PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE

newsletter

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- Since last Newsletter a National Production Agency has been set up in the Dept. of Commerce to administer any priority, allocation and inventory controls that may be instituted. Head of the new agency is William Henry Harrison, on leave from his job as President of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Powers given the Dept. and allocated to the Agency allow them to direct diversion of "certain materials and facilities from civilian use to military and related purposes." Secretary Sawyer says these powers will be used "only as it becomes necessary."

- A number of architects are interested in possibilities of commissions coming out of government agencies. There are jobs to be given out; most of them have to be obtained locally, however. Following are brief reports on some of the government programs.

- Urban redevelopment aspect of national housing act is going ahead well. Applications are being received, processed, analyzed. A number of architects are doing outstanding work in visualization of early redevelopment studies.

- Federal hospital construction program has by now settled down into well-established routine and is producing needed facilities in all parts of the country. Architects who have participated seem generally happy with the program.

- Big hitch that has developed in this program, however, is cutting in half of funds which had been allocated but not yet authorized. This badly embarrasses many local programs, and protests have poured into Budget Director's office and to many Congressmen and Senators.

- Public Buildings Administration, now under General Services Administration, is engaged in land, cost and survey studies for new public structures, as recently authorized by Congress in Public Law 1051. This work will soon be ready to give out to private architectural firms, and, although it is not large in volume, it may be welcome to some practitioners whose usual activities have been slowed up.

- PBA work is given out on a negotiated fee basis to local firms, all of whom are circularized when a local project develops. No prior applications are accepted in the Washington office. Standards and manuals of procedure are supplied to the architects, and work is paid for as design steps are accomplished. PBA does the supervision.

- Dispersal program which has recently had much publicity -- scattering of government offices, both in and out of Washington -- will be accomplished entirely by PBA. Buildings being considered are said to be technically interesting, but some observers are worried that security reasons may cause secrecy and permit overlooking of city-plan problems.

(Continued on page 2)