The regular monthly meeting of the Executive Board of The State Association of Wisconsin Architects was held Saturday, January 11, at the Plankinton Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The meeting was called to order by President William F. Mickelsen at 10:30 a.m.


By proxy: Gage M. Taylor.

An interim financial report of the model account, the assessment on models and the finances was read by the Secretary.

The Secretary read the correspondence on the Wisconsin Rapids proposed hospital which, it had been reported, was to be planned by an engineer in place of an architect. The matter, however, had been satisfactorily terminated by the employment of Childs and Smith, Architects, of Chicago.

There was a lengthy discussion on the present Registration Law for Architects and Engineers. The discussion will be continued at the next Board meeting as there was no action.

The President appointed A. L. Seidenschwartz to represent the State Association on the Wisconsin Engineers Conference.

T. L. Eschweiler suggested that Gerrit J. de Gelleke, chairman of the Large Scale Housing committee, talk on “Housing” at a future Board meeting.

A motion was made by Wallace Brown and seconded by Mr. Eschweiler that the term of our representative on the Mayor's Advisory Council, Walter Memmler, be extended for three years and that the Council be notified. The motion was carried. This was done to conform to the rules of the Council.

Following a discussion of the publishing of Building Reports in THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT, the Secretary was instructed to publish such reports in the earliest issue of the magazine.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 12:15 and reconvened at 1:30 p.m. with a discussion on the report of the Committee for the Revision of the Lien Law which is being undertaken by the Building Congress. Mr. Memmler, our representative on the Congress, is chairman of this committee. Mr. Seidenschwartz raised some questions on the action of the committee which resulted in the request that he, Mr. Seidenschwartz, put in writing his views on this important matter for discussion by the Board.

A letter was read from Walter E. Wendlund with reference to practise violations in Waukesha, Wis. The Secretary was instructed to turn this letter over to Mr. Memmler, chairman of the Practise Committee.

Mr. Eschweiler made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Seidenschwartz, that the State Association of Wisconsin Architects hold to its established policy of the last three years of not charging exhibitors for...
Facadism
By RUSSELL WOLCOTT
(Continued from January Issue)

For instance, I want my guest room to be usable when there are no guests, my dining room for other purposes than a display of Sheraton furniture and Sheffield plate after the table has been cleared three times a day. I know that it is not considered good social form but the practice has not yet been declared unconstitutional.

And, lastly, I want to use honest, durable, practical, and economical-in-the-long-run materials: but not necessarily local ones, because distribution has solved that problem today.

Those are some of the things I believe must be worked out before I even dream of an elevation, if I am ever going to achieve an honest house for myself or any one else and at the same time get a little closer to real architecture. They are more important. I think, than copying beauty from books. Just now, at any rate.

Instead of designing a scene for some engineer to figure later, as I used to, I was surprised to find that I was working from the first at a structural solution to the space arrangement I had in mind. It was hard to find an imaginative engineer who would work along with me, probably because we architects with our "cultural" processes had dulled their imaginations, too, but gradually we evolved an arrangement of structural points on the plan which would support any sort of a shell securely and then we could fill in the partitions and windows whenever we wished. The freedom of the process is astonishing to one who has worked all his life within the confines of a style. This is what evolved.

I present it not with the slightest idea that it is perfect or even "good" architecture, but because it seems

(Continued on page 5)
Mr. B. Leo Steiff  
919 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois  

Dear Mr. Steiff:

I have your letter of the 4th in which you ask for suggestions which might assist your Committee of the Chicago Chapter, American Institute of Architects, in the matter of "How Architects can best serve the various government agencies, national, state and local."

As I recall, the notices of some of your past meetings mentioned speakers on civic subjects and the notice of your January 1941 meeting states that you will have Mr. Morton Bodfish, Vice-Chairman and Mr. T. T. McCrosky, Executive Director of the Chicago Plan Committee as your honored guests at the February meeting. Having speakers on civic subjects are steps in the right direction. In the interest of the profession be sure to publicize your meetings and speakers both before and after the meeting.

You cannot expect the public and governing agencies to know that you are a public spirited organization unless you actually have such an interest and display it before the public. Appoint a publicity committee to blow your horn. This committee must prod the Chapter and its members to keep it supplied with material for publicity purposes. This committee should also build up an acquaintance with the newspapers by inviting reporters to your meetings so that they may become acquainted with your members, they will in turn call on you to make comments for quotation on matters that you display an interest in. The reporters will be of great aid in your publicity campaign. Remember, however, that the papers will publish only such material that has "news" value, or is in some other way of interest to the public.

Your public spirit must manifest itself in many other ways, members must talk and write for publica- tion in the name of the Chapter, or the profession, on all subjects for which they are qualified, especially controversial subjects.

A committee of the Chapter should attend hearings of governing bodies on building matters and other subjects in which the profession should be interested. Have architects write articles for the daily papers containing suggestions for the man contemplating building the small house, both as to matters of construction and appearance. There are many other building topics that will be of interest to the public on which the architects are qualified to write and that the newspapers will be glad to publish.

