

THE
OCTAGON

A Journal of The American Institute of Architects



The 69th Convention
The New England Scene
The Problem of Large-Scale Low-Rent Housing
Structural Service Department
With the Chapters - As of Interest

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THE OCTAGON

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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The Sixty-Ninth Convention

THIRD NOTICE

TO THE MEMBERS:

In the January number of THE OCTAGON notice was given concerning the following items relating to the convention:

- Convention Committees
- Early Election of Delegates
- Procedure for Election of Delegates
- Chapter Meetings on Convention Business
- Nominations by Petition

In the March number notice was given concerning:

- Qualification and Registration of Delegates
- Number of Delegates
- Credential Cards
- Hotel Headquarters and Reservations

In this April number will be found further descriptions of the New England scene by Hubert Ripley, of Boston; by Josiah Tubby, of Portland; and by Norman Isham and F. Ellis Jackson, of Providence.

It will add to your enjoyment and to your reasons for attending the convention if you will read these tributes to "Down East."

The May number of THE OCTAGON—to be mailed on or about May 1—will contain a tentative program of events; a record of nominations for offices and directorships received by petition up to April 21; and any other notices that may be required.

Special attention is called to the desirability of making early and definite reservations at the Somerset Hotel, 400 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. In doing so you should state the type of room desired,

the price, the time of your arrival, and that the reservation is made in connection with the convention of The Institute. All reservations should reach the Somerset Hotel *not later than May 25*.

Once more it is urged upon the chapters that they hold meetings in late April or early May to be devoted to the affairs of the profession and The Institute.

Since the last convention a special effort has been made to make the monthly issues of THE OCTAGON a real media of communication between the officers and directors of The Institute on the one hand, and the chapters and membership at large on the other.

Those members and chapter officers who check the pages of THE OCTAGON from month to month—between conventions—are assured of information and comment relative to those activities of The Institute, its Board, its Committees, and its Chapters which should be of concern to them as members of the profession.

The Convention Committee of The Institute, under the chairmanship of Hubert G. Ripley, and the Convention Committee of the Boston Chapter, under the chairmanship of Ralph W. Gray, have worked with great energy and devotion toward the accomplishment of a successful meeting. They expect to give emphasis to New England hospitality, and to show their brother architects the best of the New England scene.

Let no circumstances of business, weather, or tide prevent your attendance at this sixty-ninth meeting of the A. I. A.—June 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Boston.

CHARLES T. INGHAM,
Secretary.

The New England Scene

THE ATTRACTIONS OF BOSTON

THE early settlers of Boston (*Conditia 1630, Civitatis Regimine Donata 1822, Sicut Patribus sit Deus Nobis*), with admirable foresight, said to themselves, "We're here to stay; our children and our children's children for generations to come have got to have an example to follow in building. Let's do the thing right. True, we're poor and we'll have to stick to bricks and wood, but Art is not dependent on money alone. Why not get a little limited service from Inigo Jones, have him send over some plans suitable for repeated use?"

The result was a charming little town, as may be seen by studying Captain Bonner's lovely map of our old cow paths.

Architecturally, the finest of the early structures is the Old State House,* now a City Museum of the early days, situated at the head of State Street (formerly King's Street) near the beginning of Washington Street (formerly Marlborough Street).

Two blocks farther south, on Washington Street, is the Old South Church, oozing history from every pore. Both these buildings are built of red brick, with some moulded brick used for base and belt courses, and wood trim where stone might have been used.

If it's lunch time you'd better keep on in a southerly direction to Winter Street, which runs from Washington to Tremont Streets, stopping

* The intent herein is to suggest a leisurely morning's stroll to a few examples of Architecture worth seeing in old Boston. Take subway cars from Massachusetts Station to Scollay Square and walk down Court Street, a couple of hundred yards to Washington Street, and there you are. A tour of the interior is well worth while. Built originally in 1713, the present building was rebuilt after the fire of 1747, has had many vicissitudes and was completely restored by Joseph Everett Chandler, Architect and Antiquary, some 30 or 40 years ago to as near its original state as circumstances would permit. To see the building at its best, stand opposite the S.E. corner between 12 M. and 1:00 P.M.—the slanting shadows are then most favorable.

NOTE: The New England Scene (Part I) by "H. D. C." appeared in the March number of THE OCTAGON.

half way at the Winter Place Tavern, and try one of Billy Kane's cocktails. The cuisine, (French) moderately priced, is unexcelled. The downstairs room—men's restaurant—was built about the time Rutherford B. Hayes was President. It has elaborately carved mahogany and a silver plated steam table. A life-sized oil painting by Juglaris of "Samson and Delilah" (except that Samson doesn't show, only Delilah) hangs at one end of the room. Their specialties are: Anchovy Pastine, Clear Green Turtle au Sherry, Baked Lobster Savannah, Filet Mignon Mirabeau, Breast of Chicken Richmond, and Sweetbreads Eugenie under Glass. It's the quickest place in town for service if you're not in a hurry. There is a Ladies' Restaurant on the second floor.

After leaving the Tavern, continue up Winter Street (its entire length is hardly 500 feet) to Tremont Street and there's Boston Common, where General (There'll be no skating today, boys, the Red-coats have broken the ice!) Gage tried to stop the boys' hockey game on the Frog Pond and came out second in the controversy.

From the corner of Tremont and Winter Streets, an excellent view of Park Street Church may be obtained. This edifice stands at the foot of Park Street, known as Brimstone Corner. It was built by Solomon Willard about 125 years ago from designs by Peter Banner, made in England. Solomon Willard was a master-craftsman as well as a master-builder, and when it came to the full size details he made them himself, maybe better than Peter Banner might have done. We all think a lot of Solomon Willard around here, just the way they think of Samuel McIntyre down in Salem.

On the north side of Park Street Church is the Old Granary Burying Ground, a hallowed spot, where many great men and women rest in peace. An inspection of its monuments and headstones will well repay the visitor. The list is too long to enumerate, for it includes practically everything in the well-filled plot.

Up Park Street another 500 feet or so, is the Bulfinch Front of the New (c.1798) State House, almost engulfed by its addition. The Front is

serene and imposing. While the original building as designed by Charles Bulfinch is not large, the quality of a Work of Art does not depend on size. The old brick work is extremely interesting, the details are refined and beautifully proportioned. It is a fine example of the early Federal Period. It is illuminating to read in Lübke** that the Old State House (at the head of State Street) and nearby Faneuil Hall are the two outstanding works of art in the United States. Both the Old and the New State Houses are a vital part of the Boston scene, and both monuments are enshrined in the hearts of all who know Boston.

Continue on down Beacon Street to Tremont again; by this time you may wish to pay a short visit to the Parker House Bar, where the successors of Old Henry still carry on his high tradition. We'd recommend a Mamie Taylor if the day is at all warm. Coming out at the street level, you have King's Chapel before you. Peter Harrison designed it in 1749 and it is built of granite blocks, beautifully weathered, has a fine Ionic portico (sanded wood), added in 1780, and a low tower. It is a most engaging structure with a well-mannered interior, closed pews, fine pulpit and sounding board.

Scollay Square, where Tremont Street begins, is a few doors north from King's Chapel, from whence Cornhill leads to Adams Square and Faneuil Hall Square. Faneuil Hall, the Cradle of Liberty, was built in 1742 (Smibert, the painter, architect), by a public spirited Bostonian named Peter Faneuil, as a market-house with a spacious Hall for public meetings above. In 1798, Charles Bulfinch completely rebuilt it, doubling its size and adding the third story. It's the "historicaled" thing there is in Boston, and should not be missed. It's also darn good architecture with three of the five orders in rhythmic procession encircling its four sides. On a sparkling June day, against a background of cerulean blue and cotton-batten cumuli, it's worth coming all the way from the Golden Gate to see. Cram and Ferguson did a swell job of restoration on it a dozen years ago and the operation was highly successful. You may enter

** *Outlines of the History of Art*, by Dr. Wilhelm Lübke, Edited by Russell Sturgis—2 Vols., Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. 1904.

the ground floor, visit the stalls and poke a finger in a loin of beef, wiggle the breast bone of a Vermont turkey to see if it is tender, sniff the scalions, and then mount the broad stairs that lead to the second floor and gaze in wonder at "Webster's reply to Hayne," one of the largest framed canvases ever painted. It's so big the Art Commission of the City of Boston don't know what to do about it. It can't be taken out and the Lord knows how they ever got it in. Note the Grasshopper Weathervane on the "Cowpolo."

North Street leads from the N.W. corner of Faneuil Hall, in a pleasant meander, its sidewalks cluttered with barrels of iced codfish and bales of summer cervalot. Proceeding along with circumspection, dodging skids and tail-boards of backing trucks, one eventually reaches North Square (ten minutes more or less). There you will find the Oldest House, bar none, in Boston. It was an old house when Paul Revere bought it in 1770, paying therefor £215:6:8 in cash and a mortgage of £160. It was built in 1676, so you see it's well along in its third century. Some 15 or 20 years ago, the old house was almost ready to fall down through neglect, and the Memorial Association bought it and Jo Chandler restored it. It's a little house of four good sized rooms, built of wood with an enormous chimney and furnished in the Period. In the summer sunlight the overhanging second story casts a beautiful shadow on the lattice windows. It's a high spot. Admission, 25 cents.

