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# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

MARCH, 1943

## NEXT MEETING

Announcement of our Anniversary Dinner has already gone forth and reservations are coming in with each mail. Have you made yours? First come, first served.

Tuesday evening, March 30th.

## AFTER THE WAR

The New York Chapter of the Producers Council joined with this Chapter, the League and the Landscape Architects at the last joint dinner, held at the League Clubhouse on February 25th.

Printed programs announced the subject of the meeting: "N. Y. Planners and Builders Discuss Private Initiative in Post War Construction." The speakers were Harry Held, Assistant Vice President of the Bowery Savings Bank, Frederick M. Babcock, speaking for the Post War Planning Committee of the Producers Council, Thomas S. Holden, former President of the N. Y. Building Congress, and now Chairman of its Post War Planning Committee, and Harvey Wiley Corbett of the A.I.A. Nearly 100 members and guests were present.

Mr. Holden expressed the belief that this country after the war will enjoy the greatest opportunity for expansion in its history. There will be markets for community improvements, for houses over \$6,000, for development of textiles and new materials, he said. The possibilities of aviation development will parallel those of the automotive industry following the first World War. In the past, most periods of expansion have been unforeseen and caught us unprepared. He cautioned us that our biggest problem, following this war, will be how to control the boom.

However, we must beware, said Mr. Holden, of the romanticists and dreamers, those who envision colossal planned cities, future commercial transportation by air only, thermoplastic houses equipped with a plethora of self-starting, self-regulating gadgets. We cannot hope for the day, he said, when the designers will give us "washing machines made out of extruded cheese!"

Mr. Holden was also contemptuous of the defeatists, who can see no future for themselves under the present system, who are certain that all gov-

ernment debts will be repudiated and who ask plaintively what is to become of us all.

The country has already amassed billions in private savings, estimated as reaching between 30 and 40 billions at the end of the war, which they will put to work. In Mr. Holden's opinion, the Government is far more likely to redeem its pledges to the people of the United States than it is to increase the present debt in order to pump more money into an economic system which will probably not need it.

If private initiative is to plan intelligently for the post war period, it must dismiss defeatism and dreaming. Webster defines the word "enterprise" as an "undertaking of importance or risk; boldness, energy and invention," and that, Mr. Holden asserted, is the premise upon which we must proceed. The question is, how much boldness, energy and invention have we!

Mr. Held, speaking on behalf of the bankers and realtors, welcomed the cooperation which has developed in recent years between those groups and the builders. The 1942 Survey of the Banking industry, he said, stressed two points pertinent to our subject: the bill which permits savings banks to loan on post war redevelopment projects, and the recent announcement that the government is looking with favor on the promotion of private enterprise.

Mr. Babcock outlined for us the very comprehensive program on planning, on which the Producers Council is now hard at work. Committees have been formed covering every phase of the problem, from research on new materials, sustained employment, development of markets and volume forecasts, to revision of our archaic building codes, timing, "packaging," marketing and distribution.

Mr. Corbett expressed the same note of optimism for the future that was expressed by Mr. Holden.

In speaking of laws to avoid congestion in New York City, he suggested that one answer would be the limiting of enclosed space by the cubic foot formula. By this formula the prospective builder would have the choice of going up in the air and covering less ground, or spreading out and keeping the buildings low. This in his opinion would tend to stabilize land values and make for a better city.

## LEGISLATION FOR POST WAR PROJECTS

Messrs. Arthur C. Holden and Ralph Walker made a recent trip to Albany to consult with the Executive Secretary of the Temporary State Commission for Post War Public Works Planning, regarding appropriations for New York State Post War projects.

A bill on this subject was introduced in the State Legislature last year, as a result of which the above Commission was created, and funds appropriated and expended. This year under the new administration a new bill was introduced and is now before the Legislature awaiting approval.

In general this bill provides additional funds for preparation of plans for public work and further for the employment of private architects and engineers. The personnel of the Commission will be reduced, but the policy of making its membership representative of the various state divisions concerned with public works, will be continued.

Under the bill the State Commission has the power to allot funds for project planning to State divisions; it may further allot funds to localities providing those localities will contribute their proportionate share.

There is now pending in Congress the Lynch Bill, H.R. 1898, a Federal measure which provides for the allotment for project planning of 25 millions by the President to Federal agencies, and the further allotment of 75 millions through such agencies as he, the President, may designate, to State and local agencies. If and when these latter projects are authorized and funds become available, these agencies must repay the Government advance for planning.

Your Chapter Committees on Legislation and on Post War Planning are following these measures closely.

## CIVIC DESIGN

The members who have submitted projects to the Civic Design Committee are planning a meeting of great profit. These activities will be spoken of at the forthcoming Chapter meeting and will form the basis of an interesting contribution by the architects to the subject of city planning, when they are in more concrete form.



