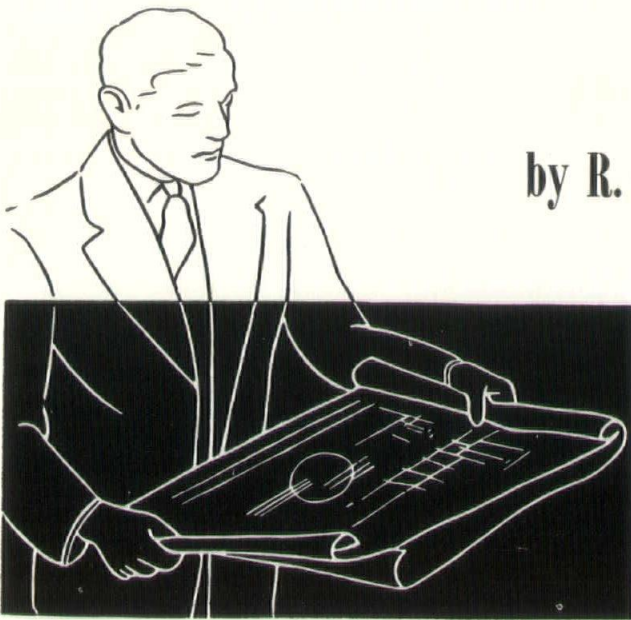
During the past week I visited a very attractive small housekeeping apartment formed along these lines from an old bungalow bedroom and sleeping porch. An electric stove, sink and refrigerator unit, together with Pullman accommodations similar to that described above provided the equivalent of a three room apartment and it rents for \$18.00 per month. At a cost of about \$900 the owner had added an immediate producing capital value of \$1500 to an old property with a good net interest return and full charge off in ten or twelve years.



So Say We All

DOOR CLOSERS

by R. G. Stronach, New Haven, Conn.



Application

It is always desirable, for very best performance, to attach the closer to the Hinge Side of the door. However, in the case of Exit Doors, which must by law open out, a different application is advisable. In order to protect the closers from the weather and low cold test exposures, it is desirable to apply the closers on the inside of the doors. In doing this, for best performance, it is necessary to secure the closer to some type of a bracket fastened to the frame or buck of the door nearest the hinge side (in most cases a corner or soffit bracket) and the foot of the closer fastens to the top rail of the door.

Occasionally, when it is necessary to install a closer on the inside of the door, the door is so low in height that the closer mounted on a bracket would project so far down as to be an obstruction or hazard to persons passing through the door when opened. In this case a Parallel Arm Application is provided in which the closer is fastened directly to the top rail of the door and the lever arms extend out somewhat parallel to the door, and in turn, by means of a special foot, the arms fasten to the soffit of the door buck. In this case the closer moves open with the door and the only obstruction in the opening is the horizontal movement of the lever arms with a downward projection of only about two or three inches below the buck. This application is used only in emergencies as both the checking power of the closer is less than when a regular application is used and there is much less spring power developed for closing a door against a strong draft to blow it open.

Construction Difficulties

A great many problems are encountered in the manufacture of door closers. In the first place, making the case or housing itself presents a real difficulty. The metal—made of cast iron—must be light in weight (preferably about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ " thick when machined) and of as uniform thickness as possible. Where there are thick sections of metal, the cooling of these spots must necessarily be slower than in the thinner sections, and a consequent porosity in the metal is developed. The grain of the metal must be very close and there can be no porosity in the checking cylinder of a closer as the checking liquid is under tremendous pressure at times and a leakage through porous spots

would be prohibitive to the continued performance of the closer and also encourage damage suits when dripping down from the closer. The grain of the metal, as stated above, must be fine and close, usually denoting hard castings; yet, in order to be successfully machined, must be soft, usually denoting a coarse grain. When the heavy molten metal flows into the moulds and around the sand cores, which make the cavities in the castings, it is apt to lift up or float these cores from their desired locations and thus render the castings useless. All the art and skill of the most experienced foundry man is called upon to successfully overcome the difficulties encountered and a special formula of metal is required from that for regular use in castings. In many instances the cases are cast from hard, close grained iron which, as cast, could not be machined and is then annealed for hours in annealing ovens to draw out the temper and permit proper machining.

Any closer in order to function properly must be free from excess friction in the movement of its parts. This requires extreme accuracy of alignment and machine work of the various parts making up the closer assembly. An escapement of liquid equal to the size of a pin hole would cause a door to slam. Accordingly, many of the moving parts have to be ground to an accuracy of less than one-half of one-thousandth of an inch (.0005). Some of these moving parts are also hardened to insure long wear. Some parts must be malleable iron and again others of forged steel. The spring used is one of most expensive types of spring manufactured. The liquid must be a lubricant, yet so constituted that it will stand a very low cold test when exposed to the weather and yet function properly. Most liquids are of a glycerine basis and this is also a very expensive item. All joints must be free in movement to prevent friction but yet can have no lost motion or an uneven, jerky movement of the door would result.

When all these factors, which are only touched on lightly in this article, are taken into consideration, one can begin to realize what a difficult thing a door closer is to construct and what a lot in the way of value goes into it and yet permits it to be sold for such a small price.

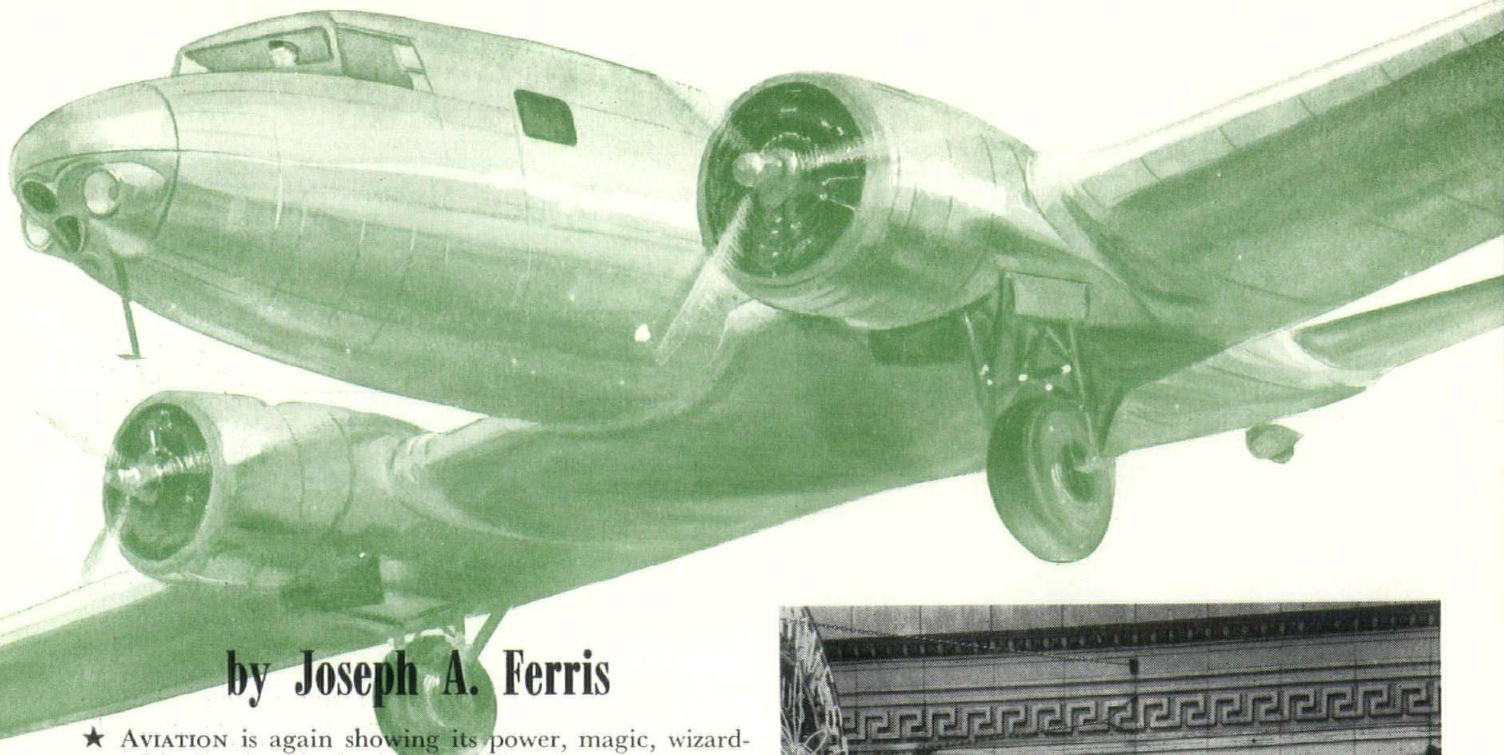
Appearance

From an artistic standpoint, although some closers are well designed in themselves, a door closer all exposed at the top of a door is not a thing of beauty. Architects, universally, would welcome its elimination from a door if possible.