This is the Italian quarter and it's about time to step in to a Pasticceria for a spumoni, for in nearby Hanover Street there are many, all good, and one might even find a refreshing agitato to accompany it. Close at hand is the "Prado," one of the sights of the North End, designed by Arthur Shurcliff and Harry Shepley. At the far end is the lovely Old North Church (one if by land, two if by sea), and facing the Prado on Hanover Street is St. Stephen's, a Bulfinch Church of a somewhat later period. The interior of the Old North is especially good—enclosed pews with brass plates bearing famous names. But dear, dear, how the time goes. We've missed most of the morning session, and if we're going to Gore Place, we must step on it.

H.G.R.

Greetings from Maine

THE Maine Chapter realizes with regret that the distance of its headquarters from Boston precluded the possibility of its acting as host to The Institute during the convention. It seems possible, however, that some of the visitors, desirous of extending their stay in New England, might include Saturday, if they can tear themselves away from Rhode Island, or, at least, the Sunday following the convention, and with that in mind, the Maine Chapter cordially invites them to devote at least a day to Maine. If time is limited, why not travel by air?

The flight from Boston to Portland (one hundred and ten miles) takes but fifty minutes. It follows a varied and interesting shore line and is reputed to be one of the finest short flights in the country. From Portland as a center, a number of architec-

turally interesting excursions may be made; to Wiscasset, a fine example of a prosperous 1800 (circa) shipping town in practically its original state.

The Maine Chapter feels that its territory has more to offer than even its unique political distinction and hopes that the invitation extended in this notice may be accepted by as many as possible.*

The time table of plane service from Boston to Portland will be posted at the convention. It is anticipated that planes will leave Boston both Saturday and Sunday mornings, returning in the late afternoon.

* One of the Maine Members is developing an appreciation of the culinary arts, akin to that of the Director of the New England District, and he might be persuaded to stage a clam bake.

Historic Rhode Island

RHODE ISLAND, small as it is, was formed by the union of three smaller colonies: Providence, Warwick and Newport with Portsmouth. The Narragansett County came later, and the lands on the east side of the Seaconnet and Blackstone Rivers were added in 1746. These divisions are reflected in the Colonial buildings of the State.

Providence began with single-room houses, each with a huge stone chimney forming almost, if not quite, the whole of one end. Two of these still exist. Lean-to's were added to these houses, and then built as part of them. The central chimney appears with an entry in front of it, a room on each side, and rooms at the rear.

By 1740 the detail is Palladian and doorways of the Wren type are found. Then comes the central entry with four rooms and two chimneys and finally the same plan with four chimneys, two in each end wall. Brick is in use. Nicholas Brown built a three-story house of it in the 1760's.

After the Revolution the East India trade brought great wealth. John Brown built his three-story house of brick with four chimneys in 1786. Joseph Nightingale built one of wood next door, and John Innes Clark another not far off, which was burned. Thomas Poynton Ives followed with a large brick house more of the Salem type and on the next

street Edward Carrington added a third story to a brick house purchased from John Corlis.

In 1772 was built the First Baptist Meeting House, with a spire designed by Gibbs, selected from the latter's book by Joseph Brown, and detailed by James Sumner of Boston. Later, in 1816, came the First Congregational Meeting House designed by John Holden Greene, of Providence, who also built many charming houses.

Newport, until its destruction as a port at the Revolution, led the Colony in wealth and culture. Some of the Antinomian exiles had been prominent and wealthy in Boston. They had, however, no radically different ideas of building though some of their houses were quite large and there are traces of stone. Coddington's house was an end-chimney affair but it had an overhang. A stone-end dwelling still stands on the Bliss Road near One Mile Corner. Houses with two rooms and more, the central-chimney type, appeared here earlier than elsewhere in the Colony, and Mr. Brenton's "Hammersmith" was by tradition, one hundred feet square which means that it was built around a court-yard. The Wanton house is still to be seen on Broadway and many an old house, somewhat disguised, is to be seen in the older streets and on the "Point."

In the eighteenth century large houses were built,

some with gambrel roofs like the Nichols House which is gorgeously panelled with "bolection work," some with hip roofs like The Vernon house which was probably designed by Peter Harrison, and others with the curious combination of hip and gambrel very rare outside of Newport.

Trinity Church, built in 1726, which gave a great impetus to classic design, was followed by the Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House, the Colony House, of Munday's design, and after the coming of Harrison, by the Redwood Library, the Old City Hall and the Jewish Synagogue with its interior unsurpassed on the seaboard.

Narragansett was a grazing country. It exported cattle, horses and a vast quantity of cheese. The great landowners were generally men of culture with fine furniture and silver. The early dwellings were quite small for many of the wealthiest owners were absentees, and this, with the disasters of King Philip's War, prevented the building of great houses. The Richard Smith house, later the Updike, built in 1677, and still standing just above Wickford, was a very large lean-to house with crossed summers in its large front rooms on the ground floor.

In the eighteenth century several important houses were built on Boston Neck, as it is called, on the shore of the Bay: the "Hannah Robinson," the Coggeshall-Casey, the Jenks and the Thomas G. Hazard. A good deal of interesting later work was done in Kingston, in Wickford, north of the "Neck," and in East Greenwich.

The social and business ties of all this country were with Newport and the houses show the Newport influence.

In the southeastern corner of the Colony is Little Compton with the William Pabodie house—his wife was John Alden's daughter—and the John Irish stone-end house now gone. In Tiverton, the next town on the north, there is some good eighteenth century work. Here we cross to Bristol where, on the main street, stands "Linden Place" built for General George De Wolf in 1810 by Russell Warren (1783-1862) who also designed "HeyBonnie Hall" on Poppasquash Neck.

Of the older houses extant, Governor Bradford's, probably built by Isaac Royal, of Medford, is a reminder of the time when the climate of Bristol appealed to nabobs of old Boston.

N. M. I.

Norman Isham's foregoing account gives the high points of Rhode Island's architectural record and background. What is "Little Rhody" like to-day, and how do such of these rare examples, reminders of another age, appear in the midst of changes and environment that bring us to this present era? Only by coming to our shores can this be answered. No picture can be painted properly or fully to portray the continuity of life that has flowed through these Plantations since their first settlement.

Last year was the Tercentenary, and many preparations were made to celebrate fittingly that noteworthy occasion. The Saturday of Convention week has been set aside to visit this smallest state of all. You, from the largest state, Texas, from the far west, north, and south will be welcome to hear from the lips of present-day residents that same phrase that greeted the early settlers and has since become an historic by-word, "What Cheer."

On arriving at the capital, Providence, which used to be one of two legislative centers, will be found the early churches; John Brown house, a fine stately mansion; Nightingale house; Brown University; and other examples of interest, some more modern. The city, center of half a million, seems in its residential portion to be little more than a large New England town, the streets lined with many over-hanging elms of great age and beauty.

From here one is on his way to the Squantum Association on the waters' edge of upper Narragansett Bay. Here shore dinners that have no peer have made this famous Club, known the wide world around, a name that brings limitless anticipations, satisfied only by the hospitality it offers. It is the dream of every epicure and lucky is he who enters the portals of this unique institution. Those who can be lured away after the repast are bound for Bristol, quaint, full of charm, the home of our Chapter President Wallis Howe, and of the Herreshoff Ship Yard. On land and sea this town is known for the quality of its houses and its sailing ships. In this year the America's cup will be in competition off Brenton's Reef Course, and here will possibly be seen both British challenger and American defender.

We are on our way through Portsmouth and Middletown to Newport, the nation's summer gathering place, a most startling combination of

naïve simplicity and sophisticated grandeur. In its perfect harbor will be found yachts of all descriptions; United States war vessels, for which this is a base; foreign shipping; domestic bottoms; in fact, it is a rendezvous for nautical life to an unusual degree. Add to this the natural scenery of the Ten-mile Drive from the Seaconnet side on the east, along the ocean front facing the broad Atlantic, to the Bay side on the west, looking off towards Narragansett Pier, and nearer at hand, Jamestown. It is hoped to visit some of the outstanding gardens, and to enjoy the many diversions that broad choice makes possible. There is room here for the anti-

quarian and the modern, and for one to run the entire gamut of these extremes.

The possibilities of the day are unbounded and were there space available in THE OCTAGON of like proportion this resumé would be materially amplified. The welcome offered is without stint or limit. Picture with us such characters of our past as Roger Williams; the seamen, Esek Hopkins and Oliver Hazard Perry; and General Nathaniel Greene. With this notable background the Rhode Island Chapter as host awaits with pleasure your arrival as our guests.

F. E. J.

Appropriation For Construction Economics

(From Bulletin of The Construction League of the United States.)

