

# **p** PROGRESSIVE **a** ARCHITECTURE

newsletter

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- 2.2 million more people lived in the U.S. in the first quarter of 1949 than a year ago. Half a million more people were employed, .6 million more unemployed. For that period, national income and income of individuals after taxes were higher than last year, dollar volume of business dropped somewhat, savings increased by \$3.5 billion.
- Sales volume will drop 4% in second half-year below similar period last year, according to Dun & Bradstreet report.
- Guy Panero, N.Y. engineer, reporting on a survey his organization has completed, says that building cost estimates have dropped as much as 25% in some sections. Greatest drop has been in Midwest. Panero noted elimination of "contingency" item from most contractors' bids, as well as more efficient operation and increased builder productivity.
- Other surveys, such as one by "Wall Street Journal," bear out these facts. Figures from various sources indicate an average decline in construction costs for first half of year of 5%. Guesses are that drop will continue, may reach a 6 to 10% lower figure.
- American Institute of Steel Construction, in recent annual conference, appraised steel situation through reports of its district engineers, found shortage ended and structural steel generally available for quick delivery. A.I.S.C. engineers find schools, churches, hospitals going ahead at accelerated rate, commercial and industrial building lagging.
- Producers' Council, in a revised estimate, forecasts dollar volume of 1949 construction at \$18.4 billion, which would mean a slight drop in expenditure but a gain in physical volume of construction over last year. P.C. also sees drop in commercial and industrial work (except utilities) and great gain in school construction.
- Commercial rental space is still 98.3% occupied, despite decline since late 1946, when the tide turned, reports Nat'l. Ass'n. of Building Owners and Managers. Association officers see much work that needs to be done in modernizing old buildings--not face-lifting, but "complete rehabilitation and modernization."
- New grease-resistant rubber floor tile in 9" x 9" size, 1/8 inch thick, is announced by Fremont Rubber Co. of Fremont, Ohio.
- Yugoslavia, anxious to reach American market, will push several building products this year. One is parquet flooring of Slavonian oak (shorter and narrower than U.S. standards); another is Adriatic marble, including black Crni Kricke, brown Finor, pink Carneol, tan San Stefano, yellow-flecked white Veselja.
- Vermiculite plaster has been given a new fire rating by Underwriters' Laboratories. (See April 1949 P/A, p. 85.) Steel columns protected with vermiculite on metal lath are rated for 4 hours with 1½-inch thick vermiculite, 3 hours for 1 inch thickness. Mix was A.S.A. standard for gypsum plaster.

(Continued on page 2)