For many years much study has been given to produce a mechanism which would successfully function as satisfactorily as a door closer and yet have it practically concealed from sight, but without success.

Among these devices are: Floor Checking Spring Hinges; Closers concealed in the jamb and fastened to the back edge of the door; Closers concealed in the top rail of the door with arm levers sliding in a groove in the top of the door; Closers concealed in the

(Continued on Page 22)



by Joseph A. Ferris

★ AVIATION is again showing its power, magic, wizardry. It's showing the business world a new way to penetrate the inner circle of buying power in the industries, professions, offices and homes the airlines serve.

The formula is simple! It's a new philosophy of design—a carefully, well-planned project designed to attract prospects and sell them at the same time.

Specifically, it's being done with modern architecture. Last year leaders of some of the airlines agreed that the New York Airlines Terminal building was a definite hit because of the unique design, the appeal to the public.

And when tens of thousands jammed the place on opening day the men of aviation knew they were on the right track.

That, of course, was a coöperative venture.

But now one airline has launched its own program—set out to prove that anything that clicks in New York should be a hit elsewhere.

This program, brain child of alert, husky, hard-working A. G. (Bert) Kinsman, general traffic manager of Northwest Airlines, calls for new offices for NWA.

The first has opened in Chicago.

Others will follow.

In all the same idea will be carried out.

For Kinsman, a man who is recognized as an authority on travel trends—both in aviation and other forms of transportation—is working on a project based on experience.

He remembers when the business philosophy used to associate "inertia" with the ever-debatable policy of "let well enough alone."

Too often, he recalls, the "inertia" was the result of a groundless fear of upsetting routine, changing specifications, setting a new precedent.

And for that reason many transportation offices were more or less behind the times—lacked the appeal of less important places of business.

But like all other Northwest Airlines officials and employees, General Traffic Manager Kinsman recognized an important fact:

The problem of competition must be met.

And the keynote must be consumer acceptance.

If, he reasoned, each Northwest Airlines traffic and sales office was made different—distinctive, attractive and inviting—new potential customers would come in.



He consulted architects, discussed his ideas.

It was agreed that designs should not be planned to suit personal, individual needs—or to suit certain idiosyncrasies—but to express certain ideas, certain facts.

And so Mr. Kinsman met with Architect R. P. Travelletti in Chicago, gave his approval to a final set of plans.

And soon a new Northwest Airlines office made its appearance at 33 East Monroe street in the Windy City.

Many innovations were incorporated into the design of the place—many innovations which again demonstrated the vision and wizardry of men of aviation.

There is, for instance, a gentle slope of the counter top toward the passenger—something which enables the people at the customer's side of the counter to relax.

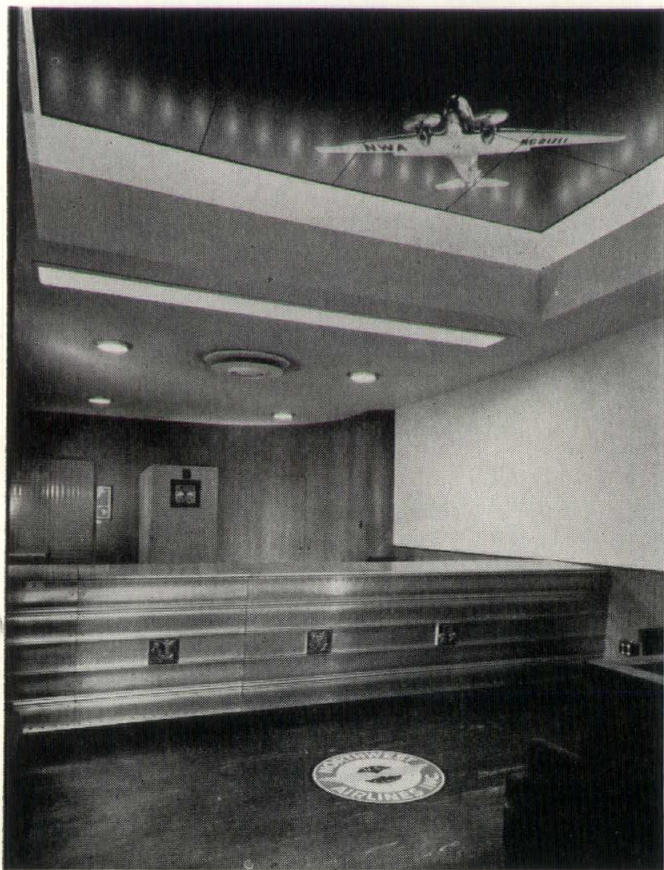
The slope was planned after actual tests were made.

Another feature is the counter's rawhide top.

On one wall hangs a pictorial map done by Edgar Miller, noted Chicago artist, a map which is 22 by 9

NORTHWEST ARCHITECT

Design for Beauty . . . and Business



feet in size, a map showing all points of interest along NWA's line.

In the ceiling of the waiting room section of the ticket office is a photo mural—a mural showing one of the Northwest Airlines planes taking off. The photo mural, showing a giant, 21-passenger Northwest Airlines Douglas plane taking off from the field, was prepared and installed by the Hedrick-Blessing Studios of Chicago.

Walls are finished in walnut paneling and the floor of the office is covered with gray, marbelized rubber tile with the NWA insignia in the center of the floor.

The second floor is used as the headquarters for the Chicago sales force, under the direction of L. S. (Larry) Reid, Chicago district traffic manager for NWA.

The front of the place is of black granite with a 6 by 6 foot display window and a 9 foot red door. Trimings are of white metal.

Comments of thousands—including rival airline representatives—have been gratifying to General Traffic Manager Kinsman, to all other Northwest Airlines officials.

One man summed it up in these words:

"... your sign attracted me to the office . . . And the map and other display material created a desire to take a trip . . . So I bought a ticket for Seattle."

Many such cases are on file.

And credit for this new method of bringing in customers—and selling them—is shared by traffic representatives and those who planned the new design for beauty—and business.

Another innovation adopted by the line is the neon sign—a sign representing the famous Northwest Airlines insignia.

Improvement to other NWA offices in cities all along the Northwest Airlines system are planned for this year—planned because everyone believes it's good business.

Yes, aviation has again shown its power, magic, vision, wizardry—set a new pace for the rest of the business world.

And all because these men of vision recognized their responsibility to progress—anticipated the future, because they decided to adopt a program calling for:

Design for beauty—and business.

Carney Company Wins Point In Cement Contest

One of Mankato's major industries, the Carney company, won an important point in its fight for recognition by the state highway department, when both branches of the state legislature recently approved a resolution authorizing the commissioner of highways to make comprehensive experiments in the use of blended concrete in the laying of permanent trunk highways in the state.

The Carney company, the state's only producer of natural cement, has been trying for some time to have state highway specifications drawn to call for concrete made from a blend of 15 to 25 per cent natural and 75 to 85 per cent Portland cement.

Company officials and civic groups have been fighting for some time to have the highway department specify the use of natural cement on state highway construction and an experimental half mile of the blended cement was laid on Highway 14 between North Mankato and Nicollet last fall.

This half-mile stretch, according to the legislature's resolution, "has in all respects demonstrated the value of said materials as compared to straight Portland cement construction."

The blended natural-Portland mixture is standard concrete for highway construction in several other states and is approved by the Federal Bureau of Roads.

The legislative resolution in authorizing the tests called attention to the state's resources commission which is designed to develop the natural resources of Minnesota, and declared that use of the blend would increase "pay-rolls and tax rolls" and encourage the establishment of additional natural cement plants in the state.