IN response to letters addressed by the League office to Constituent Member Organizations, State Leagues and Affiliates, considerable support was secured for a budget appropriation of \$300,000 recommended by the Department of Commerce, approved by the Bureau of the Budget and transmitted to the House of Representatives.

This appropriation contemplated an allowance for the enlargement of the activities of the Construction Economics Section of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the Department of Commerce to provide more adequately for the collection and analysis of statistics and surveys of interest and value to the construction industry.

As passed by the House, the budget item of \$300,000 was so reduced and otherwise allocated as to provide no increase in the \$12,000 annually previously available for Construction Economics research.

When the Bill, as passed by the House, was

referred to the Senate Subcommittee on State, Justice, Commerce and Labor, of which Senator McKellar is Chairman, it was anticipated an opportunity would be given those interested, through public hearings, to present arguments in support of the appropriation as originally recommended by the Department of Commerce; but during a visit to Washington by the General Chairman of The League, William Stanley Parker, on March 30-April 3—it was learned this was not the intention of the Senate Subcommittee.

It was most fortunate, under the circumstances, that through the interest and courtesy of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., the Senate Subcommittee granted Mr. Parker a hearing at a special meeting of the Subcommittee.

At the request of Senator McKellar, Mr. Parker submitted a statement in amplification of his presentation of the matter at the special hearing, copies of which may be had on request to The League.

Proposed Alteration of the East Front of the Capitol

ABRIEF statement on the pending bill to revise the central part of the Capitol Building in Washington appeared in the March number of THE OCTAGON, page 31.

This is a controversial subject and various chapters of The Institute have adopted resolutions on it. Two statements for publication have been re-

ceived. One, by Egerton Swartwout, F. A. I. A., is in favor of the alteration, and the other, by Dr. Leicester B. Holland, F. A. I. A., is in opposition.

These two statements—both able presentations of opposing views—will appear in the May number of THE OCTAGON, which will be mailed to the membership on or about May 1.

**THE PROBLEM
OF
LARGE-SCALE LOW-RENT HOUSING**

THE QUESTION

OF

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICE FOR SMALL HOUSES

BY

**THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

Note: "The Question of Architectural Service for Small Houses" supplements a prior statement on the same subject which appeared in the March number of The Octagon.

Concerted Action in The Housing Field

A STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE

THE preparation of a report to the 1937 Convention of The Institute on the subject of "Housing" based on facts and theories already published would be a very simple problem, for the reason that both within the membership of the Housing Committee and outside of it, there are a group of architects better qualified to write a sound program of housing than can be found in any other group in America.

Training has qualified the architect to approach this complicated problem from all viewpoints, since he stands as arbiter between the building public and all of the other elements involved.

It is appropriate that this statement recognize the position which the architect occupies, and that the suggestion be offered that The American Institute of Architects embark upon a searching inquiry into all phases of the housing question, and through its various committees establish the fundamental principles of a workable national housing program.

By so doing we shall no longer be humble supplicants for such housing work as may be allotted to us by others, but will be recognized by the public and by governmental agencies as an unbiased group of professional men able to sift the sound from the unsound and qualified to speak as a scientifically and aesthetically trained profession capable and willing to serve the public interests.

Recognition of the architect, and monetary rewards for his services will follow.

It is my conviction that the housing developments of the immediate future offer opportunities for the education of the public greater than we have ever visualized, and with the certainty of far more effective results than could be expected through any nation-wide commercialized propaganda.

Second only to the doctors, the architects are more necessary to the health, safety and economic security of the American family than any other group. Yet we have submitted and have allowed the public to submit to all sorts of abuses from commercialized quack plan services which, while they may not reach a wide field, are definitely destroying the confidence of the public in the integrity of the building industry and in the practical value of architectural service.

The attention of the entire membership of The Institute is called to the following subdivisions of this statement:

Large-scale low-rent Housing,
Summary of Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill,
Architectural Service for Small House Construction.

Our chief field for some time to come will probably be "Housing"—both large-scale and small-scale. We have no defense if we do not act.

WALTER R. McCORNACK, *Chairman,*
Committee on Housing,
The American Institute of Architects.

Large-Scale Low-Rent Housing

THIS discussion is based on the theory that the Wagner-Steagall Low Rent Housing Bill will be passed at this session of Congress. A summary of that bill is appended hereto.

If it is not passed there will be little or no large scale housing done in 1937, except that which may come from private capital.

It is unnecessary to cover any ground relating to the necessity for large-scale—low-rent housing be-

cause that subject has been thoroughly explored in many articles and books, with the result that the general mass of the American public are more or less housing conscious and recognize the need for action.

Also, it will not be necessary to go over any of the ground so thoroughly covered and so well expressed in the report of the Housing Committee of The Institute to the 1936 Convention.

National and Local Procedure.

Since a certain amount of housing has been completed it will now be an advantage to evaluate what has been done, and to suggest certain procedure for action by the architectural profession—in view of the fact that in the next decade there will be a tremendous forward movement in housing construction of all types.

With the setting up of a National Housing Authority under the Wagner-Steagall Bill, if enacted, it will be possible for the first time in the history of housing in the United States to have a single point of housing contact with Government. Since this Housing Authority is not to be an actual constructing agency but a research and stimulating agency, it will provide a means through which the architectural profession can express itself and make constructive criticisms for carrying out programs of housing in the various sections of the United States. The result to be secured from the Housing Act will be more effective if the National Housing Authority concentrates on research and promotion of low-rent housing by local, state and municipal governments.

In this connection, as a matter of organization, it might be well for The Board of The Institute to make the suggestion that each chapter of The American Institute of Architects organize a permanent chapter housing committee which shall act as the local agency through which the main housing committee might present the case for housing in the various districts more directly to the people and more especially to the banks and other lending agencies, real estate operators and the construction industry as a whole.

Before the architects of the country can effectively assume leadership in this field, it will be necessary for them to organize thoroughly on a nationwide basis. By this means, it will also be possible for The Institute to build up a housing policy which will not consist in generalities but in definite suggestions and recommendations based on the needs and the varying conditions found in different sections of the country.

Any Federal Housing Authority, set up for the encouragement of local activity, may be expected to investigate very thoroughly certain basic principles relating to financing, land acquisition, management, community planning and construction.

Since this organization will have the finances to carry on a thorough-going investigation of the entire field it will offer to the architectural profession an opportunity of inestimable value in securing for the localities in which the various chapters operate information which will assist materially in building up sound local programs.

Without question the profession itself is in a position, due to the experience of so many of its members in the housing field, to supply valuable suggestions to the central authority with respect to many of the phases of the housing question.

Fundamental Considerations.

It is desirable to consider—as listed below—some of the questions upon which the architects might take a stand, and then issue a public statement with respect to the problems and difficulties now preventing a real national housing program.

1. *The Architects.*

Are many of the profession indifferent to the problem of lower cost structures, a problem which might be at least partially solved by uniting the many well-qualified members of the profession in a thorough study of the housing field?

2. *Community Planning.*

The matter of community planning is one in which the architects should take the lead not only in so-called paper planning, but in comprehensive studies of all the economic and social elements which enter into the final preparation of a city plan in fact as well as on paper.

In this connection it may be cited that some of the racial difficulties encountered in housing projects were aggravated by the attempt to provide housing in areas in which those to be housed had no particular reason for occupying. In other words, the location of the housing was determined without giving due weight to employment, and to the working out of a sound economic basis of living for those who were to be housed.

Industry was not consulted, nor asked to cooperate in any movement which looked toward the increase of employment—with corresponding increase in the ability to pay more in rent.

3. *Real Property Inventory.*

The real property inventory in cities where it is well established is proving of inestimable value in the development of city plan and housing projects in connection therewith. It is a continuing audit of the physical properties of the city and as such should have a definite and continuing place as an adjunct of community planning.

4. *Development of City Operating Costs versus Tax Income.*

Two cities in the United States have made studies along this line.

In Cleveland, three hundred and thirty-three acres of the area of the city were found upon investigation to require \$1,250,000 more of tax money to provide city, county and school service than the city received, if all taxes had been collected in that area.

In Boston, a complete study of the entire city indicated that seventy-eight percent of the city was in the red, throwing the burden of taxation on the other twenty-two percent.

In addition to the real property inventory, this information should be made available in all cities to enable community planning developments to move forward in a constructive way.

5. *Taxes.*

If full taxes are to be assessed against housing the occupants will be faced with a charge of from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per room per month for this item alone. It is a question whether a different form of taxation should not be considered for American cities, since present tax and interest charges against a great amount of property are making it impossible for the owners to continue to operate that property on any basis, thus creating not only a difficulty in securing tax money for city operation but in hastening the depreciation of large territories in the hearts of the cities.

Perhaps the English method of taxation—on the basis of income—might be worth considering.

6. *Management.*

In the P. W. A. program, a managing and operating cost of from \$3.00 to \$4.00 a month is assessed against the tenant which, with the tax

burden above mentioned, starts the low-cost housing project off with a \$6.00 to \$8.00 a month charge for these two items alone.

