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THE OCTAGON

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The Washington Scene

BY D. K. ESTE FISHER, JR.

Washington Representative, A.I.A.

News from Overseas (*delayed*)

The following extracts are from letters from members of The Institute on front line duty. These are heartening letters. They make us proud of our profession and they show that the architect does a good, hard-boiled, two-fisted job when it comes to him.

From the former Washington Representative, Major Edmund R. Purves [A.I.A., Philadelphia Chapter], H.Q. 7th Air Force—Pacific Area—(July, 1943)

Since my Washington days I have gone rather far afield both literally and figuratively. The Army, whose ways never fail to astound me, has placed me in a strange role and one that is far removed from the practice of architecture and the engaging complexities of the Washington scene.

I was told that my background fitted me eminently for the work at hand—which is intriguing, mildly exciting and highly confidential. I failed to follow the chain of thoughts, but I signified that I was willing to accept the responsibility, which is considerable and sometimes makes me break out in a cold sweat. I have for the time being fallen rather emphatically into the place where the tradition and habits of the Regular Army are at their strongest. I might add that the Army may have been right, for I found that perhaps owing to Architectural training, but more likely owing to Washington-Octagon-Kemper training I was able to take over from my predecessor without too great a strain on my capacity and nervous system.

I see about me on all sides the manifestations of the engineer. They stop at nothing and go ahead and "do"—right or wrong they "do". The lack of plan is apparent—except for rather feeble and sophomoric attempts, and the waste is appalling—even admitting the necessities of

war. But they get the jobs done and in record time and I doubt that their accomplishments are prefaced by long drawn out discussions with the client. When entering the service I scrupulously avoided construction, partly in an effort to demonstrate in my feeble way that an architect could take on a combat intelligence assignment and partly because Army construction held no attraction for me. This last may have been a selfish point of view—but I think I was successful in demonstrating the first point.

Architects have been successful as photographic interpreters, a role of great importance. In fact it is difficult for an architect to avoid this effort when they get into Intelligence in general. But sadly enough, the impression of the profession emphasized over a long period of years is a formidable handicap to the present day architect and we have a long and arduous task ahead of us before we can succeed in persuading the building public (which will be the Federal government) that we possess in eminent degree those "inherent qualities", which you so ably catalogue on page 9, 1st column [THE OCTAGON, June, 1943]. The engineering profession with all its training and practice is not often if ever able to include the first quality listed in its scope of attainment.

But the Engineers have not dilly-dallied, hemmed and hawed or expressed themselves as being "unhappy" at a client's aesthetic decisions. I look back with cringing at my own career, at instances when I sought to be an arbiter of precious taste, little realizing the client's genuine claims, not only to an arbitership of his own, but to the fact that it was his money that was being spent.

I have met some of the charming people whom you mention—but alas I fear you would find the islands themselves no longer charming. The situation is somewhat eased since the time I first came here but there are still such vestiges of martial law as continual blackout (now with modifications), curfews and the controversy over the writ of habeas corpus. We live in a fort (virtually)

or in an armed camp and social activities are just beginning to raise their heads in a timid manner;—but we have little time to enjoy them.

From Lt. Richard Roth [A.I.A.—New York Chapter], 35th Naval Construction Battalion—Pacific Area

Architects are scarce enough in these islands and therefore architectural news is down to a minimum. I would appreciate anything at all that you could send me that would keep me informed as to what is going on in the field back home.

I would like to tell you roughly of what we are doing out here. You can see from the letterhead that I am with a Sea-Bee unit. We have been out here in the Solomon area for about seven months now and have really been doing some "building." While the work is a bit afield of the type of work I was doing in private practice, yet it is not too different basically from what an architect is called upon to do in every day work. The work is of course cruder and more details are worked out "on the site," yet planning, expediting, coordination of work, etc., is still just as important in building a base air strip as in building back in the States. The welfare, security and "housing" of the men in the Battalion is in a way analogous to the coordination an architect has to worry about on any project—the coordination of the various subcontractors to insure a successful finished job.