**MEMBERSHIP****CANDIDATES:**

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Clinton Bowen Fish Brill

*Sponsors:*

Louis S. Weeks  
Robert B. O'Connor

2. Caleb Hornbostel

*Sponsors:*

Wm. Lawrence Bottomley  
Lorimer Rich

3. William Welles Knowles

*Sponsors:*

Frederick Mathesius  
Matthew Del Gaudio

4. Alexander Perry Morgan

*Sponsors:*

William F. Lamb  
Arthur L. Harmon

5. Lloyd Morgan

*Sponsors:*

C. Dale Badgeley  
Francis Keally

6. William Muschenheim

*Sponsors:*

Antonin Raymond  
William Lescaze

7. Francis Wilshire Roudebush

*Sponsors:*

John C. B. Moore  
Wm. Lawrence Bottomley

8. George Cooper Rudolph, Jr.

*Sponsors:*

Lester C. Tichy  
Louis Skidmore

9. Morris Henry Sugarman

*Sponsors:*

Wm. Lawrence Bottomley  
Harvey W. Corbett

10. William Charney Vladeck

*Sponsors:*

Frederick G. Frost  
Jacob Moscovitz

**NEW MEMBERS:**

Elected to A.I.A. Membership:

1. Charles W. Beeston
2. Richard Gregory Belcher
3. William McKnight Bowman
4. James F. Connell
5. Charles DuBose
6. John Eberson
7. Horace Ginsbern
8. Thomas E. Greacen
9. G. Harmon Gurney
10. Robert Ingle Hoyt
11. Charles F. Mink
12. Lyford Rome (former Associate)
13. Adolph Witschard

Elected to Membership Emeritus:

1. Walter B. Chambers
2. Lyman H. Dixon

**Transferred:**

1. Charles G. Ramsey (from Brooklyn Chapter)
2. J. Leland Benson (from Oklahoma Chapter)

**Losses:**

1. Phelps Barnum (transferred to Florida Chapter)
2. Edward C. Dean, resigned
3. Donald A. Fletcher, resigned
4. Louis C. Jaeger, resigned
5. Frank A. Moore, deceased
6. Mott B. Schmidt, resigned
7. William Edgar Shepherd, resigned
8. Walter T. Williams (transferred to Boston Chapter)
9. Robert Wiseman, resigned

**NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS**

The Congress is the only organization in New York City whose membership includes all elements of the construction industry, viz. architects, engineers, general and sub-contractors, loaning institutions, real estate interests, labor unions, manufacturers and material men. Thus the Congress can speak for the entire industry, and moreover has the opportunity of influencing public opinion and appearing with authority before government, civic and industrial bodies.

This Chapter is a paying member of the Building Congress, and as such is represented in these activities. The Chapter also receives from the Congress a wealth of material on WPB and OPA rulings, reports on proposed legislation and data on current economic trends relating to the building industry. This information is on file at the Chapter Office and is available to our members.

A few of the subjects in which the Congress is currently engaged are Post War Planning, Land Utilization, Building Code changes, City Planning, Prequalification of Bidders and Government Contracts.

**CHAPTER PERSONALS**

A survey of our members' activities might at this time be of interest. Of our 450 members, 65 are now in the Armed Forces of the United States, many of these at the various Army, Navy & Marine headquarters throughout the country, the others overseas. Only a small proportion of those in service apparently are engaged in work at all akin to the practice of architecture.

As to our civilian membership, judging from such information as trickles into the Chapter office, it would appear that something over 200 are engaged in Government work, either in their own offices or in war plants, or at some form of present or post war planning.

**RED CROSS**

Madison Square Garden will be the scene on April 5th of a spectacular Show for the benefit of the current Red Cross Drive. The entertainment is sponsored by the Motion Picture Industry, the American Theatre Wing, the Hollywood Victory Committee, and the United War Activities Committee. The program, it is said, will last for six hours and a galaxy of stars is promised.

A Committee for Architects and Engineers has been formed under the Chairmanship of Jacob Moscovitz of the New York Chapter, who has been busy of late urging his colleagues to buy seats ranging from \$3.30 to \$50 each, or if they prefer, boxes at \$5,000. He also suggests that they buy seats not only for themselves but that they contribute towards the 2,500 seats which have been set aside for men in the service.

We wish Mr. Moscovitz all luck in this undertaking!

**REVIEW**

*New York Plans for the Future.* By Cleveland Rogers. Harper and Brothers. \$3.00.

This is the story of New York City's growing pains; of the difficulties which beset it along the way and of its brighter hopes for the future, told by a good reporter.

All of the things which architects are now thinking and talking about are illuminated in varying degrees by the facts of the story or by the philosophical interpretations of the reporter.

Mr. Rogers has confidence that the solution of New York City's troubles is to be found in the control of the use of private property as wisely administered by the City Planning Commission.

It is a book which should be read by all who are interested in New York City's history or in its future and especially by those who believe that no changes or improvements should be undertaken until critical planning studies have been made.

C. D. L.