This opens a wide field for questions of management and operation, which will probably lead us into a reconsideration of the mechanical equipment of the buildings, as well as methods of construction.

7. *Land Acquisition.*

This problem should also be covered in the report of the Housing Committee, which should say to the architectural profession that the entire subject of land acquisition needs considerable study—both with respect to housing and to city planning.

8. *Land Use.*

The views of the Committee on this subject should be expressed clearly and concisely in a report which should be of educational value to the profession, particularly in those localities where this question has not been examined and discussed.

9. *Cost of Buildings.*

There has been little consideration by the advocates of low-cost housing, of the subject of cost of construction, which amounts to about seventy-five percent of the total capital outlay required to build the type of housing done under P. W. A.

According to the figures issued by the government the average cost of slum clearance housing for a three and one-half room apartment is \$7,200.

The average cost for a similar apartment with private financing under R. F. C. is about \$3,600.

If a physician in diagnosing a case found that a patient had an incipient constitutional disease but in order to allay the fears of the patient he announced it to be a harmless infection, that physician would be professionally dishonest.

The architectural profession, knowing that the cost of housing today is far beyond the ability of sixty percent of the population to purchase or pay rent for, would be professionally dishonest not to insist upon a thorough investigation of the entire cost structure of housing—for the purpose of making findings and suggestions to cure the difficulty. The profession should call attention to all the elements in the picture which now prevent the construction of so-called low cost housing at costs more commensurate with the incomes of those to be helped.

There is no doubt that the reason we are not having a larger housing program is because of the tremendous spread between income and ability to pay the cost of the house or apartment, be that cost purchase price or rent, both of which must truly reflect construction costs.

Three remedies are receiving much attention:

The *first* would be to increase the income of the American people to a point where they can pay the rents resulting from the present cost of building.

The *second* would be to reduce the cost of building to the point where the ability to pay would enable a large number of people to secure satisfactory living accommodations.

The *third* would be to partially bridge the gap by subsidy.

Architects can do their share towards the creation of an informed public opinion favoring any progressive movement that would eventuate in a broader distribution of the proceeds of industry so that the average income would enable the purchase or rental of decent living accommodations.

In the second case the architects can be of great service in studying the question of costs in order to bring about a substantial reduction in the cost per unit of housing.

To rely too much upon the third method, that of subsidy for bridging the gap, is merely subsidizing present evils which should be eliminated, and prevents the development by industry of new methods.

American industry, in nearly all cases except housing, has been able to reach into much lower income brackets than has the building industry.

10. *Building Conditions.*

Questions to be considered are—

First, are building methods in the United States generally obsolete and are many architects, sometimes through the client, too often influenced by those interested in increasing the use of materials and labor?

Second, are the building codes of the United States properly drawn to provide methods of construction satisfactory for the low-cost house or apartment?

Third, should not the writing of building codes be centralized in such a Government bureau as the Bureau of Standards, and an appropriation granted to that Bureau sufficiently large to enable it to

operate for the public benefit without subsidy from industry?

Fourth, are combinations in the industry in restraint of trade increasing the cost of buildings in some communities?

Fifth, are the rackets in industry harming the individual desiring to build a home by increasing the cost of construction?

Sixth, have not the rackets in other business fields in the United States been creeping into the building trades, resulting in an increase in cost which must be passed on to the consumer?

Seventh, is there not a skilled labor shortage which will be a serious detriment in carrying on a larger home building program?

Eighth, are not jurisdictional disputes injurious to the building of housing, due to the heavily increased costs which result therefrom?

Ninth, should not the building industry attempt to develop a plan of more continuous employment so that the wage rate will decrease and the total annual wage guarantee increase?

11. *In General.*

It seems reasonable to suggest that a study by The American Institute of Architects of all these conditions is justified for the reason that a continuing rise in building costs is stopping the progress of a building program which should be well under way.

Millions of dollars in construction are now being held up in many communities because of the high cost of building. Bond issues are being voted down all over the United States because of the revolt of taxpayers against the cost of construction as well as against taxes in general.

It is suggested that the architectural profession undertake a study of all the factors having to do with the cost of housing; and that the housing program of P. W. A. be used as a basis on which the study is made.

Since the P. W. A. program is an actual demonstration of American housing on a large scale, it would seem reasonable to assume that the Government agencies involved and the architects might unite in a fact-finding investigation.

What has happened in the housing field is not solely the fault of any Government agency, nor of the architects, nor of the building industry, nor labor. It is rather the accumulation of practices

which might be investigated in order that changes may be suggested for the good of the consumer.

Such an investigation should be placed on the high level of scientific research, to develop the truth in order that progress from that point on might be on a sounder basis.

12. *New Methods of Construction.*

In the housing projects of the Government little experimentation in the line of new types of construction or of mechanical equipment was tried.

A great deal has been said about pre-fabrication in various forms. In 1930 there were practically no industrial organizations in America considering this question.

In 1936, according to reliable statistics from one of the Government bureaus, there were sixty-three industrial organizations considering this question.

It cannot be said at the present time that pre-fabrication has arrived but, undoubtedly, either in part or in whole, some short cut must be found in order to reduce the cost of houses for millions of our citizens who are now unable to live in anything but sub-standard dwellings.

All of the great industries in America spend large sums of money for research. They spend it primarily for the purpose of improving their product and lowering the cost in order to increase the scope of their market.

In the building industry there has been little research of this type, with the result that the cost of housing has gone up while in a great many cases the quality has gone down.

It would seem that the time has come for the profession to take an active part in the development of the technique of approach to the housing problem; that the time has passed when generalities are of great importance; and that a program must be worked out whereby Government housing subsidy in any form shall be reduced to the minimum.

In this connection, also, it might be well to touch on the basic minimum requirements for housing which some believe have been exceeded in the housing projects now being carried on under Government supervision.

Members of the Committee have suggested amendments to the Wagner Housing Bill. These amendments vary in scope and it is believed to be better to consider them in Committee and include such as are approved in the final report of the Committee. Attention is also called to the fact that there are amendments proposed to the National Housing Act. Mr. Holden's statement on this point, included herein, will be considered by the Committee in preparing its report.

It is hoped that this informal discussion will encourage members of The Institute to comment freely on the attitude which the Committee on Housing should take, and the scope of its recommendations, in order that its final report to The Board and the Convention may represent the best thought of the profession.

Address all communications to the Chairman of the Committee on Housing of The American Institute of Architects, The Octagon, Washington, D. C.

Summary of Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill

("UNITED STATES HOUSING BILL OF 1937")
(S. 1685; H. R. 5033)

THE Housing Committee has endorsed the Wagner-Steagall low-rent housing bill. Some of the members of the Committee hold contrary views on certain sections of the bill and any member of The Institute, or any chapter, holding convictions with respect to a need for change in any section of the bill has the privilege of filing suggestions for amendment.

This bill outlines a long-term, national policy to provide decent housing for families of low income in the United States. It establishes a policy

of cooperative effort among local, state and federal governmental bodies and private agencies. The federal government's administrative agency in this joint undertaking is called the United States Housing Authority. The phrase, "families of low income," is defined as "families who cannot afford to pay enough to cause private enterprise in their locality or metropolitan area to build an adequate supply of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for their use."

The bill also deals with "public housing agencies," which are state or local governmental bodies with powers to develop and administer low-rent housing.

They include what are commonly called local housing authorities. It also refers to "consumers' housing societies," which are non-profit corporations or cooperatives under the supervision and control of the Authority. The members of these societies are persons of low income who need and are interested in securing better housing. "Limited-profit housing agencies" are cooperatives, limited-dividend, or non-profit corporations strictly regulated by law or by the Authority.

The policy set forth in the bill recognizes the distinction between slum clearance and low-rent housing. Slum clearance is defined as the demolition and removal of buildings from a slum area, regardless of the future use of the area, and may include the adaptation of the area to public purposes such as parks. The development of low-rent housing includes any or all steps in planning, financing, acquiring land, demolishing old buildings, constructing and equipping adequate housing for families of low income. Thus it may include slum clearance.

The United States Housing Authority: The United States Housing Authority is an independent, public, corporate body of perpetual duration. It is controlled by a board of directors composed of three members, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The normal term of board members is five years. The original terms are staggered—one, three and five years.

The primary duty of the Authority is to assist public housing agencies (chiefly local authorities) by loans and grants, to provide decent low-rent housing in their localities. Certain standards of preference are set up to guide the Authority in making these loans and grants. For example, if a development includes slum clearance, proper rehousing must be available to families displaced; funds are to be distributed as widely as practicable throughout the country in accordance with housing needs of low income families; the proposed housing must fit in with the rational development of its community; and substantial assistance by local or state governments (in such forms as partial financing, annual contributions to supplement rents, partial remission of taxes, or land, community facilities and services) will be counted in favor of a project.

The Authority is also empowered to make loans but not grants to limited-profit housing agencies.

