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A CITY-PLANNING PROGRAM*

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THERE are three logical divisions of any City-Planning movement: First, the winning of public support; second, the planning itself; and, third, the translation of plans into facts.

In every locality it is wise, and in a real democracy it is necessary, to begin by winning public support before making considerable public expenditures either in preparing plans or in executing them. And for that reason there is, perhaps, more pressing need for agreement as to the best methods of developing a wise and effective public opinion in regard to City Planning than as to the steps which are made possible only by such public support. It is not to be supposed, however, because the education of the public must begin before the other steps, that it can cease when the other steps begin, or even that it can be very far advanced without the object lessons afforded by practical accomplishments in planning and in putting plans to practical use.

The three divisions of our program are concurrent; they advance or fail together; and I believe it will give a clearer conception of the subject if we begin, not with a discussion of the first steps to be taken

in arousing an indifferent public to the importance of comprehensive planning, but with a description of the conditions to which we hope our program may lead us—the sum, as it were, of all preceding steps in the program.

Let us first get before our eyes the clearest image we can of City Planning as a successful going concern, fully established in the framework of municipal government, accepted and supported by public opinion as firmly as the public-school system or the fire department. After thus getting a clear view of our objective, let us reconnoiter the intervening obstacles, and endeavor to agree upon the most promising courses to pursue toward the goal.

Do not get the idea that I am to set before you this evening, as the aim we have in view, an inspiring vision of the well-planned city of the future, efficient, healthful, and beautiful. Such visions must be set before those who need to be convinced that City Planning is worth while,—and all of us need the inspiration of such a vision at times. But, as practical idealists, what we are concerned with tonight are: First, the complex but humdrum human mechanism by which in every city

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table safeguard which they were obliged to throw about their action in order to prevent hasty or spasmodic public opinion from crystallizing into unwise legislation.

He reviewed briefly the splendid work accomplished by the architects of the United States in government buildings under the Tarsney Act, and narrated the much to be regretted circumstances under which this law was repealed at the last session of congress. He offered the opinion that it would probably be exceedingly difficult to secure a re-enactment of a law similar to the Tarsney Act, and suggested that the Institute give serious consideration to the question as to whether it would be wiser to endeavor to secure a new law of this character, or to advocate much broader legislation along the lines of creating a Government Art Commission, which should have jurisdiction over all matters relating to the application of the arts to government buildings and other allied undertakings.

Mayor Blankenburg dwelt upon the excellent work which had been accomplished by the Municipal Art Commission of Philadelphia, and Mr. Price, a member of that commission, amplified this matter by a detailed narrative of some of the actual undertakings which had been dealt with by the committee. No better illustration could be offered of the wisdom of the creation of such bodies by municipalities,

states, and even the national government, than was contained in the remarks of these two gentlemen.

President Cook reviewed very briefly the progress that architecture was making in this country, and dwelt particularly upon the advantages that had accrued through the adoption of the Institute's Code on Competition.

Mr. Kohn related a number of ways wherein the New York Chapter had been able successfully to cooperate with the city authorities, and pointed out the difficulties with which the Chapter had been confronted, especially in view of the fact that the members of the various city committees with which the Chapter had worked were for the most part entirely unfitted, by reason of their training and occupation, to undertake the study, criticism, or revision of the various laws of the city governing buildings and construction.

Mr. Kohn also urged, as a factor of vital necessity in securing the greatest progress along social and economic lines, that all organized bodies take a broader outlook upon all public questions, not merely confining themselves to the study of their own interests.

The meeting was largely attended, and was in every way a most successful event in the annals of the Philadelphia Chapter.

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES K. RAMSEY, ST. LOUIS, MO.

Died April 14, 1913

Admitted to the Western Association 1884

Admitted to Fellowship in American Institute of
Architects 1889
