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# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

NOVEMBER, 1942

? ? ? EDITOR

## ANSWER TO A CHALLENGE

In the last issue of the OCULUS, under the caption "We Are Challenged," a proposal was put before you in response to the Institute's Macedonian cry for help. Briefly the proposal was an offer to match dollars with the rest of the Chapters on a one to three basis, up to \$1,000, this sum to be paid out of our already voted Public Relations Fund.

All replies received from the general membership have been favorable. Your Executive Committee has unanimously approved the plan. Accordingly our offer went forward to the A.I.A.

Raymond J. Ashton, the newly elected Treasurer of the A.I.A., who hails from Salt Lake City, in acknowledging our "generous challenge," writes:

"Out west, where men shoot from the hips, we would call that 'placin' a purty good bet."

"We are right proud of an eastern slicker organization which can face the whole country with such an offer, and as referee for the game, I am simply telling you that we will watch to see there is no foul play. I am also prodding the rest of the Chapters to lay their \$3 on the line, matching your \$1, and when they do, brother, the gun totin' side of the profession will be real proud of you and you will hear your praises sung from the Bowery to Frisco Bay.

"Joking aside, the Institute has ahead of it a gigantic task. Bureaus have been so vigorously established and bureaucratic procedure becoming the order of the day, that nothing but a vigorous program in the part of our profession will save us from complete engulfment."

## POST WAR WORK

L. Andrew Reinhard, our Chairman on Post War Activities, notified the membership on October 14th of a request for a list of architects from this Chapter qualified for public work. The request had come from the Temporary Commission for Post War Public Works Planning of New York State.

In response to Mr. Reinhard's appeal, 39 members sent in their qualifications to the Chapter office. This list, together with the data as submitted, has now gone forward, alphabetically and without comment, to the Commission.

## NEXT MEETING

Time: Thursday, Nov. 12, 7 P.M.  
Place: Architectural League  
Subject: Arthur Garfield Hays

The second of our combined dinners with the League will be entitled "City Lawyer Looks at the Future." Mr. Hays, New York City Attorney, is well known not only as author of a recent best seller, "City Lawyer," but also for his successful law practice covering a wide range of social problems.

The thought "What is going to happen to our City?" suggests not only its social but its physical aspects as well.

Lorimer Rich, Chairman of the League's Exhibition Committee, will offer as a background to Mr. Hays' comments, an exhibition of City, Town and Country Planning, and the dinner will mark the formal opening of this Exhibition.

As before, ladies are not only invited but expected. Black tie optional. Subscription One-fifty. Please make reservations without delay on the enclosed card.

## FIRST JOINT MEETING

Sir Ernest Simon, Deputy Chairman of the Central Council of the Ministry of Works and Planning, having recently arrived from England, gave his first talk in this country on October 8th at the dinner given jointly by the N. Y. Chapter and the Architectural League for their combined memberships. The occasion was the inauguration of an Exhibition of Blitzed London Architecture, loaned by the British Information Services. This Exhibition, which covered the walls of the League's dining room, was a series of photographs showing the results of bombings on some of London's finest buildings, and interspersed with a number of colorful British war posters.

The subject of Sir Ernest's talk was the rebuilding of Britain after the war, which he hopes will be accomplished in one generation. While the cost of this will be huge, Britain is prepared to pay, and already has appointed a Ministry of Works and Planning, empowered to develop a national planning policy, in which the interests of the individual will be subordinated to the interests of the general public. Subcommittees of this Ministry are now

working on problems of finance, land ownership, transportation, sanitation and the many other phases of large scale planning. The results of their studies are to be made available to the planners in this country, said Sir Ernest, and in return we are asked to cooperate by supplying them with such data as we may have. President Shreve has already offered on behalf of the A.I.A. to help in this exchange of information and ideas, which can result only in more closely uniting our two countries. Sir Ernest hoped that a friendly rivalry might develop between England and America in post war reconstruction.

The late Sir Raymond Unwin, British housing authority and visiting professor at Columbia University on American town planning, gave an impetus to housing in England when he recommended to the British Government the building of 4 million houses with 4 million gardens.

Each workingman's house has in fact two gardens, the flower garden in the front and the vegetable garden in the rear.

In contrast to this, Sir Ernest noted with great interest the community planting of our American projects, such as for example at the T.V.A., the result no doubt of our possibly overzealous landscape architects.

Sir Ernest was an able and entertaining speaker. A native of Manchester, he has had a most distinguished career in England, having served twice as a Liberal Member of Parliament. He was also Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Member of the Government Economic Advisory Committee, Lord Mayor of Manchester and for 12 years a member of the Manchester City Council. He is now Governing Director of two Engineering firms and Regional Controller for the Ministry of Aircraft Production. He was directly concerned with the building of Wythenshawe, the huge satellite suburb of Manchester, and has been the moving spirit of many social reforms.

Over 100 members and guests attended the dinner, which was the first of this season's joint meetings of the Chapter and the League. All in all, the occasion was a notable success, and augurs well for future joint meetings which the two organizations plan to hold each month.