In the eight months we have been in the South Pacific area we have worked on air strips, with all their necessary taxiways, fingers and other appurtenances. This involved considerable earth moving and road building. We have also done a base hospital, docks, gun placements and many miles of road building. Warehouses, galleys and oil farms were also part of our work. In all, the work has been most interesting and useful and the results we have achieved have been most gratifying. Being an "old man" and finding a spot where you know you are helping end this damned war is reward enough for being out here. Having a crash landing of a plane on a not yet completed air strip and knowing that the pilot is alive because you were working that field has its rewards. Knowing that some of those fellows back in the States think enough of us to waive our dues makes us feel good.

From Capt. Ides van der Gracht [A.I.A., New York Chapter], A.A.F. 345th Bombardment Squadron—North Africa (April, 1943)

Sorry that your letter has taken such a long time to answer. It took a good many months to find me here, out in the Western Desert, where I am having a marvelous time as Intelligence Officer to one of our heavy bombardment squadrons. We live in tents, wash—after a fashion—out of our tin hats, are tremendously healthy, and the youngsters who fly these big planes quite incredible distances at fantastic altitudes are as grand a lot as any one could hope to be associated with.

When I tried to enlist in the Air Corps they wanted to know what an architect expected to be able to do there.

Well, they should take a look at our Intelligence tent. We keep a constantly changing display of maps, photographs, reports, news, drawings and "cheese cake", that really brings the men in. Maybe it's not exactly superior to one of Alfred Barr's shows at the Museum of Modern Art, but we're pretty damned proud of it. I don't think there's anything like it in all the desert. I make most of the charts myself, and it's amusing to see how breathlessly those chaps, who think nothing of flying through clouds of anti-aircraft fire, watch my gyrations with a ruling pen and a couple of bottles of colored ink.

In my "spare time" I fly with them, looking rather like an ad for "what the well dressed aviator will wear this spring"; it has all the trappings—fur lined leather suit, yellow Mae West, parachute, ear phones, oxygen mask. We need it; it gets so cold that the sandwiches freeze as solid as boards, and the other day the crystal fell out of my watch at 40° below zero, while I was hanging out over space watching our bombs fall. That crystal had a really long ride! The anti-aircraft fire is the worst—those damned little puffs suddenly sprout in the sky all around you, and there's nothing you can do to fight back at them. You just hope they don't have your number on them.

I do my architecture by means of five gallon tins filled with dirt: you'd be surprised what a boost it gives the module system: 13" x 9½" x 9½"—it's a natural. My own recipe for stopping the war is: eliminate the five gallon gasoline can—and the whole business would automatically come to a stop; they serve not only for gas and water, but for washing, as heaters, pissoirs, building blocks, road markers, seats, etc., etc. They are the most characteristic item in the desert.

From Colonel Ralph H. Cameron [F.A.I.A., West Texas Chapter], C.E., 344th Engineer Regiment, G.S.—North Africa (April 1943)

... My first seven months were spent in England; the first three of which was as executive officer to the Engineer of a very important Base Section of the Services of Supply. I organized the office with only a few officers and a few enlisted men to help me, found it necessary to work every day and every night with the exception of three nights, for the entire period I was engaged in that office.

On September 19th, I was all of a sudden given command of a regiment which had to be reconstructed and immediately trained for combat duty. None of the officers had had service prior to the time that they came with the regiment, and so I had to provide training not only for men but for officers. This was accomplished by hard work in the field and still harder work during midnight hours, preparing programs and schedules and lectures for officers' schools. Soon after this training was concluded, and only about two months ago, the regiment was sent to North Africa, where I am now, and I still (because of the press of the emergency) find it necessary to work long hours. As a matter of fact, although it may be hard to believe, since I arrived overseas I have not had one single day

or even half day of pass or rest, for my duties have been so heavy that it has never appeared possible to leave things even for such a short period of time. The result of this is that I am very much worn out and somewhat burnt out, but I know that my efforts have been crowned with some success because I can see the magnificent work my regiment is doing wherever they are engaged, and I have as fine a bunch of enlisted men and officers as can be found anywhere in the American Army.

This, of course, did not happen overnight, and while it has been costly to my health and mental stamina, it has up to now paid wonderful dividends. At this time my regiment is spread out over an area about four hundred miles long and a hundred seventy-five miles deep, doing every imaginable type of construction work, both military and civil. It is most interesting, but it keeps me moving to check my units in the field for construction as well as housekeeping.

