



Vol. III

OCULUS

No. 3

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET • DECEMBER, 1940 • ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

NEXT MEETING

Time: 12:30 p. m. Lunch, Tuesday,
Dec. 17.

Place: Architectural League.

You have already received notice of next Tuesday's lunch. If you have not yet sent in your return card, please do so now. An important matter is to be presented for your serious consideration.

The Executive Committee has voted to spend \$4,000 of the Chapter's Contingent Reserve Fund (in which there is now a cash balance of \$5,287.50) for the purpose of combatting the National Administration's attitude toward the employment of private architects in Government work of all kinds. This money can be spent only with the Chapter's approval.

All members received, and we trust read, Mr. Frost's letter of November 27. This contained excerpts from some of the replies recently received from Government officials on Defence Construction work. Further correspondence seems futile.

This \$4,000 is a definite move toward a drastic program for combatting that attitude. A Special Committee of three—Messrs. Lescaze, Fellheimer, and Prentice—have been appointed to formulate the program.

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Enclosed with this number of the OCULUS is a copy of "Memorandum on Architectural Competitions." This is an official document of the Chapter and is an explanatory statement of the Architectural Competition.

It is hoped that Members of the Chapter will distribute this document to Public Boards and Officials wherever in their judgment such information concerning Architectural Competitions is needed.

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Members who are willing to speak before various types of clubs in the New York region are requested to volunteer for this service by Eleanor Pepper, Chairman of our Public Information Subcommittee on Talks Before Clubs.

WHAT! No Architect?

NOVEMBER MEETING

The theme of the Chapter meeting held after dinner at the Architectural League on November 25 was Publicity. Following a short business meeting and the presentation of certificates to the winners of the recent small house awards, President Frost turned over the meeting to Kenneth Reid, Chairman of our Committee on Public Information. Mr. Reid then outlined his program for this year. He has broken down this subject into component parts and has assigned each part to an individual member of the committee. This member acts as a subchairman and is given the privilege of inviting any two members of the Chapter to assist him. "To a man," commented Mr. Reid after announcing the scope of work he had laid out, "my committeemen have complained that I have outlined for them full time jobs."

The subdivisions and their chairmen are: Educational Movies—Wesley S. Bessell; Talks to Schools—Albert G. Clay; Radio—Don E. Hatch; Talks Before Clubs—Eleanor Pepper; Newspapers—Kenneth Reid; Trade Publications—Henry H. Saylor; Exhibits—Spencer R. Smith; Lay Magazines—Joseph D. Weiss.

As a stimulus to discussion Mr. Reid read a few of these outlines. A dozen members responded in rapid succession in one of the most spontaneous volleys touched off recently. All present regretted the early adjournment enforced by the approaching hour of the CBS broadcast.

The sole business matter before the meeting was a vote on relinquishing from the jurisdiction of our Chapter the island of Porto Rico. A motion was made, carried and seconded to release this territory in the event that application is made by the architects of Porto Rico for a local Institute chapter.

President Frost introduced two new members who were present. They are Don Graf and Ernst Payer, a former Associate.

CBS BROADCAST

Most of those who had attended the Chapter meeting on November 25 reassembled later that evening at the CBS broadcasting studios with representatives of the 15 other constituent societies of the State Association. William Lescaze, as chairman of the State Association's Committee on Radio Publicity, had arranged a program designed to set forth the possibilities of the use of this medium for publicity.

Mr. Lescaze, in his opening remarks, explained that the California State Society of Architects, Southern Section, last April had sponsored a series of 26 broadcasts called "What! No Architect?" The purpose of these broadcasts was to bring before the radio public a clearer idea of the professional duties of architects. Points stressed in the talks were the help furnished an owner not only in the design of a well planned house but in building that home economically. A further service offered through these broadcasts was a scheme of helping a prospective home owner to get in touch with an architect in his territory.

One of these broadcasts was then repeated for the audience, after which Mr. Lescaze asked for comments both from CBS and from the audience. CBS explained that these broadcasts had resulted in 8,000 inquiries which in turn resulted in \$867,000 worth of commissions. The approval and satisfaction of the architects sponsoring these broadcasts has been evidenced by the renewal of their contract for another 13 weeks. These talks are now taking place weekly.

The possibility of planning such a series of broadcasts for our state has been undertaken by the Radio Committee. In order to cover the entire state it will be necessary to broadcast over seven stations, WABC alone covering a radius of only some 60 miles around New York City. The cost per series with a statewide hookup would be about \$20,000 for

26 broadcasts, whereas the 26 broadcasts over WABC alone would approximate \$9,000.

The radio homes covered by these California broadcasts approximate 800,000. There are between 500 and 700 members of the California Association. In New York State the number of radio homes reaches the astounding total of 4½ million. In this territory there are 1,500 architects belonging to our State Association.

Methods of financing such a plan were discussed. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that it would be unwise to seek a sponsor and that it should be possible to finance the plan by member assessment. Another scheme mentioned was taxing those architects who actually receive work which was directly traceable to the broadcasts. Even if this ingenious scheme were put into effect the original broadcast would have to be underwritten.