Should the highway department authorize the blended mixture in its specifications, year-round production in the Carney plant would be stepped up to near-capacity, company officials say.

IMPRESSIONS OF MEXICO

*Gained in a five months' sojourn
south of the border during the
spring and summer of 1940*



by

Ralph W. Hammett

Associate Professor and Lecturer in History of Architecture, University of Michigan



★ THE further my family and I went in Mexico and the longer we stayed, the more impressed we became with the great differences that exist between this country and our own. Also the more impressed we were with our former ignorance and that of the average "gringo" about this country. Land of Mañana, where people put so much off until tomorrow, where people seem lazy, and yet where people work the hard way and till every available inch of soil, even to almost perpendicular mountain-sides. Land that is still primitive and medieval, yet a land that is leading this continent, if not this hemisphere, in the so-called modern movement. Land where freedom has been ground in the dust, where dictators and politicians have grafted the very soul from the people, yet a land making great strides in education and social reforms. Land of bull fights, tequila and gun play, yet people of utmost compassion, sympathy and tenderness. "Poor Americans de Estados Unidos, they are so worried, so tired, they do not take time to live, they are so nervous." Odd to have people treat us with compassion; we who supply the world with bathtubs and automobiles.

We had also thought that the Mexicans were, on the whole, a rather dirty people, morally and bodily. True it takes all kinds to make a country, but Mexican women always seem to be washing, and no washday is complete without a personal bath and bath for each member of the family. In rural sections much of the bathing is taken nature's way in some mountain stream, even at the side of the road. But they must be clean. In the cities there are luxurious bath establishments and most homes boast of bathing and washing facilities. Every town of any size has its municipal pool and bathhouse equipped with showers and supplied with soap and hot and cold running water. Palmolive is sold in most out-of-the-way markets. Public Health Departments have been established in all of the larger centers and are now crusading in the most remote districts.

Morally also the Mexicans have a very high code. Admitted that public health records show statistics of venereal disease that would factually prove otherwise, it is nevertheless true that women are never accosted on the streets, no soliciting is done and there are no shows of the Parisian type countenanced in Mexico City or any other part of the country. Sisters and sweethearts are giv-

en a great deal of social freedom, but are always carefully chaperoned. Parties, dances, theater going, even night clubbing is always done in company with older people. Everyone takes the situation in good fun; oldsters enter into the spirit quite as much as the young people, and often foot the bills.

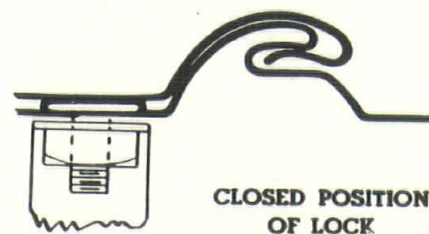
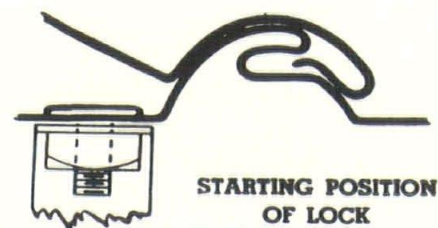
It was also a surprise to find the Mexicans so interested in athletics. The picture that had been given was that their only pastime was viewing of bull fights and possibly horseback riding. It is true that there is no sport that stirs a Mexican's blood quite as much as a bull fight, especially if there are expert toreros, well-bred bulls, plenty of cerveza—Spanish word for beer—bands playing, flower-bedecked women and a hot Sunday afternoon. But they also like baseball, and softball is now sweeping the country. Even in the most out-of-the-way mountain villages that are reached only on horseback, I inevitably found outdoor basketball courts next to new schoolhouses. If we of the United States will continue as the true Good Neighbor, keep Standard Oil out and the Rockefeller Foundation in, Mexico will become a neighbor to be proud of. Most of us north of the border are enamoured with Mexico now and indications are that it is going to improve. It is on the threshold of a Renaissance.

As soon as the traveler crosses the border at Laredo, over the excellent Pan-American Highway that now reaches most of the important spots in Mexico, he senses an immediate change: semi-arid desert, burros, sombreros, so many people trudging the roadside carrying huge bundles or packs on their backs, occasionally a luxurious car, but never a tin lizzie as is often encountered in Texas or Iowa. There are many adobe windowless houses with thatched roofs, which if it were not for the very bright sun would be very dismal inside. But despite the cluttered yard, there are many potted plants clustered around the doorways and acacia trees blooming overhead and pink or red hibiscus bushes near the fence. After all they are much nicer than the terrifically drab windowless shacks that are passed in Arkansas, shacks of the share croppers—Grapes of Wrath!

Monterey is not too exciting: an industrial city not typically Mexican. Here are steel mills, oil refineries and the great breweries of the famous Cerveza Monterey and Carta Blanca. To see the real Mexico the traveler should hurry on to the plateau.

On the way the tourist must pass

Now Corrugated Porcelain Sheathing



Workmen applying sides. The interlocking edge makes application easy and simple. Note enameled sill.

through the tropics that are rather dry and semi-arid in late winter and spring, but after the rains, a veritable jungle of vine-covered trees and lush undergrowth. The second day from Laredo, about five hundred miles below the border, the automobilist starts to climb. In a distance of one hundred and ten miles, it is necessary to rise from fifty feet above sea level to ten thousand feet in order to get through the mountain pass. Such mountain scenery! But there is a good wide road all of the way, and though there are innumerable turns, there is never a grade over six per cent.

On the plateau the altitude averages between six and eight thousand feet—Mexico City is seven thousand five hundred—hence, the climate and verdure are temperate. They have summer rains and cool, ideal falls, winters cool and dry and springtime that is delightfully warm though very dusty. The thermometer seldom goes above eighty-five at midday and is always around fifty at night.

The last hundred miles into Mexico City are interesting because of the many villages that are passed. All of these villages have a Spanish flavor, plaster covered adobe walls, red tile roofs and always three or four Spanish colonial churches. Such picturesque churches! Tile domes, renaissance bell towers and richly decorated portals! They seemed almost more Spanish than Spain itself. I took several photographs and was tempted to take more, but there were so many of them. Every town, every crossroad had one or two. Some were falling into disrepair, but most of them are well kept up. They are controlled by the state now, though candles are burning on most of the altars and people are still bearing flowers to the Virgin. At the little town of Actopan, I noticed that the central church was very

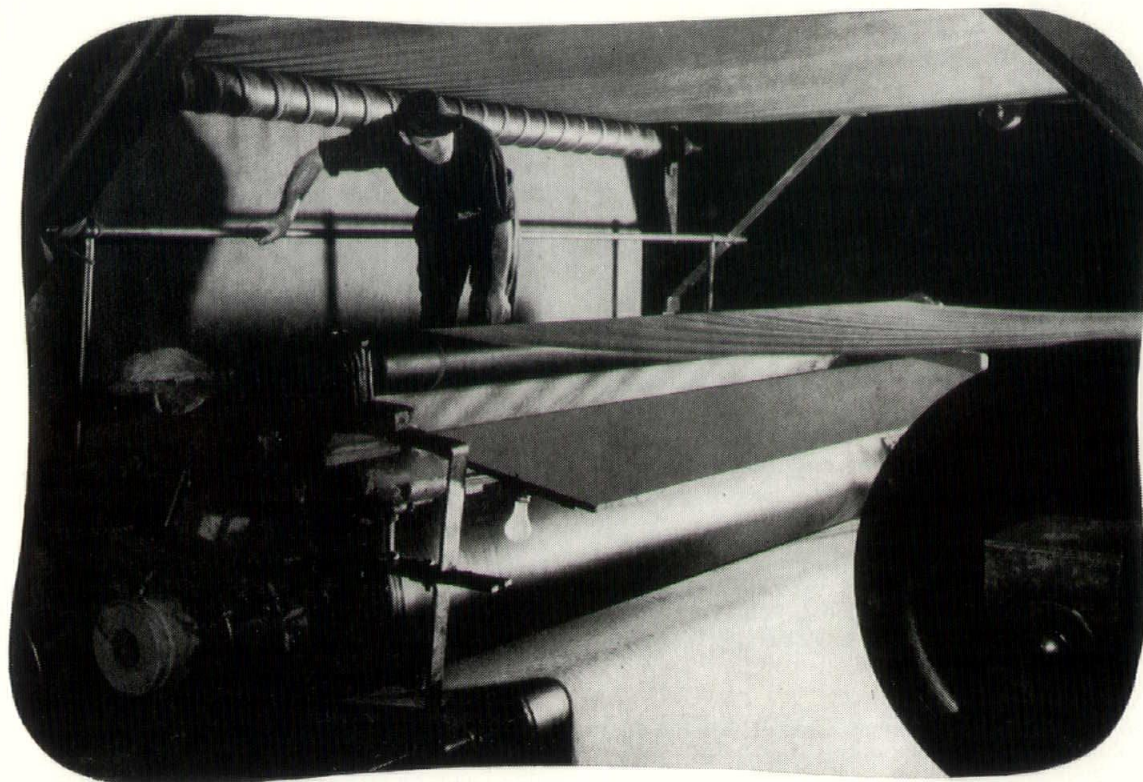
(Continued on Page 14)