## TRIVIA

One beautiful Sunday morning, in early summer, I was drifting ghost-like between stud framing, visualizing future rooms, in a residence under construction. As I floated through space, I felt very pleased with myself and my job. The disposition of the rooms in reality was as hoped for when planned on the draughting board, and the room proportions were very satisfying. I revelled in the glow of having created something worth-while—an Olympian feeling indeed. The quiet sunny Sabbath morn with a chorus of avian song completed the God-like ecstatic picture.

Peering down from the clouds, through second floor joists and two-by-fours, I observed a very smart run-about swing to a halt at what was to be the front entrance. A very dapper individual descended from the car and entered the building. He proceeded to look about the future rooms below me.

I remained quiet and speechless for several reasons, one being the interruption to my pleasant dreaming. The gentleman seemed most thorough in his examinations and showed great skill in locomotion. "Ah!" thought I, "Someone who knows something about building." He did not appear to be one of the populace whose Sunday outdoor sport is to ramble over a stranger's domicile in the making, and thereby gain first-hand knowledge of his mode of life. He seemed to have a definite purpose about him. So interested was he, I thought it advisable that I make my presence known.

Descending to his level via the ladder, I approached with a "Good morning!" "Jolly house, this!" was his greeting, "dashed good plan and proportions." "Well," I replied, using bright little architectural persiflage number one, "every mother loves her child." "Oh, I say, are you the Architect? I've so wanted to meet you."

"Another client in the making," was my pleasant thought. So I admitted that I was the architect and further that I was pleased he liked my effort so well. We chatted on about this and that, seeming to have more and more in common. A beautiful friendship in the making, as it were.

Meal-time drawing nigh, I must perforce terminate our pleasant conversation. "Do you intend building?" I asked, heroically disguising the hopeful note in my voice. "Oh, yes," he replied. "I am a bricklayer and thought

perhaps I could build your fire-places and chimneys."

How he got-the-hell-off the job, or why he did not fall down between the joists and break his gabby neck, only the Fates know. When I came to, the man and his swank car had vanished; also the dream of another client.

J.T.H.

## LETTER FROM LONDON

*Herewith is a letter from President W. H. Ansell of the R.I.B.A., recently received at the Chapter Office:*

It is now just a year since we received from the Architects of America their most generous gift in aid of British Architects and their families who have been adversely affected by the war. I think the contributors may like to know broadly how this fund has been used.

Bearing in mind the wish expressed by the donors, the following are some of the cases which have already been helped from the fund:

Architects' Orphans; grants for vocational training.

Architect's Widow with two young children. Husband died from overwork on A.R.P. Rescue in air raids.

Widow of Architect's Assistant, lost everything in air raid, her son also losing his possessions.

Widow of Architect's Assistant, with two small children; grant for children's food and clothing.

The Council of the Architect's Benevolent Society, who administer the Fund, considered it prudent not to distribute the whole amount immediately, but to reserve a balance towards cases of hardship which are likely to occur, as a result of the war, and which the Society might otherwise find itself unable to assist.

The recipients have expressed great appreciation of the aid they have received in this way from the American Architects, "which," as one says, is another instance of the expression of the bond of sympathy which exists between our respective nations." Another writes, "How good and thoughtful of the American Architects to help our British ones in time of trouble, and I only trust this war will soon be over so that they can all have a fresh start to make up for all the precious time lost."

May I take this opportunity of once more expressing our heartfelt gratitude for your help.

## OCTAGON TO OUR ASSOCIATES

The delegates to the last Annual meeting of the A.I.A. voted that all Associates of Chapters should receive the "Octagon."

The method of paying for these subscriptions, either out of the Chapter's general funds, or by increasing Associates' dues, was left to each Chapter.

The New York Chapter's Executive Committee has voted to furnish this service to our Associates out of its general funds and without increase of dues.

This action is one of the steps towards unification of the profession. It should bring our younger members into closer contact with the Institute, increase their interest in National activities of the profession and, we hope, encourage them to apply for corporate membership.

## MEMBERSHIP

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

## 1. G. Harmon Gurney

*Sponsors:*

Matthew W. Del Gaudio

Wm. Lawrence Bottomley

## 2. Adolph Witschard

*Sponsors:*

Steward Wagner

Arthur C. Holden

## NEW MEMBERS:

*Elected to A.I.A. Membership:*

## 1. Albert B. Bauer

(former Associate)

## 2. Kent Crane

## 3. Charles Bertram French

## 4. Thomas F. Holifield

## 5. Morris Ketchum, Jr.

## 6. Luther Hammond Lewis

## 7. Eric Mendelsohn

## 8. Chauncey W. Riley

## 9. Kenneth H. Rippen

## 10. Hugh Nanton Romney

## 11. Hermon Wick

*Associates:*

## 1. Karl Quirin

## 2. Thorne Sherwood

## LOSSES:

Carl Feiss, transferred to Colorado Chapter

Albert C. Schweizer, transferred to Washington, D. C., Chapter

James Brite, died

George Steele, resigned

## CHANGE IN STATUS:

John V. Van Pelt, elected Member Emeritus