Not more than \$25,000,000 of such loans may be made in any year. No loan of this kind may exceed 85% of a project's cost. The standards of preference mentioned above also apply.

The Authority also has a limited right to develop and administer a few demonstration projects either for low-rent housing or slum clearance. These projects may be started only with the consent of a local governing body. Not more than one demonstration project may be developed in any locality and not more than \$25,000,000 spent upon such projects in any year. Furthermore, the Authority has to rid itself of the control of a demonstration project as soon as practicable: it may sell the project to a public housing agency or lease it to a public housing agency or consumers' housing society. Standards of preference also apply to the development of demonstration projects. While title is held by the Authority, it may pay service charges in lieu of local taxes.

The other minor and subsidiary powers of the Authority include the right to make surveys and studies and to undertake and encourage research and experimentation in various aspects of housing.

Loans and Grants to Local Housing Authorities: The plans for loans and grants under the Wagner-Steagall bill differ markedly from the existing methods of financing low-rent housing in this country. Care must be taken to avoid misunderstandings from a mixing of present practice and contemplated plans. The chief difference between them is that under this bill, capital or lump-sum grants or write-offs of capital funds are not allowed. Terms and concepts based on this practice have to be dropped if the new plan is to be understood.

Under this bill the Authority will raise capital funds by the sale of its bonds, guaranteed by the United States. It may lend these funds to public housing agencies (and to limited-profit agencies) for the development of low-rent housing. These loans may amount to the development or acquisition cost of the project. As pointed out, however, preference will be given to projects for which part of the capital funds are raised from other sources. The interest rate may not be less than the going federal rate at the time the loan is made. Length of loans (not more than sixty years), security, and method of repayment are to be determined by agreement between local and federal authorities.

In place of capital or lump-sum grants, the Authority is authorized to make separate contracts with local authorities (in addition, that is, to the loan contracts), for fixed and uniform annual contributions to supplement the rents collected by the local authorities from the low-income tenants. No annual grant may exceed a sum equal to the annual yield at the going federal rate of interest plus one per cent upon the development or acquisition cost of a project. The maximum possible period for these annual contributions is sixty years. The Authority is charged with limiting the amount and the length of term of these grants to the minimum necessary to assure low rentals in each project. The effect on rents of the maximum subsidy under present costs of producing and operating typical housing in the larger cities, would equal roughly a reduction of forty to fifty per cent of a strictly self-liquidating rental based on low interest rates. Annual grants may not be paid out of monies borrowed by the Authority. The Authority may not enter into new contracts for grants averaging more than \$10,000,000 annually.

The Authority has ample power to assure the continuing low-rent character of projects financed by it. If the borrowing agency does not keep rents low, the Authority may collect interest at a rate increased to the going federal rate plus two per cent or may declare the unpaid principal of the loan due forthwith. In making contracts for annual grants, it will reserve the right to reduce or discontinue the grants if the local public agency should break its agreement to maintain low rentals.

Funds for the Authority: The Authority is authorized to issue its obligations, guaranteed by the United States, in amounts not to exceed \$200,000,000 on or after July 1, 1937, \$250,000,000 on or after both July 1, 1938 and July 1, 1939, and \$300,000,000 on or after July 1, 1940. As mentioned above, monies from these bond issues may not be used to pay annual grants but only to make loans at not less than the going federal rate of interest.

The cost of annual subsidies is to be met by periodic appropriations by the Congress. The bill calls for an appropriation of \$51,000,000, of which \$1,000,000 is for subscription to capital stock in the Authority. The balance may be paid out in annual grants in accordance with contracts made with local authorities.

Major Miscellaneous Provisions: The President is authorized to transfer to the Authority any projects of existing federal low-rent housing agencies and the other assets, contracts, records and materials connected with such projects.

New employees of the Authority, except officers, attorneys, experts, skilled and unskilled building labor (on demonstration projects) are to be selected under the civil service laws. Employees taken over from other federal housing agencies are "covered into" the civil service only if certified by the Authority and if they pass a non-competitive examination given by the Civil Service Commission.

Issued by the National Association of Housing Officials.

Statement on Coordinated Housing Legislation

BY ARTHUR C. HOLDEN, A. I. A.

IT IS disappointing that the Wagner-Steagall Bill makes no attempt to coordinate the housing activities of the federal government. It does create a housing authority which is a body that will possess both corporate powers and executive powers—in other words, although it will be a body empowered to conduct business enterprise in such a manner as the Port Authority in New York, it will also have powers similar to the Federal Trade Commission or the Interstate Commerce Commission. It is unfortunate that the constitutional basis of these powers has not been more particularly defined.

It is difficult to appraise the Wagner-Steagall Bill without consideration of the needed amendment to other legislation which has brought the federal government into the housing program; for example, Article 207 of the National Housing Act, which set up the FHA, badly needs revision. As it stands now Article 207 is altogether too narrow. It should be broadened so that the idea of federal insurance of mortgages on large-scale projects may apply to any public purpose which is designed to improve blighted properties or work out a coordinated large-scale development in which public

improvements and private improvements are planned for at the same time. Since the passage of the original Federal Housing Act, it has become increasingly obvious that slum clearance was not limited solely to providing the cheapest possible homes in the identical slum districts. The problem is rather to determine the best possible use of the blighted area and in many cases to provide for low-cost homes elsewhere. It is certain that large-scale planning is necessary, and hence large-scale finance. The absence of machinery to take care of large-scale finance is one of the reasons for the advocacy of public housing. It is hard to see how the scale on which public housing is to be financed can be determined unless it is known what part can be played by private finance.

At the same time that legislation such as the Wagner-Steagall Bill is drafted, every effort should be made to improve upon the inadequate provisions of Section 207 of the National Housing Act, and

an attempt should be made to coordinate those agencies which are engaged in the refinancing of existing housing. This should include those under the supervision of the Home Loan Bank Board and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation as well as the refinancing operations and the mortgage distribution service provided for under the National Housing Act.

Finally, it is a source of regret, to the writer at least, that the United States Housing Authority as set up in the Wagner-Steagall Bill, should be so exclusively related to the idea of public housing. Section 7 of the Wagner-Steagall Bill deals with research, studies, surveys, experimentation, etc. It might very well be broadened to impose upon the Board created under the Act the task of making specific recommendations for the improvement of all housing in the United States and especially the improvement of our system of housing finance. A Commission is needed to study the problem and to formulate a coordinated workable program.

Architectural Service for Small House Construction

SUPPLEMENTING THE STATEMENT IN THE MARCH OCTAGON

THE purpose of the statement in the March OCTAGON entitled "Architectural Service for Small House Construction" was not to present a plan for approval or disapproval by the membership of The Institute, but for the purpose of creating a sound and not excited sentiment regarding this very large field in which the architect at the present time has had very little part.

This supplementary statement has the same purpose. It is not a committee report.

A Close Analogy.

It is significant that The New York Times, of Sunday, April 4, devoted an entire page to a discussion of a 1500-page report on American medicine, issued after eighteen months of study.

Quotation from the Times:

"This report, containing 5,000 contributions by

2,100 leading physicians and surgeons throughout the country, who were called in consultation to diagnose the ills of their own profession and to prescribe remedies, is made public today by the American Foundation, established by Edward W. Bok.

"The report comprises the most comprehensive discussion ever made by medical men themselves on the present status of American medicine and on the problem of making adequate medical care available to the large part of the population that now fails to get it.

"The report, which appears under the title 'American Medicine: Expert Testimony Out of Court,' summarizes the results of an inquiry to medical men begun by the American Foundation about eighteen months ago. The doctors, chiefly those who have been in practice twenty years or more, were asked whether they felt that radical changes in the present system of medical care were indicated, and if so, in what directions."

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"The replies received and incorporated in the report represent every shade of opinion from the extreme liberal to the ultra-conservative. No recom-

Note: It is interesting to note that the publication of the statement regarding the Small House Problem in the March number of THE OCTAGON brought inquiries from two large industrial groups for information concerning the plan and an expression from them that they would be glad to cooperate with the architects in carrying out such a plan.

mendations are made, but, in quotations from thousands of statements, described as singularly sincere and spontaneous, the report—it was stated by the Foundation, 'analyzes profoundly and without reserve the whole structure of American medicine, presenting the whole picture—including, as one doctor puts it, the back of the house as well as the front.'

"The doctors and surgeons who sent statements represent every state, all divisions of medicine, and all types of medical experience. The general practitioner in rural districts; the specialist in every field; the professor in the teaching hospital; the dean of the medical school; the research director and laboratory worker; the partner in the group clinic; the hospital administrator; the officer of the medical society; the director of public health work—all are represented in the discussion of the various phases of the problem."

It is described as a comprehensive and fair summary of the views of the medical profession.

"The intent and purpose of this report," says Dr. Truman G. Schnabel, of Philadelphia, the medical member of the directing committee in an introduction to the report, "is to illumine and not to prove."