★ **COMBINING** the many advantages of formed roofing and siding with the corrosion resistance, clean smooth surface and color of porcelain enamel, Por-Ce-Lok sheets offer architects and builders a broader horizon, particularly in industrial structures. These new sheets are shown (see following pages) being installed on a new structure now being produced on U. S. S. Vitrenamel steel by Porcelain Enamel Steels, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio.

The accompanying diagram illustrates the new type of lock joint developed for this sheathing, assuring weather tightness without danger of chipped enamel. After forming the corrugations, the sheet is machine-punched along a longitudinal edge for fastening to the structure, cut as designated by the architectural layout, and then porcelain-enameled. Recent developments in special porcelain enamels and firing practice make it possible for two coats of porcelain enamel to provide the desired tough, flexible, weather-resistant glassy finish on all surfaces of the sheets, including edges and bolt holes.

These new sheets eliminate the need for either interior or exterior painting, as sheets are available finished in white porcelain enamel on one side to provide the desired high-light deflection for interiors, and in royal blue, maroon, forest green, or fall brown on the exterior face. Other colors are available on special order.

Stock sheets of Por-Ce-Lok cover 24 inches in width after interlocking and are available in standard lengths ranging from 5 to 10 feet. They may be applied on steel or wood framing, solid roof decks or side wall surfaces. Design is such that all attachments are concealed and all edges and holes are protected by a porcelain enamel coating, thus preventing possibility of corrosive attack on unprotected surfaces. Special porcelain-enameled fittings are available for corners and sills as well as for cornices and gravel stops on flat roofs.

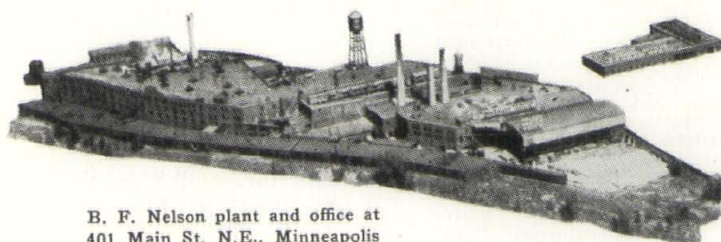


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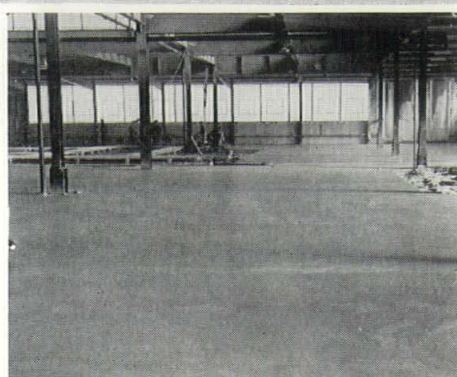
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LUX-RIGHT STEEL AREA WALLS COME BY BARGE

★ ON THE last northbound Mississippi river tow of the season, the Saint Paul Corrugating Company received a full barge-load of steel from the Newport Rolling Mills at Newport, Ky.

Equivalent to twenty or more carloads, it was one of the largest single shipments of steel the corrugating company ever received in its fifty-five years of service. In weight, the steel totaled over one million pounds.

The steel, in the form of sheets piled together in bundles of proper handling weight, traveled 1,350 miles to get to the corrugating company's fabricating plant.

A special "digger" consisting of a set of grappling hooks attached to a channel frame and thence to a derrick cable hook expedited the unloading. A bundle of sheets was swung cradle-wise among the six to ten hooks (the number in use depending on the length of the steel), and then hoisted out of the barge. Each lift averaged two tons.

The steel was stored in the new warehouse of the corrugating company. Eighty per cent of it will go into the fabricating of the well-known LUX-RIGHT STEEL AREAWALLS, for 1941 installation throughout America. These areawalls, one of the newer products of this long-established plant, are advertised nationally as a handy, low-cost steel retaining wall for basement window wells. Fabricated in one piece and hot-dip galvanized after formation, they are in use from coast to coast on homes, schools and many other kinds of buildings.

The Saint Paul Corrugating Company recently announced a benefits plan for employees entering the service of the national defense forces that has won widespread commendation. Among other things, the company gives each man in service a pay check every month equal in amount to the base pay the man receives from the government.

IMPRESSIONS OF MEXICO

(Continued from Page 12)

early in style: sixteenth century Plateresque. I was told that it was one of the four missionary monasteries established at the time of Cortez, three years after the conquest, 1524, and that the present building was completed prior to 1550-51. The interior of this church was most interesting, real gothic rib vaulting.

Mexico City was a joyful surprise. I drove into the metropolis on a Sunday afternoon for the first time and was immediately impressed by the beautiful boulevards and European atmosphere. Could I be driving my car in Paris? Was this really on the American continent? I drove down the Paseo de la Reforma—as beautiful as the Champs Elysees—through Juarez past the Opera—why, this was like the Place de l'Opera in the old days of Paris; into rather narrow streets like most of the side streets of the French capital and directly to the little hotel that we had had recommended to us, Hotel Monte Carlo. This also was just like those little left-bank hotels in Paris that were—and we hope still are—so charming. My family and I knew immediately that we were going to have fun here. We were lodged in a nice front room with comfortable beds and private bath; and the food was delicious.

Regarding food we were prepared for the worst. I had been told that we would have difficulty in getting good food in Mexico, we'd probably have to live on chile con carne, tortillas and frijoles—beans. All the books told me that the natives live on tortillas—unflavored corn griddle cakes—hot sauces and queer meats. I was sure we were in for it, but for the five months that

(Continued on Page 24)



NOW READY FOR DELIVERY

PALCO BATTS

Made from the Already Famous
Palco Wool Redwood Insulation

Just in time for Spring building comes the new PALCO WOOL BATT, made of the same wiry resilient fibres of redwood bark that has made PALCO WOOL a favorite with dealers.

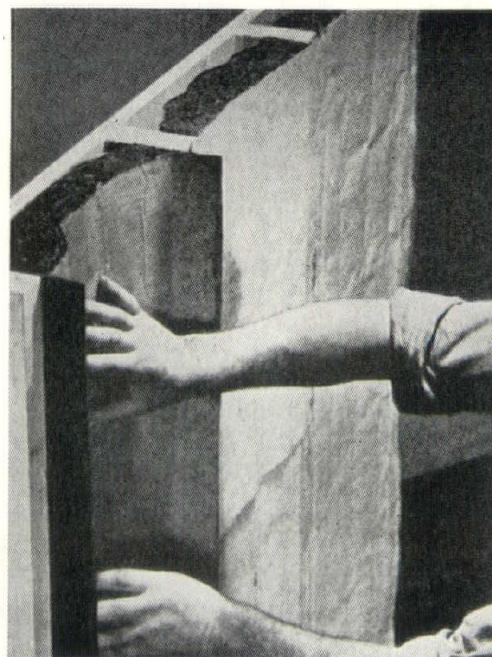
Now, PALCO WOOL is "Saferized" . . . a new process which makes it even more fire resistant than before, and whether you sell it in the new batt or in the form of wool, you may know that it has passed the "blow torch test" which shows it flame-proof.