This is indeed a beautiful country; it far surpasses any preconceived ideas I may have had as to what North Africa would be like. Fully ninety percent of this country is in cultivation, with irrigation systems everywhere; fine roads, bridges and public buildings in the towns. We might have thought that moderne architecture had had its fling in the United States, but to see it at its best one should visit North African cities, for here you find every type of moderne architecture that one can possibly conceive. I only wish that I was competent and was allowed to take photographs of these buildings, many of which run seven and eight stories high, as moderne, crisp and sparkling as anything that we have produced in America.

These cities are peopled and managed mostly by the French, but they are very cosmopolitan in their general makeup, for we see plenty of Spanish people as well as a great many that appear of Nordic Origin. Of course the greater part of the population consists of the natives (who are Arabs) and they are a most interesting people. Their costumes and burros and modes of living, and their music are really enthralling.

The cultivation of this country is mostly grape vineyards, but many thousands of acres are devoted to almond groves, olive groves, citrus groves, peach orchards and the like. The citrus fruit over here is second to none I have ever eaten, and is most plentiful. Recently we received several shiploads of Sunkist oranges from California, and I must say they did not measure up to the local oranges. I have had naval oranges on my desk that were five inches in diameter, thin-skinned and full of juice.

I was fortunate enough while in England to receive an invitation to attend a small Thanksgiving Day party at Buckingham palace, where I met the King and Queen and the two princesses. They were, perhaps, the most charming people I have ever met, for they were so simple, gracious and lovely. They reminded me more of our wholesome country people in America than they did of royalty, for they were easy to talk with, and anxious to learn lots about the United States and its people and customs.

Public vs. Private Architects

Straws show which way the wind blows. Architects throughout the country should be aware of the following specific situation, lest its bad example lead to a pattern of similar attempts in other states.

In New York City and State, the Civil Service Technical Guild has, for some years, made repeated efforts to obtain legislation and court action which would prevent the assignment of public works projects to architects and engineers in private practice. The chapters and the state associations have as rigorously opposed such action and have, so far, succeeded in protecting the interests of the private practitioners.

We quote the following from a circular recently sent by C.S.T.G. to its members:

"Ever since its inception the Civil Service Technical Guild has been vigorously opposing the practice of 'farming out' to private practitioners the design and supervision of public works. Year after year we have introduced bills in the State Legislature and in the City Council to remedy this 'spoils' system. But to no avail. The private architects' lobby has been growing stronger and stronger and something drastic must be done immediately to destroy this parasite."

There are now two suits, instituted by the C.S.T.G., pending in the courts:

(a) A suit to restrain the Board of Education of New York City from employing private architects (or engineers) for post-war school planning. This suit was lost in the lower court and has been appealed; it will be heard in the September term of the Appellate Division.

(b) A suit to restrain the Board of Estimates of New York City and other city officials from awarding *any contracts whatsoever* to private architects or engineers, from fulfilling current contracts and from paying any moneys now due under them. This suit will be heard in the current Special Term of the Supreme Court.

In both instances the New York Chapter is the rallying point for the private practitioners and has retained Messrs. Eidlitz, French and Sullivan, Attorneys, to represent their interests, acting as "a friend of the Court" in both cases. Expenses are being defrayed partly by the Chapter, partly by subscriptions from interested firms and individuals.

In the meantime, serious consideration is being given to the desirability of introducing legislation in the State Legislature to define more clearly the

nature of the work which the Civil Service Bureaus may properly do in the construction field and to clarify the status of the private architects and engineers in the work to which they have always been entitled heretofore.

Building Codes and Post-War Planning

Under the Department of Technical Services, in this issue, Mr. Coe presents some comments on building codes. The A.I.A. Committee on Post-War Reconstruction, in Part I of its report [Article 18(f)], has pointed out with force, and at some length, the urgent need for architects' attention to the code situation, in order that post-war construction may not be hampered by antiquated code provisions.

There are some 1,500 codes in existence in the states, counties, cities and towns of this country. They vary all the way from modest little pamphlets, kept in the desk of the "Building Inspector" and "interpreted" by him at will, to elaborate and scholarly technical volumes of many hundred pages, such as that recently adopted by the City of Baltimore and administered by a highly competent staff. Many are of ancient vintage and the "interpretations" which keep them alive vary with the competence and judgment (and integrity) of the individuals who administer them. There may be a dozen conflicting interpretations of the same kinds of subjects in one state. Many of the more recent codes, though up-to-date and adequate when written, are already out-of-date in many respects, are difficult of satisfactory revision without legislative action, and threaten to become straight-jackets in the post-war era when many new materials, and many new principles of use of old materials, will come into the picture.