Organize a speakers bureau among members of the profession to talk before groups of professional and social organizations on architectural subjects, or for that matter on other subjects. You will find this an exceptionally dignified way to get before the public and also get notice in the papers.

By working along the lines here suggested you will develop latent talents among the membership so that you will become equipped to go before the public on short notice to speak on practically any architectural subject in which the public may be interested.

If the Chapter displays an interest in public affairs the governing body in City, County and State will recognize it by giving the Chapter and profession due consideration in their requests for information and committee appointments.

In state matters all Chapters should act jointly, but in national matters the country must act together, which means that the officers of the American Institute of Architects must take action. This they have always done in the past and are ready to do in the future.

In addition to the suggestions that I have made in response to your inquiry, I have consulted Mr. Leigh Hunt, Director of the American Institute of Architects representing the State Architects' Associations, for further suggestions and as a result offer the following topics for chapter discussion to stimulate attendance at Chapter meetings.

The greatest difficulty chapters have to surmount is the lack of interest of the members in the meetings. This situation can be helped somewhat by organizing a telephone squad, each member of which is to telephone six to ten members reminding them of the meeting and urging them to attend. The more prominent architects should be particularly urged to attend because they will assist in attracting the younger men by their presence.

Every alternate meeting of the Chapter could be in charge of the chairman of a standing committee. It would be necessary for the committee to make research and prepare material for the meeting. If this is done it would stimulate committee activity and would create competition between the various committees and thereby create more interest in the meetings.

Invite public spirited citizens connected with various civic organizations to the Chapter meetings and have them talk on their particular phase of public service and point out to the architects how they can be of service in the various civic organizations.

Have one of your committees make an analysis of the profession of architecture as compared with the engineers and contractors organizations and corporation architectural departments. Have a discussion and see what can be done about recovering the loss of work that the profession has suffered.

Take up with the contractors organizations any grievances the architects, or the contractors may have and invite a committee of contractors to attend a chapter meeting to discuss the subjects with the architects.

Sponsor a series of architectural competitions among the members for small houses of various kinds and publish the drawings in the local papers. Also arrange competitions in other fields. This scheme has been tried out and found to be successful in Baltimore and other cities.

Hoping that these suggestions will be of service to you. I am Sincerely yours.  

Peter Brust
to me to show that progress is possible even in a facadist’s mind. And now, having exposed my personal ambitions to the ridicule of those who still exist in ivory towers, to those high priests of art who know so definitely and surely that only the old forms of architecture are worth their while, to those well-smocked beings who speak so learnedly of "beauty," I can add only this.

I know of no set of rules by which architecture can be achieved. I’ve read of "the eternal laws of beauty and composition, form and decoration" but I’ve never found them written down — not any laws that one could call eternal. Beauty is certainly eternal but the laws of its form and composition and decoration, I think, are not. Can any one define the thing which makes such varied forms as the Taj Mahal, the Parthenon, Hagia Sophia, Chatres, the Carnavalet and, yes, the Washington Monument and even the San Francisco bridges accepted by different yet knowing eyes as being types of beauty? All we know is that the spirit in them can be felt. But we also ought to know by this time that we cannot copy the inspiration that makes one of these forms beautiful to you and another more beautiful to me. We can copy the form of it but we can never steal its spirit. Somehow it isn’t possible. And yet, how hard we have tried!

Lately, some men have come to believe that there is only one way to achieve the essence that makes architecture — or anything else — eternal. They feel that when our dead trade becomes again a living expression of its own civilization — not of that of its ancestors — then inspiration which is the spirit of beauty will become possible. Only a few men have been trying the experiment and for such a little while; but already in some of the most recent attempts to express our own age in architecture a certain spirit has entered them and has changed their forms, not willingly but inevitably, to shapes which are strange to our stylistic traditions. And the authors of these attempts feel this is progress. Since there are no rules by which we can arrive at beauty quickly in these new forms, they believe that if we keep on learning facts and working honestly to express those facts it is not impossible that some day, somehow, some inspired genius will use the results of our crude and wishful experiments to achieve that beauty which we were never near. As Ictinus did long ago.

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The Reply

Editor's Note: This is an actual letter received by an architect in answer to his advertisement.