"The objective of the inquiry," he adds, "was not to poll the medical profession upon anything whatsoever, but rather to assemble ideas."

"He indicated that a similar inquiry would be carried on later among other professional, non-medical groups.

"In sending out inquiries to doctors in the first instance," Dr. Schnabel states, "there was no assumption that doctors alone could solve the problem. Social scientists, economists, government administrators have certainly a contribution to make. But it seemed to us that the group best able to define the problem in the first instance is the qualified medical men of the country."

"Judge Curtis Bok of the Orphans' Court, Philadelphia, Chairman of the Foundation's governing committee, in a foreword to the report, explains that all the Foundation's studies 'are motivated by an interest in investigating the manner and degree in which government may wisely serve its citizens within the limits of the parliamentary system—if there are limits.'"

Some members of the Foundation's governing

committee, supporting this study, are: Hugh L. Cooper, Consulting Engineer; Thomas W. Lamont of J. P. Morgan & Co.; Dr. Robert A. Millikan, Nobel Prize Winner in Physics; James D. Mooney, President, General Motors Export Company; Roscoe Pound, former Dean of the Harvard Law School; Mrs. Ogden Reid, Vice-President, New York Herald Tribune; William Scarlett, Protestant-Episcopal Bishop of Missouri; Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip, President, Board of Trustees, New York Infirmary for Women and Children; and John G. Winant, former Governor of New Hampshire and former Chairman of the Social Security Board. Elihu Root was a member of the committee and its active adviser for fourteen years.

Investigation Proposed.

It would seem that this outline of the attack on its problem by the medical profession contains much which would be useful to the architects in approaching what will probably be their chief field during the next few years—housing. It is certainly not the intention of the Housing Committee to assume that it is in a position to make recommendations for the solution of all the ills besetting us with respect to this field.

It does seem reasonable, however, to institute a searching investigation of all problems connected with it and to ask the entire profession to cooperate by frank statements regarding the situation in the various sections of the country, and to ask the various architects—whether practicing in the housing field or outside of it—to comment frankly on the questions involved.

One of the chief comments of European visitors to America, with respect to housing, has been its excessive cost and they point out the danger to the architectural profession which may arise by large combinations of capital and manufacturers, looking toward a solution on a large scale housing construction approach where the architect may be left out of the picture and the work done by architectural organizations within such combinations.

Attacks on the Architects.

A particular case in point was the attack on the Architects' Registration Law at a public hearing in the Ohio Legislature on March 19, 1937, where the National Association of Lumber Dealers insisted

that no restriction be placed on the size of a house requiring architectural service. Their chief argument was that the architects were not contributing to the solution of the problem and were in no way prepared at the present time to solve it. Some of the statements made were very harsh in their criticism of the profession.

Appearing, also, at the hearing in opposition to the amendments to the registration law was the President of the National Plan Service Association of New York, which organization is apparently collaborating with the lumber industry to put the lumber dealers into the architectural business.

Further than that, Collier's Magazine, in an issue of April 3, prints an article, entitled "Collier's \$7,500 House." At the end of the article, on page 55, is the offer of a set of complete working drawings and specifications with additional material at a total cost of \$3.00.

The Architects Must Decide.

Some of the large industrial organizations in the middle west are very definitely pointing their activities towards low-cost housing and whether or not they recognize the architects as a part of this movement depends largely on the architects.

It is not a question of whether or not the ideal solution is service by the individual architect to the individual client on the basis of what we call a standard fee. It is a question of how we can approach the problem to extend the service of the profession beyond the very meagre limits in which it now operates. The problem is far too important for the profession itself to become embroiled in an argument as to whether group service or individual service is the answer. It is a question of educating ourselves first. The education of the public will follow.

Without Benefit of Architect.

There has been recently published a book, called "Without Benefit of Architect," by Frazier Forman Peters, the author of "Houses of Stone." Mr. Peters is a registered architect.

In a statement issued with the publication of the book, we find the following:

"About two per cent of the American people acquire their homes with the assistance of an architect; the other ninety-eight per cent acquire them either from previous owners or in speculative de-

velopments or by building for themselves from stock plans with a contractor or hired help.

"Mr. Peters, a registered architect himself, neither approves nor condones the practice of doing without the services of an architect. However, he believes it his professional obligation to be of service to people of moderate means who must go ahead without professional service, and in this book he gives generously of his wide experience to the end that their homes may be well built and permanently secure."

Quoting from the introduction by Mr. Peters, we find the following:

"During the next few years, hundreds of thousands of Americans are going to buy or build homes without the aid or counsel of an architect—'without benefit of architect.' Armed with a few minor facts gleaned from not over-honest nor disinterested advertisements, they are going to appraise their intended purchases or write a specification and contract.

"Armed with top-heavy information, they are going to buy a top-heavy house; it may have no foundation, or be nailed on every fifth stud, but it will have brass pipe, insulation, and an air-conditioning system of sorts."

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"And so home building has degenerated, not due to the builder so much as to the owner. Why should a speculator build diaphragmed cellars if three dollars' worth of copper around the chimney will give him a perfect rating? Why should he spend an extra hundred dollars on a free standing masonry shell when fifteen dollars spent on linoleum counters in the kitchen will put the name on the dotted line more quickly?"

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"But the same system, when applied to buying a house, is dangerous to the buyer, and the only way to correct or counteract the system is by an intelligent analysis of all, not just a few, of the parts that go to make up a good building."

Ways and Means Considered.

In the preparation of the final report of the Committee on Housing, each member of the Committee has been asked to give his general opinions regarding the problem of continuing the attack on the barriers to architectural service by a thorough-going examination of the defects in the present sys-

tem, and by cooperation with government and industry. Each member of The Institute is now asked to do the same thing.

It would seem reasonable to assume that a continuation of the study on a much broader front than it has been possible to carry on this year would be advisable—even to the extent, perhaps, of trying to secure funds from a foundation or some other source to carry on the work.

Of first importance is continued cooperation with the various Government agencies which are in close contact with those in a position to finance housing, for the purpose of informing them concerning the value of the architect. It would seem advisable to give widespread circulation among the members of the profession to the Housing Committee's opinion on the problem of the small house and the methods of attack, to be stated in its report to the coming Convention.

Questions to be Answered.

In connection with the continued study of this problem, a series of questions asked by the committee studying the field of medicine are given below. The only change is that the word "architect" is substituted for "doctor" and the word "architecture" for "medicine."

There is a close parallel between the two professions with reference to scope and necessity for internal investigation.

The questions follow:

- (1) Is radical change needed in the present organization of architectural service?
- (2) What is adequate architectural service?
- (3) What is meant by available?
- (4) Are there practical ways of reducing present costs of architectural service?
- (5) Is the public really demanding modern scientific architectural service of high grade?
- (6) If it were available now to all would half the population still prefer quacks?
- (7) How far in the world as at present organized can the individual citizen be responsible for his own home?
- (8) Where does Government enter the picture?
- (9) Should Government concern be confined to the lack of decent homes of the indigent and low-income group, or should Government promote such service for the whole population?

(10) Is improving architectural education and the personnel of the architectural profession the first step in improving the organization and distribution of architectural service?

(11) Can an individual architect really furnish scientific service alone, or are organized laboratory and consultative assistance an absolute necessity?

(12) In the architecture of the future will the practitioner function as an individual or as a member of a group?

(13) Is there too much specialization?

(14) What is the present status of the individual architect?

(15) Is he passing or is a new version of him just coming into being?

(16) Is the individual architect-client relation an absolute sentimentality or has it a practical value in modern architecture?

(17) How can higher standards of architecture be achieved?

(18) Should the United States have a ministry of construction and set up a Federal department of construction in the President's Cabinet?

(19) Which, if any, of the following is the answer to the present problem: the status quo; group service; thorough-going state service; evolutionary increase in Governmental authority and functioning, integrated with private practice?

Comments and Ideas Are Invited.

The practice of architecture is becoming so bound up with social and economic problems that it cannot be analyzed except in its relation to these problems.

It is proposed that the report of the Committee on Housing shall not be a declaration of final conclusions, but that it shall be a statement of the case as it is—with suggestions and a program for investigation and action.

Your frank comments on the entire picture of the small house problem will be of great help to the profession as a whole. If the Committee is to set forth a clear picture of all the elements which must be considered in attempting to extend architectural service to the general public it must have the active interest and a full expression of opinion from the architects of the country.

Address all communications to the Chairman of the Committee on Housing of The American Institute of Architects, The Octagon, Washington, D. C.

British Airports and Airways Exhibition

THIS exhibition was opened by the Secretary of State for Air on Friday, February 19, in London, at 66 Portland Place, London, W. 1, the headquarters of The Royal Institute of British Architects.

The exhibition will travel to a dozen or more English cities.

Through the courtesy of Sir Ian MacAlister, Secretary of the R. I. B. A., The Institute has received a catalog of this exhibition, entitled "Airports and Airways."

The document comprises ninety-nine pages of text, with many illustrations—most of which are of very definite interest to the architect.