More than 250 Cold Storage Locker Plants in the Northwest, operating at zero or less, are insulated with PALCO WOOL. It's used by Westinghouse for insulating electric heaters. Everywhere you find dealers and manufacturers calling for PALCO WOOL when they want a dependable fill insulation.

Now comes the batt, made with the "Spring-Wedge" feature which makes it easy to install and assures a snug fit. Just the answer to your home builders' insulation needs.

Facts About the New Palco Batt

- It's SAFERIZED—making its fire resistant qualities even greater than before.
- The Batt is 2"x16"x48³/₈", made to fit all standard stud spacing.
- Completely enveloped in Kraft paper, the Batt is sewed and sealed together so that it will not buckle or sag when being installed.
- Its Spring-Wedge construction enables it to support itself in the wall or ceiling while being installed, and assures a snug fit.
- Its light weight and extreme rigidity make it easy to install overhead between ceiling joists.
- Installed permanently in place by stapling the overhanging flanges to the studs or joists.
- The flange of the Palco Batt is designed to pull tight over the face of the studs and leave no air space between the "Vapor Shield" and the plaster base, but does leave space on cold side of insulation when it is desirable.
- Available for carload shipment from the factory. Available in LCL from Twin Cities.



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Standing Committees for 1941

The following committees have been appointed by President Tusler to serve the Association during the year. Committee Chairmen and members alike share the responsibility of seeing to it that their committees meet and function.

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PUBLICATIONS

H. W. Fridlund, Chairman

Robert Cerney	Fred Klawiter
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John Jager	A. O. Larson

1941 CONVENTION COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING

Report of Otto M. Olsen, Chairman

THE first meeting of the General Committee was attended by W. H. Tusler, Wm. Dorr and Paul Havens from the Twin Cities and T. J. Shefchik, E. R. Erickson, F. H. Fitzgerald, A. R. Melander and myself from this city. Other members of this committee who could not attend the meeting are J. C. Taylor of Hibbing, Reuben P. Damberg of Eveleth and W. E. Ellingsen of Duluth. I seem to be chosen as general chairman, and E. R. Erickson is serving as secretary. The following tentative Convention Schedule can be released at this time.

Place—Hotel Duluth. *Time*—Friday and Saturday, August 22nd and 23rd.

Registration, Golf—Friday morning.

Luncheon—Friday noon. Architects only. General get-together, getting acquainted, visiting, etc. No speeches.

Business Session—Friday afternoon. Round-table discussions. Committee reports, etc.

Cocktails—Friday following business session.

Dinner Dance—Friday evening. Formal. Not exclusively for architects, but also their guests, interested members and friends of the building industry, etc.

Business Session—Saturday morning. Committee reports. Old, unfinished and new business. Election of Directors, etc.

Luncheon—Saturday noon. Architects and others interested in the building industry. Speaker on some subject of general interest. Adjournment.

Exhibits—Exhibits for manufacturers and their products. Space for displays to be worked out and submitted to exhibitors. Details to follow.

Women's Activities—Discussed in a general way only and left to sub-committee to work out.

General—All convention activities to be started and terminated on time as per pre-arranged schedule so as to avoid delays, etc., and to keep up the general interest in the various convention activities.

The above information is brief, but gives the high points. Sub-committees are being formed to make and complete the arrangements for their various activities, and when the selection of the membership of these committees is completed, they will be sent to you for publication in subsequent issues of NORTHWEST ARCHITECT. OTTO M. OLSEN, *General Chairman*.

Practically all the guests at the speakers' table at the annual Minneapolis Builders Exchange banquet some time back, drew prizes except "Tus" Tusler. Hal Fridlund netted a new fish line—all he needs now is another banquet and a little more luck so he can get a reel to go with it.

E. J. (Ed) Prondzinski has moved to new offices at 240 Plymouth Building, Minneapolis.

A Letter to Architects

ABOUT A WARM SUBJECT

Gentlemen:

If you were limited to one source or channel for securing new clients—if a law were suddenly passed that said there was only one way that people might become acquainted with your ability, what medium would you choose? We'll bet a cookie that nine out of ten of you would say "I'll depend on the praise and good words of those for whom I have done satisfactory work."

All of which leads us to ask another question, namely, "have you always given your clients the best advice when it came to the matter of a heating plant?"

You know, up in this country, home heating is an all-important subject nine months in the year. Graceful lines, pretty roofs, hand-rubbed woodwork or sweeping vistas have never yet been able to combat the curse of goose-pimples.

We urge you to thoroughly investigate the possibilities of heating with coal and a stoker. Let us show you some new homes heated with stokers and let the proud owners tell you how they get the convenience of automatic heat plus absolute comfort, amazing economy and complete safety. They'll tell you there is no form of automatic heat any cleaner and none that equals a stoker for the steady heat so necessary to health.

If you will dig into this question of automatic heat with coal you'll be pleasantly surprised. And, there will be a good many more new homes built with specifications calling for heating with an automatic coal burner.

Yours for better heating

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THUMB TACK Holes AND ART GUM CRUMBS

By **KEN FULLERTON**
St. Paul Architect

DEAR MR. COLT FUR:

My pop's the man that's runnin' around our house pullin' out his side hair (because he ain't got much top hair) because he's frantic and he says a guy by your name wants him to write sumpin' funny or steal it out of some magazine so's you can go to press you pants, whatever for I don't know, and my pop says he's got to do sumpin' because there's a lot of architects that's paid their dues and expects sumpin' cheerful in their magazine.

He says he's gotta write a squib for that guy 'cause he ain't writ for a long time, but he don't see a thing funny goin' on. He says he'd rather go to Florida, but my pop oughta know that ain't so much fun too. All you do is ride along on pavements and watch traffic signs and how many miles is it to the next town and study spellin' in the back seat and pass through towns with army camps around in the vicinity, so I thot I better write for my pop so's when I tell him I writ you this he won't have to be settin' around in front of the radio and shushin' me every time he hears corn plantin' goin' on, and I have to bizz my airplane too quiet to get up the right speed.

I don't no so many jokes that youse guys thinks is funny so I don't know what else to write about, except that once my pop had a bad time in the hospital and got sent a pome, and I notice that once in a while when my pop has engine trouble he up's and asks where's his poem and he reads it over and grins and its kind of easier for me to get a nickel to spend after Cub Scouts.

A friend of his—Ella Wheeler Wilcox—writ the pome and might be she wouldn't want you to print it for free, just like ASCAP don't let us kids whistle "I Gotta Girl"—but you gotta find out can you print it.

Anyway if it works on one architect it could work on those that's paid up, so if you maybe can't print the pome, here's about what it says:

QUOTE

Way back, long ago, there was a king—good king too, but cagy, but smart too, and he sees that sometimes things'll be smooth and sometimes Things'll be rough, so he thot he oughta have a motto. So he puts out a contest and the prizes was honor and cash and a gold watch—anyway a gold locket or sumpin'. Anyway the rules was—send in a slogan, short, snappy and smart—one he could frame and take a good look at when he was feelin' bad, but it had to work the other way too, so's he could glance at it when wheat was high and when things was just goin' too good. He wanted a rememberer that Humpty Dumpty was once feelin' too alright and then he fell and broke his appendicitis. There was another rule to write a piece about how your slogan would work.

Well the jolly old monarch got lots and lots of slogans I guess and it took him a long time to pick a winner,

NORTHWEST ARCHITECT

but he did. He picked the little old motto "This, too, shall pass away." Just that. Things was funny in those days, wasn't they Mr. Colt fur?

Well it turned out that the motto was purty good because the fella sent along a bunch of don'ts to go with it that made it sound purty comfortin'.

He says—(the fella that won)—"If you've had a bad break, like a leg, or if collections don't come in, or if you can't get aluminum or stuff—just keep thinkin' about that motto and wait (seems to me he shoulda said hustle) 'This, too, shall pass away.' He says Pop Time brushes up the iron links of pain with gold paint and so's you can't see the iron, and he says—dark today, light tomorrow just like us kids say day follows night and like pop says 'thank Heavens you don't burn no gas lamps in the daytime.' He says you can't have fun all the time—but also, you can't have no reason to be grouchy and feel bad all the time neither. Well that's what he says about the bad.