Private owners, mortgage investors, real estate operators and dealers as well as materials manufac-

turers, contractors, engineers and architects are all interested in seeing that building costs are not kept unnecessarily high by unnecessarily restrictive or discriminatory or merely carelessly compiled code requirements. Materials manufacturers deplore the present necessity for "selling" the qualities of their products to each individual code administrator in every town where a "code" exists.

Most state legislatures meet in the odd-numbered years. The next twelve months may be the crucial time in which code revision and standardization may be advanced with better hope of success than ever before. The public is becoming more aware of matters affecting construction—realizing that it affects their pocketbooks and their living and working conditions. Perhaps the public is more aware of government—more alive to what is necessary for *good* government—less satisfied with "laissez-faire." It will require public education and public attention to accomplish intelligent code revision—to overcome the inertia and the self-interest which would maintain the status quo.

The Producers' Council has an active committee giving close attention to the whole subject of codes. Their local chapter in each district will be glad to cooperate with the architects in studying the local code conditions and in organizing suitable activities to better them. This is a *local* problem.

The American Standards Association is continuously engaged in studying code problems. Mr. G. N. Thompson, Chief of the Code Section, National Bureau of Standards, has a mass of data on codes and code conditions throughout the country. The Department of Commerce (Bureau of Standards) issued Report BMS 19, "Preparation and Revision of Building Codes" several years ago. All of these sources of information will prove stimulating. Now is the time to get busy. Don't wait for "George" to do it for you!

State and Municipal Public Works

THE report of the Committee on State and Municipal Public Works, James W. Kideney, Chairman, was submitted to The Board of Directors at its meeting in Cincinnati immediately preceding the Seventy-fifth Annual Meeting of The Institute.

In its own report to the Annual Meeting of The Institute, The Board had the following to say:

"The report of the Committee on State and Municipal Public Works includes a table showing the states in which drawings and specifications for public works were prepared by state departments and gives the total amount of work done in states by architects and engineers in private practice. It is significant that two-thirds of all of the work done in all of the states listed was executed by state public works departments.

"The result of a questionnaire sent to the various state departments of education indicates an absence of a correct understanding of the functions of an architect and the true professional value of his services.

"This picture is disturbing, but the Committee believes that with appropriate concerted action a better situation can be created."

The report of the Committee, as distributed in Cincinnati, follows this foreword, and is thus made available to every member of The Institute.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Gentlemen:

The Committee on State and Municipal Public Works report is broken down into three parts, dealing respectively with recommendations to the members, existing conditions in state and municipal public works, and recommendations as to future procedures.

PART I. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MEMBERS

The Committee recommends that the Board urge all members to carefully consider the reports of Committee for 1939 and 1940, believing that careful consideration of the comments therein may result in a more active and intelligent approach to the problem by the entire membership.

Also, it is specifically called to the attention of the state association members and the chapters.

The Committee has made a thorough study of the subject of state and municipal public works, with particular reference to effects on the practice of architecture.

It is the duty of every state association member and of every chapter to give constant attention to conditions in their own states. Obviously it is not feasible or desirable for The Institute as a national body to enter the jurisdiction of a particular state for the purpose of influencing legislation or of taking action with respect to state or city bureaus of architecture.

In this connection, the attention of the president of each chapter and each state association member is called to the letter of August 4, 1943 addressed to him on behalf of the Committee on State and Municipal Public Works, requesting the appointment of a Committee on Public Relations, and the sending of information concerning that committee to the Chairman of The Institute's Committee on State and Municipal Public Works, James W. Kideney, 293 Summer Street, Buffalo, New York.

The Institute Committee, through its Chairman and members, is at the service of the chapters and state associations and will extend the fullest measure of cooperation if called upon for advice or assistance.

ALEXANDER C. ROBINSON, III, *Secretary*

PART II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

(a) *State Public Works.*

The following table lists the states having departments of public works, with the value of public projects in each (with highway improvements deducted), the ratio of each such state's improvements to the total for the country, and the ratio of the state's population to the entire country. Columns 5 and 6 in Table I are from the U. S. Census Bureau.