Charlotte, N. C., Jan. 3, 1923

109 G.
Dear Sir:

Replying to your "Ad" in the current number of the American Architect, I am a thoroughly all around experienced Architectural draftsman of the highest class, being experienced in the finest class of work as head man for more than 25 years and being first class in every particular. I am rapid and accurate and can take an organization and get all there is out of it as my long and varied experience has taught me how to steer correctly for the motif and detail that solves the problem. Allowing nothing to side-track me on useless attempts to revise motif which seems to work for the solution of the problem at hand, assured by experience that I have sufficient mature judgment in design to conceive the effect of various motif even before it is delineated. Although I thrash out all matters in composition in the most practical manner. I never copy, or look at pictures to get ideas for my work but handle every problem absolutely on its merits, as a well rounded out architectural creation. I don't care how another would do it, but only trust to my judgment and governing conditions. My designs are models in all that is best in architecture and most desirable or appropriate in plan. I use ornament only when necessary to emphasize and enrich the architecture. Simple lines with strength whenever it is valuable as a structural necessity or accessory to my composition. I work about equally well in all styles, having handled representative structures in all that are current. "Poetry in lines" or "of lines" is my guide. I can make a warehouse stand up and testify to its security or make a church sing praises to the eternal, a home in a residence, with every convenience and everything in the proper place. A capitol that will make the work adorn government, and a hotel with every wish of the sojourner gratified, for the least expenditure. An office building tickle the clouds if need be, as I am afraid you will think I am trying to string along also, with the working conditions, then I will be able to conceive what a place in your organization will cost you, and yield me. I wish I could get an office to myself where I could be away from the hum of office machinery, as loud talking, whistling, thrashing out detail, etc. often annoy me. Your location in a city of 400,000 is

At your pleasure I will take up any matters you wish to discuss with me, and in reply, please give me an idea of your work and organization, along also, with the working conditions, then I will be able to conceive what a place in your organization will cost you, and yield me. I wish I could get an office to myself where I could be away from the hum of office machinery, as loud talking, whistling, thrashing out detail, etc. often annoy me. Your location in a city of 400,000 is

about O.K. and I suppose you expect about $5,000,000 in "commissions" (work) this year. I would desire much to hear from you. My field has been in the U.S.A. in and around New York, but generally in all our larger cities as far West as Denver. Rather, some of the largest cities but by no means all of them.

If it is architecture I can do it in the best manner. I am now putting in spare time on a proposition that you would be most fortunate to get connected up with and if you give me the proper opportunity, I will show you the gateway of more business than you will be likely to get in the next ten years. I need you for my present resource, and you will be glad that you attached me to your force. A word to the wise will be sufficient, now, as I am afraid you will think I am trying to string you. I am not, but mention this, just as an incident, I rest only on my qualifications as a producer of good work.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) C. R. Dewey

11 Mint Street
January 4, 1923

P.S. I wrote this letter last night and this morning I have information that I can say positively you will be the gainer by getting in touch with me by wire as soon as you receive this. For I will leave here soon, to follow up information I am in possession of that has great promise.

C. R. D.
Obviously, there are ill-trained people in every business and profession, and before the founding of the American Institute of Decorators some six years ago, it was conceivably difficult for client or architect to know which were decorators with proper qualifications. As today one can call oneself an actor, musician or writer, so one can be a decorator without a degree or license. It is conceivable that architects may have had reason to look upon some decorators very much as, some years back, the literal and sturdy-minded engineers looked upon the architects. —JAMES H. BLAUVELT, A.I.D.

The architect is usually as interested as the client to see that the house is consistently decorated. As he, himself, has spent years preparing for the practice of architecture, little wonder that he is sometimes annoyed at seeing his house completed by one who has had no technical training whatsoever, little claim to real efficiency or even much taste. The decorator who has won the respect of the architect through a thorough knowledge and technical training can do much to further the cooperation between the two professions. —MRS. ARCHIBALD M. BROWN, A.I.D.

In the olden days when the “architect was a craftsman more than a draftsman, in the evolution of his work he called in all the other allied crafts to help him in the evolvement and completion of whatever work he undertook. Times have changed with advancing knowledge, and architects evolved out of “carpenters and masons” just as decorators have matured out of seamstresses or furniture salesmen. —WILLIAM R. MOORE, A.I.A., Hon. F.B.I.D.

It is our firm conviction that an interior cannot exist without an exterior, and neither without a plan. We conclude that the professions of Architecture and Decorating are by their nature co-existent and can only in rare cases be isolated one from the other. It would, therefore, be a reasonable deduction that the traditional feud between Architect and Decorator was of their own making and not inherent in either profession. —T. MERRILL PRENTICE, A.I.A.

(Continued from page 2)

space at our annual conventions. This motion was prompted by the knowledge that many associations have been charging the exhibitors for space.

It was moved by R. S. Chase that the Small House Committee outline its plans for an architectural exhibition to be shown during the 1941 Convention. It shall include models and photographs and the details for these two exhibits shall be submitted by the Chairman at the next meeting of the Board. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Brown and carried.

Mr. Brown, chairman of the Special Committee on Home Defense Program, submitted his final report and turned over his file to the Secretary for the record.

President Mickelsen appointed a Special Committee to make a study of the proposed State Building Code with Mr. Seidenschwartz, chairman, and Mr. Memmler and Mr. Hunt to serve with him.

It was the sense of the meeting that the February Board meeting be held in Madison, Wis. The Secretary was directed to make arrangements for time and place.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

LEIGH HUNT, Secretary.
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