Then he says—"if things is good, and you think you weigh about fifteen hundred pounds and you think you can stop the world from goin' 'round, and it looks like the whole bowl is full of just cherries—just go take a gander at that 'This, too, shall pass away' line. Says—maybe you are a big shot—maybe you have got dough and us kids call you mister: he says—Huh! Look what happens to a bubble! He says Pop Time's likely to kick you right back in the dust bowl lest you be as good as you feel and don't go shovin' too many I's and me's around about bein' a wise guy. See. There you got the pome workin' both ways.

Then the fella goes on tellin' you to "just do the best you can while you can, and he hints that you better plant flowers without no bugs in while you're goin' along nice and easy. But anyway—he says—keep smilin' and helpin' the other fella and keep thinkin' nice stuff, because if you're grouchy the Lord don't like it. He says a gloomy guy what goes to church is a pair of ducks.

And—he says—"as long as you don't live for ever you gotta get around all over—spreadin' sunshine, anyhow kind of actin' nice to us kids—and he says—you better remember every day that you'd better watch out or you'd better cheer up, dependin' on if you feel cocky or dumpy, because what you got or ain't got, you're liable to lose or get, even if it's measles."

UNQUOTE

Mr. Colt fur, I'm sendin' on the pome too so's if you don't like how I writ it you can print it the way she says or both, but you better watch out for her manager so he don't sue you. Maybe if you print the pome way in the back they won't see it, and then if some hardapple don't get what you and me is drivin' at, they can look back and see.

A mighty monarch in the days of old
Made offer of high honor, wealth and gold,
To one who should produce in form concise
A Motto for his guidance, terse, yet wise;
A precept soothing in his hours forlorn,
Yet one that in his prosperous days should warn.

Many the maxims sent the king, men say:
This one he chose, "This, too, shall pass away."

Has some misfortune fallen to your lot?
This, too, shall pass away: absorb the thought,
And wait—your waiting will not be in vain,
Time gilds with gold the iron links of pain.
The dark today leads into light tomorrow;
There is no endless joy, no endless sorrow.
Are you upon earth's heights, no cloud in view?
Go read your motto once again, "This, too,
Shall pass away." Fame, glory and power,
They are but little bubbles of the hour,

MARCH-APRIL, 1941

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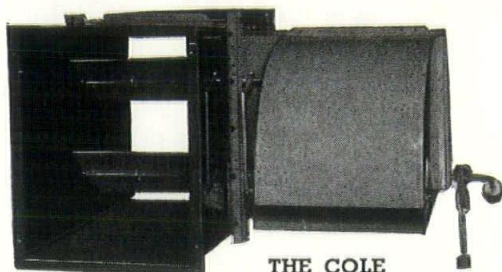
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Take warning and be worthy of God's trust.

Use well your prowess while it lasts, leave bloom,

Not blight, to mark your footprints to the tomb:

The truest greatness lies in being kind,

The truest wisdom is a happy mind.

He who desponds, his Maker's judgment mocks;

The gloomy Christian is a paradox.

Only the sunny soul respects its God.

Since life is brief, we need to make it broad:

Since life is short we need to make it bright.

Then keep the old king's motto well in sight,

And let its meaning permeate each day

Whatever comes—"This, too, shall pass away."

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

New Thicker Balsam-Wool At No Extra Cost Announced

A NEW Balsam-Wool of greater efficiency, greater thickness and greater moisture protection than ever, has just been announced by the Wood Conversion Company, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

This new product, available in "Standard" (formerly 1/2") and "Double Thick" (formerly 1") in widths to fit 16" and 24" framing members, is now available for immediate shipment. Although the thickness has been increased and other improvements have been made, there is no increase in price.

Mr. P. A. Ward, Vice President in Charge of Sales, said that the new Double Value Balsam-Wool has been designed to put the lumber dealer and the contractor back in the insulation business. "With this new product," he said, "it will be easy to demonstrate to the consumer the advantages and superior qualities of Double Value Balsam-Wool Insulation. The new material has greater eye appeal, has greater protection against moisture, greater thickness, greater efficiency and will be sold at the same price as formerly. Also, as always, sold exclusively through lumber dealers."

"This new development in Balsam-Wool is something we have been working toward for years," said Mr. Ward, "it is not merely a matter of making the already highly efficient mat of Balsam-Wool thicker, but of combining in it new principles of heat and moisture control. For instance, the Double Thick blanket has three individual moisture barriers. The Standard blanket has two barriers. Each barrier is designed specifically to protect the individual thickness which each supports."

Complete information on this new product together with literature and display material is available from company salesmen or directly from the Wood Conversion Company.

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The SHARP Pencil

COLLUSION OR COMPETITION?

PLUMBING-HEATING CONTRACTORS spend 92½ per cent of their estimating time for nothing. The average contractor obtains only 7½ per cent of the jobs he figures on. In fact, over 55 per cent of the work upon which he submits a price never materializes at all.

This sad and unremunerative plight of plumbing-heating contractors is revealed by a survey made by "Plumbing and Heating Business" in one typical large U. S. city. The survey proves one thing: it proves that if Thurman Arnold is right in his claim that this industry is characterized by collusion, the contractors engage in estimating expense and drudgery just for the fun of it, to the extent of 92½ per cent of their estimating time. Or it proves that Arnold's conception of our industry is just a pipe dream.

The survey covers three recent months of normal activity. During that period 502 jobs were figured by the group of contractors on which we have the facts. Of these 502 jobs, 280 never materialized at all—they represented the dreams, hopes and aspirations of architects and property owners who thought they would like to have plumbing some time or other and didn't mind putting contractors to the trouble of figuring what plumbing and heating their dreams would cost. In short, over 55 per cent of the time spent by these contractors in figuring work was absolutely wasted, although they had to absorb the estimating expense.

There follows a tabulation of the number of jobs figured, and the number of jobs secured, by 18 typical contractors in the city in which the survey was made. This tabulation shows that the bidders were successful in getting only about 7½ per cent of the jobs they figured. Think of the tremendous waste of time and money which results from this intense and cut-throat competition. Consider for the moment the plight of the man who figured 161 jobs and got 13. Or the man who figured 92 and got four. Or the man who figured 45 and got one. Or turn to the man who figured 17 jobs and got none at all.

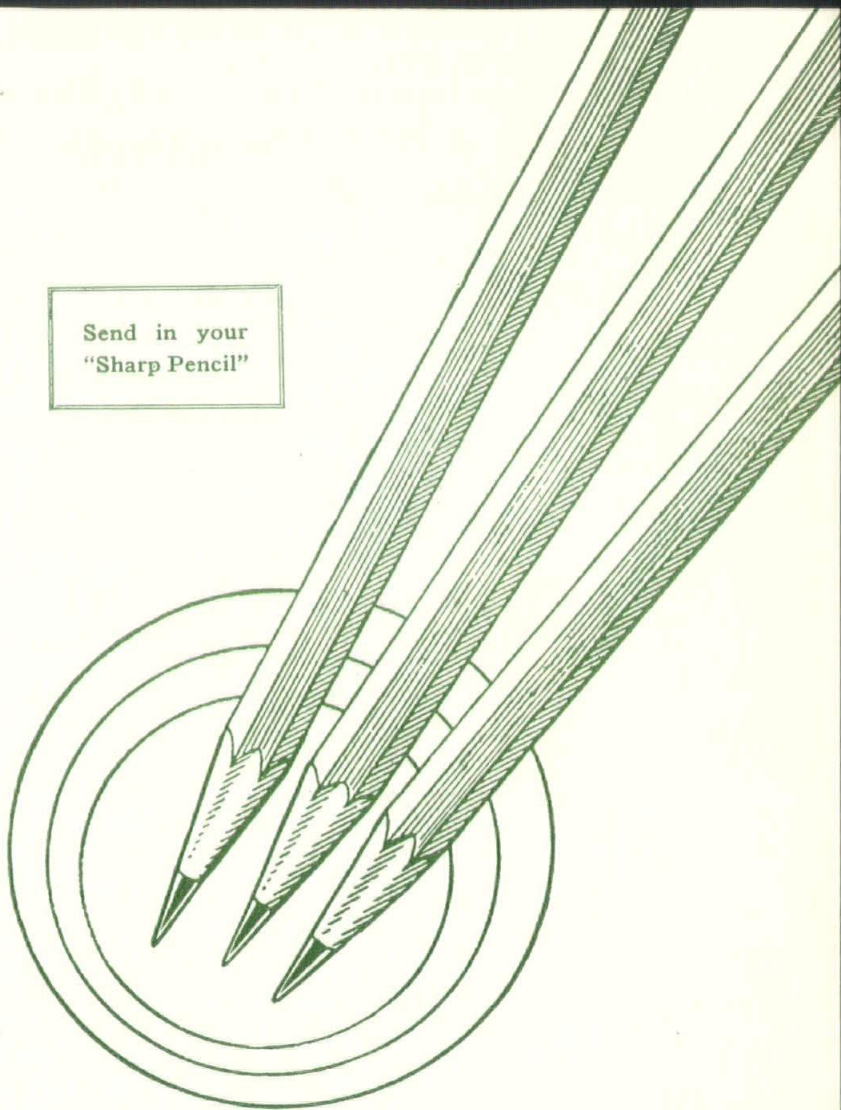
Is this situation characteristic of the collusion which Arnold alleges, or is it characteristic of the cut-throat competition which permeates and dominates our industry in the contracting branch?