It is interesting to note that the states having state departments of public works prepared plans and specifications for 66 2/3% of all that done in the country. It does not necessarily follow that states not listed have not bureaus preparing plans and specifications for public works, as some highway and health departments prepare plans for improvements erected under their control. Nor does it necessarily follow that all of the work within these states is done by the department of public works. Standard references do not segregate the volume of work done by private architects and bureaus.

TABLE I
States Having Departments of Public Works

State	Agency	Value of Capital Improvements 1941 not including Highways in 1,000s	% of total of Capital Improvements of all states	Population 1940 in 1,000s	% of total population of all states
Alabama		907	0.8	2,833	2.1
California		9,891	9.5	6,907	5.2
Idaho		604	0.5	525	0.4
Illinois		9,736	9.3	7,897	6.0
Indiana		4,255	4.0	3,428	2.6
Louisiana		6,398	6.1	2,364	1.8
Maryland		1,240	1.2	1,821	1.3
Mass.		1,233	1.1	4,317	3.2
Nebraska		372	0.3	1,316	1.0
New York		20,018	19.2	13,479	10.2
N. Carolina		1,720	1.6	3,572	2.7
Ohio		1,372	1.3	6,908	5.3
Penna.		4,391	4.2	9,900	7.5
Rhode Isl.		335	0.3	713	0.5
Tennessee		2,344	2.2	2,916	2.2
Vermont		90	.08	359	0.2
Washington		1,544	1.4	1,736	1.3
W. Virginia		2,428	2.3	1,908	1.4
Subtotal for 18 states having departments of public works		68,878	66.3	72,893	55.3
Subtotal for 24 states which do not have departments of public works		35,019	33.7	58,776	44.7
Total for nation (48 states)		103,897	100	131,669	100

(From "The Book of the State",—Note that other departments, as Highway Departments, may be preparing plans and specifications for public works, including buildings. Some of the capital improvements may have been designed by private practitioners, even where department of public works exists.)

The Committee takes pleasure in pointing out that in 1942 Connecticut abolished its department of public works. Douglas Orr, F.A.I.A., points out that support and assistance of architects is necessary to prevent the recurrence of the conditions, which originally caused the bureau to be established.

(b) Public Education Building.

More detailed information is available with respect to public school buildings. The following Table II (No. 12 from Assistance on School Plant Problems as a Function of State Departments of Education) shows the extent to which private practitioners are excluded from practice in school design.

TABLE II

State	Private architects Prepare plans and specifications	Number that prepare plans	State department prepares plans and specifications							
			For buildings of the following room sizes:							
			1	1 to 2	1 to 4	1 to 6	1 to 9	1 to 12	More than 12	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Total	37	18	14	12	12	9	9	8	8	
Alabama	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Arkansas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
California	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Florida	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Georgia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Minnesota	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Mississippi	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Missouri	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
North Dakota	x	x	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)				
Oklahoma	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Pennsylvania	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
South Carolina	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Tennessee	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Texas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Vermont	x	x	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)				
Virginia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
West Virginia	x	x	x	(3)	(3)	(3)				
Wisconsin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Connecticut	x									
Delaware	x									
Idaho	x									
Illinois	x									
Indiana	x									
Kentucky	x									
Louisiana	x									
Maine	x									
Maryland	x									
Michigan	x									
New Jersey	x									
New Mexico	x									
New York	x									
North Carolina	x									
Ohio	x									
Oregon	x									
Rhode Island	x									
Utah	x									
Washington	x									
*Massachusetts	x									
*Montana	x									
*Nebraska	x									
*New Hampshire	x									
*South Dakota	x									
*Wyoming	x									

1—Chiefly small schools. 2—Standardized schools only.
3—Small schools. *—From Table III, pages 86 and 87.
No report—Arizona, Colorado and Iowa.

Idaho requires employment of an architect where value is \$7,500 or more and in rural areas.

Mississippi does as little as possible in making plans and specifications.

New Mexico limits preparation of plans to private architects only.

Oregon limits preparation of plans to private architects only. Law compels employment for building over certain size.

Utah—employment of private architect is compulsory.

Wyoming requires private architect for all buildings of more than 4 rooms.

Virginia prepares plans for 95% of all schools not within cities—Charges local district 1/6 of 1% of cost of construction.