It is appropriate to here reproduce the introductory statement in the catalog by the President of the R. I. B. A., Percy E. Thomas, O. B. E.:

"The architect, like the barrister or the physician, must be capable of dealing with each problem that confronts him, not only as a particular problem but also in relation to all the wider factors involved.

"An architect is often a specialist with a profound knowledge of a particular subject, which renders him valuable as a consultant. The chief service that he renders to mankind, however, lies in his trained capacity for creative construction. He is, or should be, conversant with contemporary life as a whole. His value is not limited to his technical efficiency and scientific knowledge, but lies in his power to apply these things to good living and well-being as a whole.

"The true architect is concerned, not merely to make his buildings useful or to stand up, but to make them take a part in the scheme of life. He, through his buildings, must contribute to civilization.

"The great period of expansion during the last hundred years has shown the defects that can arise from ill-considered development. We are now suffering from the mistakes of our forbears, which have presented us with many serious problems. It is equally certain that we shall, if we allow our immense economic and technical advances to run away with us without control or direction, lay an even greater burden on the future. The technical achievements of our civilization are, in a sense,

neither good nor evil. It is the direction that is imparted to them that gives them their virtue.

"Man's latest achievement—his conquest of the air—is potentially full of weal or woe; to plan its future wisely is the vital concern of us all. Control of the air adds to the span and scale of life, for it shortens space and reduces time. It is the newest addition to the ever-widening circle of human contacts, and must not be allowed to develop in a haphazard fashion.

"The architect is often regarded purely as an artist, to the exclusion of his more practical qualities. He is, as history proves, a creator of the social background, and his art lies essentially in this direction. He aspires to plan a good and beautiful world, and to that end strives to make the best of the materials and means at his disposal. He should most certainly be called upon to assist to the utmost of his capacity in the right and seemly development of aviation.

"The first necessity in the construction of an airport is the choice of a suitable site. It is particularly important that the position of the airport in relation to the town or towns which it serves should be considered from the beginning. It should be sufficiently far from surrounding buildings to ensure all amenities and adequate safety; and the airport must be connected with the town by the most rapid means of communication. It is essential that the airport buildings should be well planned and appropriately designed.

"It is a poor advertisement to a nation or a town when a visitor arrives amid a collection of dilapidated sheds and huts. National and civic pride demand that the first impression be a good one. The conquest of the air deserves its monuments, and what could be more appropriate than that these should form the buildings which serve that achievement?"

NOTE: The price of the catalog is not given. Those desiring copies may address requests to The Royal Institute of British Architects, at 66 Portland Place, London, W. 1, England, requesting that the document be sent with bill.

Members Elected—From October 17, 1936, to March 31, 1937

- Boston Chapter* - - - - - JOHN ALLAN BOYCE
Brooklyn Chapter - - - - - HENRY V. MURPHY
Chicago Chapter - - - - - CARL J. KASTRUP, VICTOR H. STROMQUIST, WILLARD WALKER
Cincinnati Chapter - - - - - CHARLES F. BEROLD, FREDERIC H. KOCK
Cleveland Chapter, - - - - - JUNIOR W. EVERHARD
Connecticut Chapter - - - - - WALTHER PROKOSCH
Detroit Chapter - - - - - LYNN W. FRY, PAUL KASURIN, MALCOLM RODERICK STIRTON
Florida North Chapter - - - S. RALPH FETNER, OLOF ESKIL SEGERBERG, IVAN H. SMITH
Grand Rapids Chapter - - - EDWIN E. VALENTINE
Kansas City Chapter - - - CLAUDE MEREDITH GUNN, JOSEPH DENIS MURPHY
Kentucky Chapter - - - - - WALTER S. ROBERTS, JR.
Madison Chapter - - - - - LEWIS ALFRED SIBERZ
Maine Chapter - - - - - ROYAL BOSTON, JR.
New Jersey Chapter - - - - HENRY BARRETT CROSBY, LOUIS HEYER GOETTELMAN, ABRAHAM GOODMAN, IAN MACKENZIE HORNE, HERBERT NORRIS MOFFETT, WILLIAM PIEPER, F. HERBERT RADEY
New York Chapter - - - - - CHARLES S. HAINES, II, ROBERT S. HUTCHINS, GORDON S. MARVEL, GEORGE S. STEELE, WILLIAM H. WRIGHT
Northern California Chapter - - - - - REDDICK BICKEL, CHARLES EDGAR BUTNER, WILLIAM GLADSTONE MERCHANT, WALLACE A. STEPHEN
Oklahoma Chapter - - - - - CLAIR FRED DRURY, JOHN DUNCAN FORSYTH, ALFRED DODGE HILL, JOHN C. HOPE, JOS. R. KOBERLING, WILLIAM MARTIN LAWRENCE, DONALD MCCORMICK, GUY C. REID, LEE SOREY, THOMAS L. SOREY
Oregon Chapter - - - - - HOWARD R. PERRIN
Pittsburgh Chapter - - - - - STEWART L. BROWN, RAYMOND A. FISHER, GEORGE POWERS MCKINNEY, RODY PATTERSON
Rhode Island Chapter - - - - FREDERICK N. BROWN, JR.
St. Louis Chapter - - - - - LAWRENCE HILL
South Texas Chapter - - - - HAROLD CALHOUN, THEODORE F. KELLER
Southern California Chapter - - - - - ROBERT H. AINSWORTH, HEATH SCOTT GERITY, ROYAL W. LESCHER, LESLIE J. MAHONEY, DOUGLAS HULL McLELLAN, RICHARD A. MORSE, FRED W. WHITTLESEY
Southern Pennsylvania Chapter - - - - - R. DOUGLAS STEELE
Toledo Chapter - - - - - HAROLD HENRY MUNGER, MARK B. STOPHLET
Utah Chapter - - - - - WILLIAM E. NELSON
Virginia Chapter - - - - - MELVILLE C. BRANCH, JR.
Washington State Chapter - JOHN T. JACOBSEN

Structural Service Department

BY THEODORE I. COE, TECHNICAL SECRETARY

Standard Filing System (A. I. A. Doc. 172)

Revision.

The latest edition of the Standard Filing System for Information on Building Materials and Appliances was published in 1930. New developments in the building industry have necessitated changes and additions in the classifications as provided under the 1930 edition. Revision of this document is now in progress and it is expected that the new edition will be available within the next few weeks.

Of Interest to Architects.

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science—March, 1937—contain an interesting article by Dr. N. H. Engle, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, entitled, "The British Housing Problem"; and by Lowell J. Chawner, Director of Construction Economics Section, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, entitled, "Economic Factors Related to Residential Building."

Reprints of these articles may be obtained, without charge, upon request to either Dr. Engle or Mr. Chawner—address, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

Building Code Correlating Committee—A. S. A.

Subsequent to the discontinuance of the Building Code Committee of the U. S. Department of Commerce, in 1934, the Secretary of Commerce requested the American Standards Association to cooperate with the National Bureau of Standards in arranging for the continued development of this important work under A. S. A. procedure. The American Standards Association accepted this responsibility and, in 1935, organized the Building Code Correlating Committee.

The Institute is represented on the Building Code Correlating Committee of the American Standards Association by J. Andre Fouilhoux and Mellen C. Greeley. H. R. Dowswell and Theodore Irving Coe serve as alternates for Mr. Fouilhoux and Mr. Greeley, respectively.

Institute appointments to several Sectional Committees of the Building Code Correlating Committee have been recently made, as follows:

Building Code Requirements for Excavations and Foundations—Samuel R. Bishop.

Building Code Requirements for Iron and Steel—Carl F. Grieshaber.

Building Code Requirements for Light and Ventilation—E. Philip Schreier.

Division of Simplified Practice—National Bureau of Standards.

Arthur B. Heaton has been appointed Institute representative on the Standing Committee for Simplified Practice Recommendation R157, Steel Horizontal Firebox Heating Boilers. The purpose of this Committee is to promote adherence and to review and revise the Simplified Practice Recommendation when necessary.

A. G. A. Testing Laboratories.

The users of many types of equipment and materials are familiar with the testing, inspection and approval which is part of the service of the Underwriters' Laboratories, Incorporated.

A similar service of test and approval, with particular reference to gas-fired appliances and equipment, is rendered by the American Gas Association Testing Laboratories, located at 1032 East Sixty-second Street, Cleveland, Ohio, which publishes, from time to time, a directory or list of the gas appliances and accessories approved by the Laboratories.

With the Chapters

(EXCERPTS FROM BULLETINS, MINUTES AND REPORTS)

Brooklyn.

Sixty members were present at a recent meeting of the Chapter held at the Architectural League in New York City. The meeting was also attended by many members of the New York and New Jersey Chapters, as well as Regional Director Richmond H. Shreve; James Reily Gordon, President of the New York State Association of Architects; D. Knickerbacker Boyd, of the Philadelphia Chapter; C. V. R. Bogert, of the New Jersey State Board of Architects; and William P. Bannister of the New York State Board, all of whom had matters of interest to bring before the meeting.