There are those both within and without our industry who believe that plumbing-heating contractors have no overhead. An even greater number of people in our industry believe that an overhead of 5 per cent to 10 per cent is sufficient for any sort of job, regardless of actual overhead. It takes but a brief review of the first tabulation in this story to prove the existence of overhead when one again considers the fact that these contractors, all of them solvent, experienced and intelligent, only got 7¼ per cent of the jobs they figured. The above figures were not drawn out of a hat to astonish the multitude. They are factual, accurate and typical. They should offer irrefutable evidence of the competitive conditions within the ranks of the plumbing-heating contractors.

Architects Sell Services—Not Merely Blueprints

WHEN the function of an architect is reduced to fundamentals it might well be defined as that which is necessary to provide a building fulfilling the owner's de-

Send in your
"Sharp Pencil"



sires and needs in a manner which is practical and economical in plan, efficient in operation, pleasing in appearance, financially sound, and orientated to obtain the fullest benefits and satisfaction from the property or site.

Surely the above is no small order, but true architectural services must cover the above points and often many more.

Because of this fact it is necessary that the public be informed as to what constitutes architectural service and that "blueprints" are merely records of ideas, of hours, sometimes days of analysis and study of a problem.

The public must be made to realize that "a set of blueprints" and a few hen scratches for a specification as furnished to them "free" (?) by "carpitects" and certain lumber yards and millwork firms do not provide architectural services and in almost every instance Mr. Owner gets what you usually get when you get something for nothing.

Every architect should constantly promote the facts as to what true services consist of - - - our better contractor friends - - - certain material firms - - - a few financing people - - - will help us, BUT we've got to do most of the blowing of our own horn.

Decide now that you will do your part and when a comprehensive plan of publicity is presented for action by the Association through its Committee on Public Relations and Education let's get behind it with not only the necessary moral support, but the financial means to "sell" architecture to the public.

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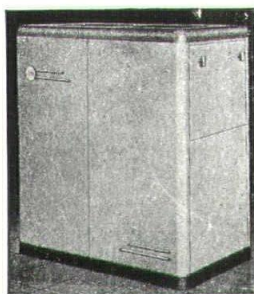
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DOOR CLOSERS

(Continued from Page 7)

top of the door but with levers exposed as in regular closers—a semi-concealed closer; and Closers concealed in the casing or transom bar over the door and with lever sliding along the top of the door.

In all of these cases, while they are moved from sight, yet they lack either or all of the following points:

First: They furnish closing power by operating way back at the hinge line of the door and cannot possibly close successfully if there is the least draft exerted to blow the door open.

Second: If built into a door, the net diameter allowed for the checking plunger in 1¾" thick doors is so small as to prevent proper checking without a tremendous load on and consequent wear on the working mechanism. It needs to be kept in mind that, given a certain checking power, the large diameter and a short stroke is much more efficient in a door closer than a small diameter and a longer stroke. The checking action of this case can only be about equal to that in small liquid screen closers.

Third: If the arm lever slides along on the top of the door or jamb, the leverage is exerted to such a disadvantage that the door will not close properly against a slight draft to blow it open.

All of these devices are so lacking in efficiency necessary to overcome all of the various door problems that they can never effectively become a substitute for the regular door closer. Another factor to take into consideration is that their cost in manufacturing and application, as well, runs very high and in general calls for a special construction and design in order to permit them to be installed.

Because of the strategic location of a regular door closer on the door, the great advantage in its compound lever arms, its accessibility for adjustment and servicing, its efficient control of the door under all the varying conditions, and its comparatively low cost due to high production machinery developed, it still remains, after years of experiments on other means of control, the only practical method of successfully controlling doors.

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"INCREASED demand for Montana Travertine due to the fact that imported Italian stocks in this country are practically exhausted is noted by F. M. Mesenbourg, Manager of Travertine Properties of the Northwestern Improvement Co.

"Already the Northwestern Improvement Co. quarries near Gardiner, Montana, are commencing an era of greater production," he said. "New equipment has been purchased and installed, old equipment has been overhauled during the winter months, and the spring work schedule is under way.

"A larger force has been set at work and shipping facilities have been expanded to maintain the outgoing movement of travertine at the increased production levels. The quarries are now working on extensive travertine orders for several important buildings in various parts of the country."



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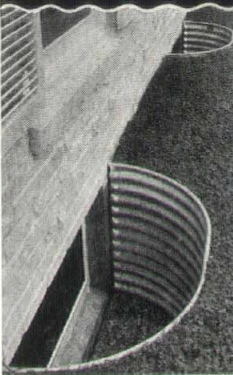
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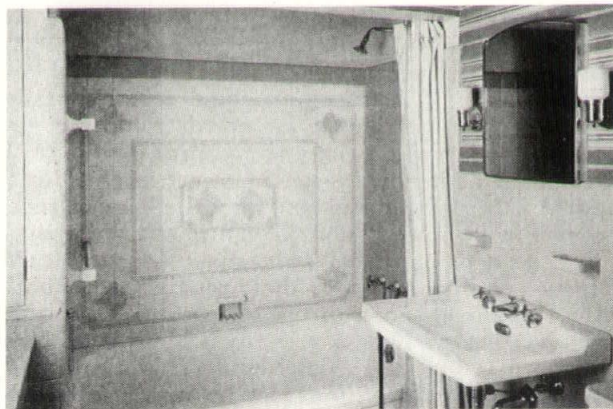
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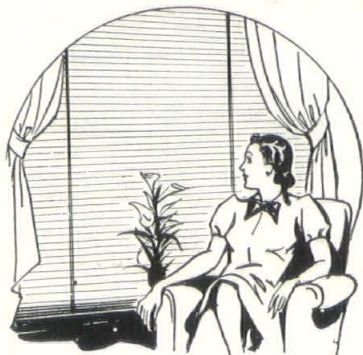
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IMPRESSIONS OF MEXICO

(Continued from Page 14)

we were in Mexico, we did not alter our diet from that at home. Except for the elimination of fresh lettuce, radishes and fresh fruit that cannot be peeled or cooked, we enjoyed our food immensely. We were warned not to overeat, and told to take a siesta after the hearty noon-day meal in order to avoid indigestion that is prevalent in high altitudes. We followed instructions and had good health and a wonderful time. We enjoyed our hotel food and eating at restaurants in Mexico City is fully as pleasant as in most foreign places.