The author of this pamphlet, Miss Alice Barrows, sent questionnaires to each state commissioner of education, requesting their opinions on the advantages of state departments preparing school plans. Their replies, of which eight are listed below, give a clear view of misunderstandings which The Institute must dispel before private practitioners may fully participate in this important civic work.

Advantages and disadvantages of State departments preparing plans and specifications for school buildings, as reported by State superintendents:

CALIFORNIA:

Disadvantages—

It is entirely wrong to have State make plans. The making of plans is a private business and of local responsibility, first of all because school buildings are financed locally and they should have their own architect in order to take care of local needs and desires. Private architects think of new things and these can be encouraged in other schools. Variations in plans in conformity to local conditions easier.

CONNECTICUT:

Advantages—

Probable efficiency (in long run) of school buildings planned only by school planning specialists.

Disadvantages—

Probable tendency toward over standardization. Diminished application of inventiveness and imagination. Increased cost of architectural services. Poorer quality of architectural services (than best otherwise obtainable). Curtailment of services due to budgetary limitations.

FLORIDA:

Advantages—

Furnish complete plans, specifications, and supervision for small buildings that will not involve enough expenditure to be attractive to competent architects.

Disadvantages—

The chief objections to the furnishing of architectural drawings by the State is that some individuals feel that this is contrary to our theory of democratic government in that the State should not engage in a business that

can be discharged by individuals or companies, and that it could result in too much centralization of authority in the State.

GEORGIA:

Advantages—

This service means a great deal to communities that are heavily bonded and not able to rebuild. Furthermore there are many small buildings and additions in outlying districts where a practicing architect cannot be had at a nominal cost. There is an educational advantage as well as the economic. There is opportunity to lay before school officials a better layout of classrooms, library, laboratories, lavatories, lighting arrangement, and many of the better things that come with modern school buildings.

Disadvantages—

Practicing architects are on the lookout for any large building service of this kind paid for by the State, and unless we are careful to serve only those communities that really cannot afford to employ outside architectural services, they are not inclined to support taxes for education.

MICHIGAN:

Disadvantages—

Believe that local boards and architects should do it. Department should approve plans before construction. Too much of a burden on State department. Architects object. Local school authorities lose initiative and responsibility for important aspect of local school administration.

MINNESOTA:

Advantages—

Service to rural communities whose building projects are too small to attract services of competent architects.

Disadvantages—

Assumption by State of such responsibility requires maintenance of competent staff for which sufficient funds are difficult to secure; ill feeling and criticism engendered by State for encroaching on private enterprise; disproportionate time and effort required to render such service.

SOUTH CAROLINA:

Advantages—

1. Saving to school district of architect's fee.
2. Buildings are planned more in keeping with needs of the school and with hygienic requirements than if planned otherwise.
3. Buildings planned by the State are more economical than those planned by private architects, and furnish a higher educational return for the investment.
4. The State specializing on school buildings rather than general architecture is in a position to assemble and utilize the best information available as related to school buildings.

VIRGINIA: (does 95% of all work outside of the cities).

Advantages—

1. The Department is in a position to have an over-view of the entire State, which the private architect is not in a position to do.
2. The State Department is in a position to exercise leadership in persuading a committee to accept a type of planning and construction that the private architect is not in a position to do because of the fact that the State Department is not dependent upon fees for its services.
3. The State Department should know educational needs better than the private architect is in a position to know them.
4. The State Department of Education is in a position to provide for long-range planning, consolidations, and properly locating buildings in terms of such consolidations. The private architect is not in a position to do this.
5. The cost of the State Department is 1½ percent the cost of the building to prepare architectural plans and specifications and supervise construction, as contrasted with the usual 5 percent and 6 percent charge of private architects.

Disadvantages—

It can so easily become bureaucratic. It can so easily become overstandardized.

The Committee hopes California architects will commend their commissioner for his well chosen words.

STOCK PLANS

Many departments have stock plans for distribution. While these are generally of small schools, the attitude expressed by the Oklahoma commissioner shows how dangerous such practices may become, even if regarded as innocuous in inception.

NORTH CAROLINA:

Advantages—

Distributing stock plans for school buildings instead of preparing plans for specific buildings is of service to those communities which are unable to engage the services of a private architect. Likewise, architects will follow these stock plans in designing buildings. The stock-plan idea has no real advantage over the "plans for specific buildings" idea. However, the stock-plan practice is not criticized by architects.