Hubert Dunning, an Associate member of the Chapter, arranged for the first showing of a talking movie, "The Winning Formula," showing the technical side of products of the National Lead Company, made doubly interesting by notable sports events described by Graham McNamee.

The Brooklyn Chapter has through its president and its various committees taken an active part in the numerous efforts to improve conditions affecting the profession in the Metropolitan District, including the Dow 10-point Plan; the Vigilance Committee; Minimum Specifications for Institutional Corporations; the Mayor's Committee for Better Building Construction; the Historical American Buildings Survey; the move to make mandatory by law, that the supervision of construction, as well as the preparation of plans, be placed in the hands of Registered Architects only; the selection of a jury to select Architects eligible for City work; and protests against the designing of monumental structures by State Bureaus.

The Chapter has donated an annual prize for a competition among students of Pratt Institute and is co-sponsor of the Gauthier Atelier, and with three other affiliate associations, selected the design for a medal to be awarded to the person rendering the best service in city planning.

Oklahoma.

The annual meeting of the Chapter was held at the Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City, with President Joseph E. Smay presiding. Leon B. Senter,

a member of the Legislative Committee of the Chapter, submitted a most comprehensive report on the progress that had been made by the Chapter and the legislative group of the Oklahoma Society of Architects.

As reported in the January OCTAGON, the membership of the Chapter and of the State Society contributed most liberally to a fund to be used for the purpose of furthering the legislation necessary for the revision of the Oklahoma Architectural Registration Law. Mr. Senter reported that much had been accomplished by his Committee and that there was every indication that favorable action could be expected.

George Blumenauer, Chairman of the Chapter membership committee, was commended by President Smay for the successful membership drive just completed. Five new members have been added to the Chapter rolls and several others have applied.

All Chapter officers were unanimously re-elected to serve during the coming year. The election of delegates to the 69th Convention of The Institute which will be held in Boston, June 1-4, was postponed until the next meeting.

Following the business meeting the Chapter members and guests assembled for the annual banquet. There were several speakers including President Smay, who addressed the meeting on the principles and ethics of professional practice; Phil Wilbur, who spoke of the work being done at Oklahoma A & M College; and Mr. George Huey, State Director for P. W. A. who spoke on the policies of the Government in relation to architects.

The principal speaker of the evening was Solomon A. Layton, who is credited with being the oldest architect in the state of Oklahoma, in point of service, if not years. Mr. Layton expressed his views vigorously and entertainingly in regard to the present system of taxation as applied to the support of state educational institutions. In regard to architectural education generally, Mr. Layton expressed the need for not only technical instruction, but curricula designed to form character, to the end that the profession of Architecture would be maintained on the highest plane.

Southern California.

Seventy members and guests attended the meeting of the Chapter held at the Chapman Park Hotel in Los Angeles on March 9. An excellent dinner was served in the main building, after which those present reassembled in the Pueblo Oratorio for the program. Mr. Harry Q. Mills played several selections on the chapel organ, President Flewelling introduced the guests of the evening, and William H. Schuchardt read an excellently prepared paper on the Life of Michael Angelo. The subject was appropriately illustrated by slides furnished by Dean Weatherhead. Altogether, it was an excellent and inspirational meeting.

The Chapter is indebted to Carleton Winslow for his help in arrangements and to Mr. Chapman of the Hotel for the friendly reception, the good food, the souvenir menus, the organ soloist and the use of the chapel. The large attendance indicated an appreciation for this type of meeting and brought back to Chapter activity several members who have been missed in recent meetings.

The rediscovery that the members of the Southern California Chapter of The American Institute of Architects are primarily interested in Architecture has been demonstrated by the increased attendance at Chapter meetings. The papers read on the lives of the great artists of the past are inspiring. To spend a few moments once a month in the deep consideration of the successes as well as failures of such personalities cannot but help to intensify our own ideals, as well as enrich our general knowledge of our profession.

To write such a paper, to be forced to delve into the records of the lives of such individuals, is really a privilege, and something that the average architect does not find time to do. Having done so, however, he immediately becomes an intimate of his subject, and further becomes receptive and sympathetic to the papers written by others.

Mr. Schuchardt's paper on Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, given at the March 9th Chapter meeting, was indeed a cultivated analysis of the work of that great artist of the Italian Renaissance. The panorama of his life and work was presented with such a realistic quality that a feeling of personal acquaintance was experienced by all of us. Mr. Schuchardt confessed that he is a hero worshipper, and there can be no doubt that Michael Angelo

Buonarrotti is an undying hero to him. It was a great privilege for us to worship likewise through such an inspiring medium.

Washington, D. C.

With a "beer and skittles" party as a lure, an exceptionally large number of members attended a recent meeting of the Chapter held at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D. C. The Chapter secretary, E. Philip Schreier, in his notice of the meeting and its accompanying list of Chapter committees—with notations as to what they have accomplished—or should accomplish—advised the members that Chapter meetings should not be all "beer and skittles" but should be productive as well.

"Chapter meetings," said Mr. Schreier, "should prove to be something more than an occasion to meet and talk with fellow practitioners and, in my humble opinion, a substantial part of each meeting should be taken up with reports of definite action by committees and proposals for future activities. It would seem to me that the Chapter can hardly justify its existence if interest in its work is to be limited to the average of three hours per month (the length of the average meeting) and if nothing is done by committees and individual members during the remaining seven hundred and forty-one hours of the month."

Prior to the regular business of the meeting, the Chapter was entertained with a talking movie dealing with termites and methods of combating their destructive activities.

Washington State.

The forty-second annual meeting of the Chapter was held at the Gowman Hotel in Seattle.

The meeting was opened by President L. E. Gowen who addressed the membership on Chapter activities of the past year. Mr. Neill of the Washington Construction League outlined the activities of the League for the year 1936 and spoke of the Coulee Dam, the activities of the P. W. A. in the State, and the 1939 celebration.

Various committee reports were read and accepted.

The business meeting was followed by the annual dinner which was attended by a large number of Chapter members and their ladies. Harlan Thomas presented an engraved testimonial to Albert Miller Allen in appreciation of Mr. Allen's ten

years of service as treasurer of the Chapter. Mr. Allen's resignation as treasurer was accepted with regret.

A most interesting talk on Oriental Architecture was given by Dr. Herbert Gowen. Several vocal selections and much pleasant discourse consumed the balance of the evening.

Westchester.

The regular monthly meeting of the Chapter was held at the Normandy Tavern, White Plains, New York. President Stowell presided, calling the meeting to order at 8 p. m.

Lewis Bowman, reporting as chairman of the Membership Committee stated that a large number of architects in Westchester County had expressed the desire to become members of The Institute, assigned to the Westchester Chapter. Robert H. Scannell, reporting as chairman of the Publicity Committee, called attention to the fact that four Westchester County newspapers had published articles regarding the formation of the Chapter and its activities.

Paul B. La Velle has been requested to submit a report on housing at the next meeting, for possible use in further publicizing the activities of the Chapter. The motion was made and carried that the Chapter by-laws be amended to agree with the mandatory provisions of the Standard Form of Chapter By-laws, A. I. A. Document No. 273.

Wisconsin.

The regular monthly meeting of the Wisconsin Chapter, held at the City Club in Malwaukee, was attended by eighteen members and three guests.

President Herbst read a communication from C. C. Zantzinger, F. A. I. A., inviting architects to attend the International Congress of Architects, which is to be held in Paris in July, 1937.

A communication from William Orr Ludlow, Vice-Chairman of the Construction Industry Relations Committee, in charge of Industry Cooperation, was read. It was moved, seconded and unanimately carried that this communication be referred to the Committee on Practice.

President Herbst then introduced Mr. George A. Parkinson of the University of Wisconsin Extension Division, who gave a short talk on the financial and educational situation existing at the University of Wisconsin and in the Extension Division. He also discussed the situation with respect to the building facilities and requirements.

Following Mr. Parkinson, Professor William J. Fuller, who is in charge of the Engineering Department of the University of Wisconsin Extension Division, addressed the meeting on the subject of "Future Architectural Training." Professor Fuller outlined the facilities available at the Extension Division and discussed their problems in providing facilities for architectural education.

As of Interest

MARYLAND'S ANNUAL HOUSING AND GARDEN WEEK PILGRIMAGE

The Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage under the auspices of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland will take place April 30, to May 8, inclusive. More than 100 houses and gardens of historic interest in the different counties of Maryland will be open to the public during this time. The object of this tour is to assist in the reconstruction of Colonial Annapolis.

Dates:

April 30 and May 1, Prince George and Calvert Counties; May 1 and 2, St. Mary's and Charles Counties; May 3 and 4, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County; May 4 and 5, Baltimore and Environs; May 5 and 6, Howard County; May 7 and 8, Eastern Shore from Chestertown to the Virginia line.

For detailed information write to Miss Louisa M. Gary, The Belvedere Hotel, in Baltimore or the Mayflower Hotel, in Washington, D. C.