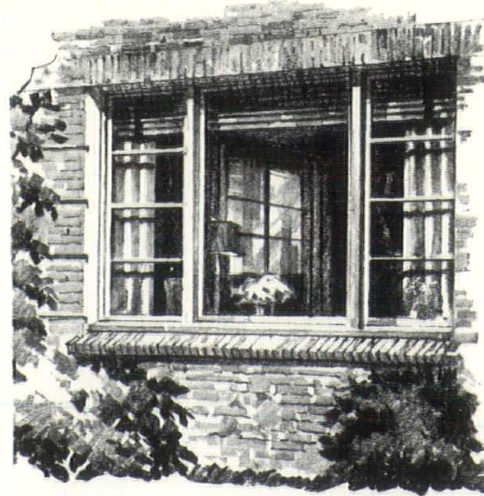
There is much to see. Our first point to visit was the zocalo—city square—with the great cathedral, the city hall and the national palace. We were interested also in the zocalo for the immense amount of traffic that it carries, the six-lane thoroughfares that circle about it, the maze of traffic lights, street cars, automobiles and busses. We were greatly impressed by the flowers, fountains and palms, the street vendors and the large numbers of people that are here at all hours of the day and night.

I knew that the city had been built on an old lake bed and that the foundations are none too secure unless builders go down eighty or more feet to bed rock. Having lived in Chicago, I expected to see buildings that had settled, but hardly expected to see the great cathedral, the largest in the western hemisphere, settled so that the floor is now below the street level. But the cathedral is very beautiful and grand: Spanish renaissance of the seventeenth century. The interior was a bit startling with its superfluous amount of gold leaf—I had forgotten how gorgeous these renaissance churches usually are, and this one surpasses most. The National Palace was interesting—covers about four city blocks in area and is several stories high. This also has settled so that one end is four feet below the other, but being so large in area, it is hardly noticeable. The building has been planned around numerous courts and presents many different sections, additions and alterations. Here we found our first Diego Rivera murals on the grand staircase; but there are almost miles of Rivera and Orosco murals in Mexico—all of them masterpieces.

Such a city! Old palaces, colonial churches, markets; boulevards, smart shops, ultra modern theaters, hotels; modern schools, hospitals, clubs; streets of ultra apartments; parks, playgrounds with all kinds of equipment, swimming pools and riding academies. Yes, it's fun to live and vacation in the Mexican capital.

A visit to the National Museum rather startled me with the amount of archaeological sculpture that they have on display. Most of the work is from the plateau and I was impressed by these early pre-conquest cultures. I had heard of the fall of Montezuma and knew that there was a great barbaric nation here before the white man, but I had thought that the best was to be found only in Yucatan and Peru, and that the Toltec and Aztec work in Mexico was most crude by comparison. That was also a mistake, for though this work is fearful and blood-curdling in its ferocity, it is well finished and represents a very advanced technique.

The best temples and pyramids on the plateau are to be seen at Teotihuacan, thirty-five miles north of Mexico City; though the largest of all man-made pyramids is at Cholula, about seventy miles east, near Puebla. This largest one measures twelve hundred by thirteen hundred feet at the base and was over five hundred feet high. It was partially destroyed by the conquistadores who built a church on the top in place of the ancient altar. The pyramids of the Sun and the Moon at Teotihuacan are well preserved. Why were they built? Were they tombs like those of Egypt, or places for sa-



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cred fire and sacrifice? The latter supplies the answer. It is said that they were built in pyramidal form to simulate the volcano, and that the archaic pyramids were round. These being of later times, Toltec after 900 A. D., were square and stepped to the top like the zigurats of Ancient Mesopotamia. The similarities are uncanny though from the point of time and distance apart there is no connection between the two civilizations.

One hundred miles south of Mexico City is Tasco, the little Spanish Colonial town where we lived for three months. Beautiful! Like Toaromina in Sicily. Though not able to boast the beautiful sea, Tasco is just as picturesque. Marvellous eighteenth century cathedral built by Borda, the multi-millionaire from Spain who for a few years made this town a place of wealth and luxury. Like the hill towns of Italy, its palaces are now in disrepair and used for hotels, shops and cocktail lounges. But Tasco has beauty that will always remain, and being under the control of the State Department of Fine Arts, no alterations can be made in this town that will mar its architectural colonial charm. No one should go to Mexico without seeing and spending a little time here.

Then, of course, there are Guadalajara, and Morelia, Lake Patzcuara, Puebla, Fortin, Oaxaca and many other places of interest. Queer names, a different people; old, new, squalid and ultra, but always beautiful, always restful. Mountains, seashore, art and architecture.

I have heard of some people who don't like Mexico; but I do and my family does. Given time and a little money, there is no place more foreign or more friendly than our neighbor, South of the Border, down Mexico Way.—*The Archi of Alpha Rho Chi.*



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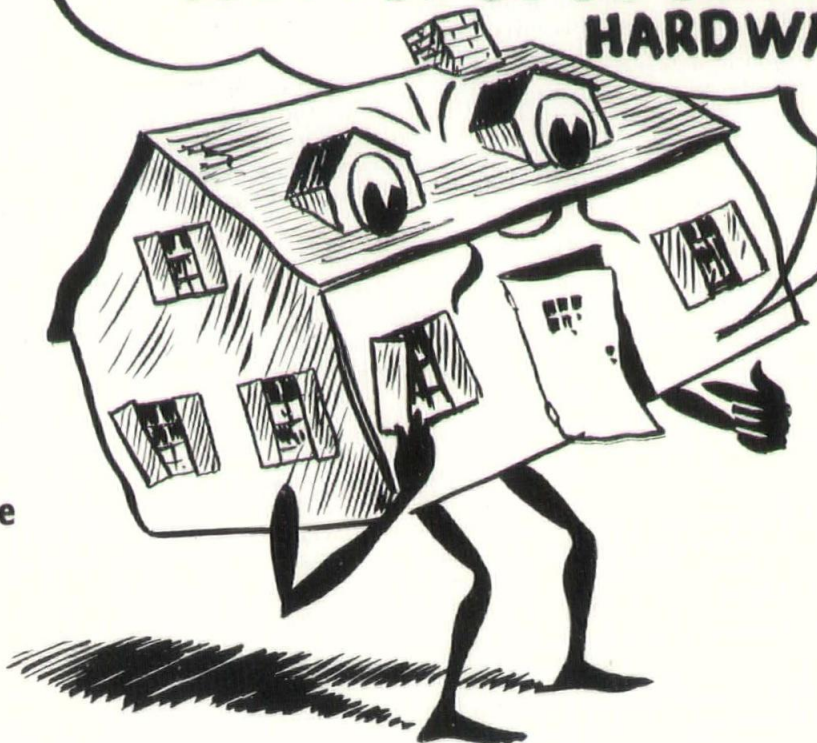
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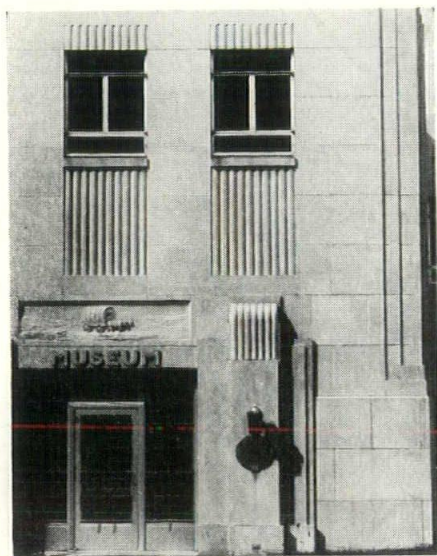
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*Library at New Ulm
Albert Plagens, Architect*

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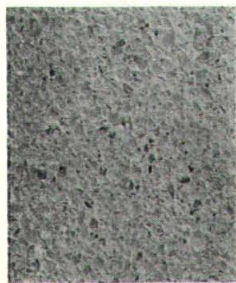
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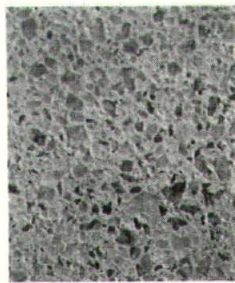
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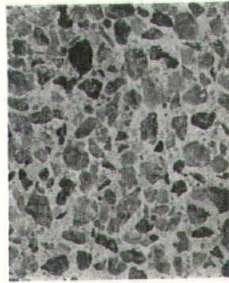
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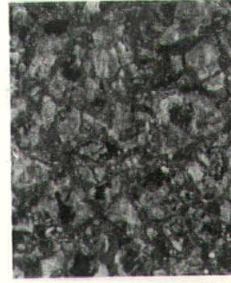
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