OKLAHOMA:

Advantages—

The State Department makes stock plans for one to four-room buildings not to exceed \$10,000 in cost. These stock plans are used because, with the limited personnel available, it is impossible to keep up with the demand for plans of school buildings if it is necessary to make new

plans for each building. If the personnel was adequate the division would prefer to make individual plans.

WEST VIRGINIA:

Advantages—

Department has used Julius Rosenwald plans considerably rather than prepare stock plans. Such plans help rural school systems considerably where school units are small.

Disadvantages—

May not suit special situations.

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PART III. RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO FUTURE PROCEDURES

(a) The Committee feels that it is going to be necessary to develop much greater effort within the Chapters and State associations if any headway is to be made. In setting up the Standard Chapter By-Laws, The Institute wisely provided that in each chapter there shall be a committee on public affairs. Since this provision is mandatory, it may be assumed that most chapters have such a committee. By working through and with these Chapter and State association committees, this Committee believes much intelligent comment and effort may be furnished.

Your Committee therefore recommends that the Board of Directors provide funds for, and direct that:

1. The administrative staff notify each Chapter and request each State association to immediately appoint such a committee.
2. That the administrative staff ascertain the name of the chairman of each.
3. That funds be set up for distribution to each such chapter committee of at least four communications yearly.
4. That attempts be made to list prominent and qualified members of The Institute who could effectively address meetings of the Chapters and State associations on the question of public affairs, and set up sufficient funds to make these men available. Our efforts need both direction and inspiration.
5. That such program be put on a long-range basis.

(b) That the work of the Institute Committee on Post-War Reconstruction be given every possible assistance, not the least of which should be financial, so that its excellent reports may be distributed generally and its chairman and vice-chairmen be enabled to reach every member by both printed word and personal appearance at chapter meetings.

Respectfully,

JAMES W. KIDENEY, *Chairman*
JOHN HUNTER, JR., *Vice-Chairman*
WILL G. CORLETT
JOHN O. MERRILL
CHAS. F. OWSLEY

RAYMOND J. ASHTON
DOUGLASS V. FRERET
FRANKLIN O. ADAMS
WALTER F. WILSON
DOUGLAS WM. ORR

The Department of Technical Services—Notes

BY THEODORE IRVING COE, TECHNICAL SECRETARY

Building Codes

The Construction and Civic Development Department of The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has performed a worthwhile service in support of post-war planning through the publication of the statement on "Plan Now For Future Public Works," by the Washington Representative of The American Society of Civil Engineers, Hal H. Hale, and D. K. Este Fisher, Jr., Washington Representative of The Institute.

The statement emphasizes a factor of particular significance to architects in its reference to the close connection of building codes, and their enforcement, with all forms of physical planning.

It recalls the fact the construction industry has complained for many years that antiquated and badly drawn or widely varying types of codes have created a chaotic condition which tends to increase the cost of construction.

Codes generally have been formulated on the basis of detailed and specific requirements which make the initiation of the use of new materials or methods of construction dependent upon the slow process of securing enabling legislation.

Codes of this character seldom keep in step with technological advances in the manufacture of new and improved structural materials notwithstanding the fact the necessary revisions would permit advantage to be taken of materials and methods which reduce cost and thus encourage a larger volume of construction.

This is of particular concern to the producers of building products distributed on a wide geographical basis and one of the important activities included in The Producers' Council's Postwar Program has been delegated to a Committee on Correlation of Building Codes.

That lower costs increase the demand for production applies to construction as well as to automobiles, automatic refrigerators, radios, and a host of other goods and services.

A further factor, applying particularly to construction, is the improvement of property as an accepted form of investment.

It is in this field that costs become of the utmost importance if the returns from the improvement of

property are to compete successfully with the returns from other forms of investment.

This should be understood and appreciated by all of those interested in the continuing welfare of the construction industry if construction is to be encouraged for profit or investment.

As we face the need for an unprecedented volume of post-war construction effective consideration should be given to those things which, if not corrected or changed, will unnecessarily increase the cost of that construction. This applies not only to building codes but to uneconomic practices which increase cost without contributing to production.

The writing or revision of building codes is a public service in which the architect may and should appropriately take a leading part.

It is no longer necessary to formulate codes on the basis of detailed and rigid "specification" requirements. There are advantages in codes based on a "performance" basis, and the adoption of state codes, such as the Wisconsin State Code, which deserve the consideration of those interested in the subject of building codes.