Mr. Lescage thanked CBS for their courtesy and the facilities extended, and the meeting adjourned after a motion was made by Wm. Lawrence Bottomley, seconded and unanimously carried to the effect that the suggestion made by the New York State Association Committee to further the interests of the profession of architecture by means of radio broadcasts be approved, and that the matter be referred back to the Committee for further study.

QUEENS SOCIETY DINNER

The Queens Society of Architects extends a cordial invitation to our members to attend a dinner meeting, "stag" and informal, on Thursday, January 23, 1941. It is expected that Borough President Harvey of Queens, Commissioners Wilson and Gilroy of the Department of Public Works and "just a few others" will speak at this occasion.

For tickets address Sidney L. Strauss, Chairman, 41 Union Square West, New York City, or the Chapter office. \$2 is the price.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATES

The names of the following men have been presented:

For Institute Membership

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Clarence Dale Badgeley | |
| Sponsors { | Ward W. Fenner |
| | Lorimer Rich |
| 2. James W. O'Connor | |
| Sponsors { | Julian Clarence Levi |
| | William Gompert |

EXHIBITION

Old buildings of New York City are on exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York. This show, called "Architectural Wonders of Their Day," covers the period from 1640 to

1900 and was assembled with a view to the impression created by the buildings at the time of their construction rather than to a valuation which later years have placed upon them. Some 72 drawings, prints, photographs and water colors are displayed.

Each picture has been labeled not with the usual historical facts but with comment from contemporary descriptions of press accounts.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Reginald E. Marsh, Chairman, reports that the work of the Chapter Committee on Public Schools is to further the interests of private architects on school work:

"Obviously in New York City, where public school work is executed by the Dept. of School Buildings, progress along these lines is slow, if in fact at all possible. The Committee has therefore centered its efforts in finding some method of reaching the Boards of Education outside of the City of New York. Since this has meant reaching out beyond the confines of the Chapter, it has been necessary to seek the approval and cooperation of other A.I.A. chapters and also of the State Associations, as well as the State Departments of Education.

"To put this plan into execution, the Committee prepared a pamphlet called "How to Select an Architect," which outlines briefly the necessity for careful preliminary steps in the selection of an architect, after which the two methods of selection are outlined: direct selection and selection by competition.

"The Committee is happy to report that this pamphlet has been endorsed by the New York State Association of Architects, which represents the sixteen Chapters and Societies within the State. New Jersey and Connecticut are also included in the plan, and the Committee has held meetings with representatives of the Building Divisions of those State Departments of Education, with assurances of cooperation. Thus after a year of constant effort, progress has been made and success seems within the realm of possibility.

"The ultimate purpose is to distribute this pamphlet of information to all School Superintendents and Supervising Principals. These men are more or less permanent in their localities. Later when the State Departments receive word of new school facilities in some school district they in turn can supply that information to the local Boards of Education."

The Committee suggests that similar pamphlets of information might be useful in other types of public work.

MEETINGS FOR 1941

Our Meetings Committee has requested the OCULUS to reprint the tentative meeting schedule for the balance of the season, hoping that members will get out their new calendars and mark on them the following dates:

Jan.—Tues., Jan. 28, Lunch
Feb.—Tues., Feb. 25, Dinner
Mar.—Tues., Mar. 25, Lunch
Apr.—Tues., Apr. 29, Dinner
May—Tues., May 27, Lunch
June—Wed., June 4, Lunch

LANGLEY SCHOLARSHIP

The 1941 Langley Scholarships have been announced by the A.I.A. Applications will be received between January 1st and March 1st, 1941. This fund of \$104,000 was received by The Institute from the estate of the late Edward Langley, A.I.A., of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and is administered by a committee of our Board of Directors.

Mr. Langley was born in Toronto, Canada, and graduated from the University of Toronto. He was the son of the late Edward Langley of the old architectural firm of Langley, Langley and Burke, and a cousin of Charles E. Langley of the present Toronto firm of Langley and Howland, Architects. He became a member of The Institute and the Philadelphia Chapter in 1908, and when the Scranton-Wilkes Barre Chapter was organized in 1922, was transferred thereto. He practiced architecture in Scranton for about 30 years and during that time designed and supervised the erection of several of the largest buildings in that city.

That portion of his will relating to the establishment of the scholarship reads as follows: "All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, real, personal and mixed wherever situated at the time of my death, I hereby give, devise and bequeath unto The American Institute of Architects, incorporated under the laws of New York State, its successors and assigns, for the establishment of an architectural scholarship, to be known as the 'Edward Langley Scholarship.'

"My said estate so devised and bequeathed to The American Institute of Architects shall be invested by the said American Institute of Architects and the principal thereof shall be maintained in perpetuity, and the income to be derived therefrom shall be used for scholarship purposes and particularly in the aid of students, residents of the United States and Canada, in the study of architecture, and said fund to be administered by a committee to be appointed by the Board of Directors of The American Institute of Architects, from the said Board of Directors."