The need for the revision of codes is apparent in all too many communities and it is to be hoped it will not require further "Cocoanut Grove" fires, with accompanying serious loss of life, to initiate action to bring such codes up to date.

A pressing need is to see to it that in the planning for immediate post-war construction the provisions of local codes permit full advantage to be taken of sound technological advances and new and improved materials which meet structural and other applicable requirements and reduce construction costs.

Developments in the Dimensional Coordination of Building Materials and Equipment

The August, 1939 issue of THE OCTAGON referred to the organization, under the sponsorship of The Institute and The Producers' Council, of the American Standards Association's Project A-62 for the Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment, and the Correlation of Building Plans and Details with such Dimensions.

Reference was also made to the formation of Sectional and Executive Committees, under the chairmanship of Max H. Foley, A.I.A., and the appoint-

ment of two special subcommittees to study the application of the principles of the coordination of dimensions to masonry made of clay products and to wooden windows and doors.

Further progress in the development of the Project was reported in the July, 1941 issue of *THE OCTAGON* at which time four additional subcommittees had been formed to study the relation of other basic building materials to dimensional coordination.

Members of The Institute were also advised of the availability, without cost, of a 65-page Brochure, containing information concerning the organization, scope, purpose, and advantages of the project.

A further reference to ASA A-62 appeared in the May, 1943 issue of *THE OCTAGON* which reported the organization of a seventh Subcommittee on Building Layout, under the chairmanship of Frederick G. Frost, Sr., F.A.I.A., to study the application of dimensional coordination to building plans and details.

A recent report indicates that this committee is making definite progress and that several post-war projects are now being planned embodying the principles of building material coordination, the erection of which will demonstrate to their builders the economies and advantages of dimensional coordination and thus contribute to an expanded application of the principles embodied in ASA Project A-62.

As the result of the development of a "Proposed American Standard Basis for the Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment," by ASA Sectional Committee A-62, and its study committees, there is a growing appreciation of the advantages of coordination on the part of a number of groups of building material producers and architects, who have prepared plans correlated with dimensional coordination.

The development of ASA Project A-62 represents the culmination of many efforts to determine a basis of agreement for the practical determination of dimensions, and their variations, which may be readily applied to all the materials and products to which the principles of coordination are applicable.

Interested groups within the construction industry are now being given an opportunity to review the "Proposed American Standard Basis for the Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment, ASA A-62.1" for the purpose of submitting comments and criticisms to the Executive Committee of ASA A-62 previous to the approval of the Proposed Standard by the Sectional Commit-

tee and its adoption by the American Standards Association as an "American Standard."

The Executive Committee of The Producers' Council has indicated its approval of the Proposed Basis Standard and directed its Postwar Technical Committee, through its Subcommittee on Modular Products, to promote the adoption of the Project.

"Application Standards," based on and supplementary to the Basis Standard, which apply the principles of coordination to Masonry and to Clay Products, are in a forward state of development, and the Structural Clay Products Institute, representing the clay products industry, is actively supporting the adoption and application of dimensional coordination to brick and other clay building materials.

The transition from construction for war to construction for peace, with the reconversion necessary in certain branches of the materials-producing industry, provides a favorable opportunity for the adoption and application of the principles of dimensional coordination, as developed by ASA Project A-62.

It is important that architects become familiar with the principles of dimensional coordination and assume a leading role in the adoption and application of these principles, if the construction industry and those who provide the funds for construction are to secure the advantages inherent in their application, which include reduction in costs by the minimizing of cutting and fitting during erection, the elimination of an unnecessary variety of "stock" sizes, and, for the architect, economies of time and expense in the preparation of working drawings.

The Department of Technical Services has a limited number of copies of the "Proposed American Standard Basis for the Coordination of Dimensions of Building Materials and Equipment, ASA A-62.1" for distribution to readers of *THE OCTAGON*, on request.

A few copies of the above mentioned Brochure are also available.

The Producers' Council's Advisory Board

President Ashton has accepted appointment as a member of the Advisory Board of The Producers' Council.

The Board is composed of the Presidents, or other executive officials, of 21 of the members of The Council, under the Chairmanship of Stuart M. Crocker, Vice-President of the General Electric Company.

