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## OFFICIAL COMPETENCE

**I**N THESE days of inquiry and investigation into administrative economics, it is not surprising to learn that there are those who have come to believe that wise building is a serious business,—a business demanding the highest order of competence, integrity and executive ability, as well as an appreciation of the refinements of the art of architecture. In state and municipal building, there have been so many examples of incompetent administration of the public funds, by politically appointed officers, that there has developed an earnest desire to establish a new order of things, and to endeavor, if possible, to insure that the great responsibility of planning and erecting public buildings shall be borne by those only who have been proved fully qualified, and whose selection shall be a guarantee that the convenience, health, and safety of the public will be properly safeguarded, and that the public funds will be disbursed with a minimum of extravagance and waste.

A bill has been prepared for presentation to the legislature of the state of California, looking to the establishing of a State Architectural Commission, consisting of qualified architects and engineers, and providing for the employment of a Supervising Architect under the control of the Commission. It is intended that the Commission shall be a substitute for the present office of State Architect, and it has been recommended by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which is urging this legislation, that the members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

This would seem to be a timely suggestion for consideration by the legislators and executives of other states, particularly by Governor Sulzer of New York. It has been represented to the Governor that, as the office of State Architect is one of great responsibility, involving the expenditure of millions of dollars of the public funds, the incumbent should be the sort of man whom any individual or corporation would feel justified in employing to conduct important operations and disburse large sums. The Governor has expressed his entire sympathy with this view, and has initiated an investigation to the end that the afore-stated ideal may be realized. He is to be congratulated upon his broad

## MEMORIAL NOTES

RICHARD NORMAN SHAW, R.A.  
Honorary Member of the American Institute  
of Architects

Richard Norman Shaw was born in Edinburgh, in 1831 and died November 17, 1912.

He was a student in the office of Mr. William Burn, and continued his studies in the Royal Academy Schools, from which he obtained the gold medal in 1853, and the traveling studentship the following year. In 1858 he published his book, titled "Architectural Sketches from the Continent," which contained a series of drawings from cathedrals and other ancient buildings, drawn by himself, on stone.

One of his first buildings was the New Zealand Chamber, on Leadenhall Street. Symmetry of arrangement was discarded in the design of the ground story in a manner that was considered indecorous. Above the ground floor, four great brick piers were carried up the height of the building, between which the wooden bay-windows were played with, and a curved-out cornice in plaster projected over them. While the detail suggested English Classic, it was of a type of what was afterward called "Queen Anne," and showed that the architect had not been sketching medieval work without feeling its influence. This design, being a starting outbreak of architectural originality, immediately attracted wide attention.

It is through Mr. Shaw's picturesque, simple, and dignified residences that he will be best remembered in this country. Among these may be mentioned Cragside, in Northumberland, built for Lord Armstrong; Dawpool, in Cheshire; Chesters, in Northumberland; and Adcote, in Shropshire; Lowther Lodge, designed in 1874; Swan House, Chelsea, in 1877.

The London Times mentions a block of mansions where no great expenditure on architectural effect could be allowed, in which Shaw managed to give variety and architectural expression by recessing portions of the exterior wall and grouping some of the windows under arches. This device, simple and inexpensive, was most effective.

Norman Shaw designed many churches, of which St. Michael's Church, Bournemouth, and St. Margaret's, Ilkley, are the best known.

He also designed many office buildings, such as the Alliance Assurance Building, corner of St. James' Street and Pall Mall, the Central Offices of the Metropolitan Police, and Parr's Bank, Liverpool. The New Scotland Yard is the most notable and admired of his business or municipal buildings.

Of late years, his advice was sought by the Government and by the London County Council on various matters connected with London architecture.

He was consulted by the Department of Woods and Forests on the rebuilding of the Regent Street Quadrant.

Mr. Shaw was joint editor with Mr. T. G. Jackson of the series of Essays published in 1892, entitled "Architecture as a Profession or an Art."

Mr. Reginald Blomfield pays the following tribute to Norman Shaw:

"Mr. Norman Shaw was an artist, absolute and ingrained. To scholarship and learning he made no claim, but he possessed a mind of rare distinction, a shrewdness and clarity of intelligence that illuminated the darkest corner of any difficulty, made everything seem delightfully simple and easy, and did in fact suggest the way out for those less favored than himself in resource and quick imagination. A man who disclaimed any powers as an orator or writer, he was in fact an admirable speaker, and few men have ever written more charming and characteristic letters. He handled every subject with an inimitable lightness of touch, letting his humor play on it, yet never losing sight of the essential purpose of his writing. To borrow a term from horsemanship, he had beautiful hands.

"There has been a singular completeness about the career of this most distinguished architect. An artist, and always an artist, he was indifferent to honors (I believe I am right in saying that he declined a baronetcy). He was equally indifferent to society in the technical sense. His whole power was concentrated on the art that he loved and to which he dedicated his life; and from the ideals that he formed in early life he never swerved. It has been a fine life: finely conceived and finely lived."

### LOUIS DE COPPET BERGH, F.A.I.A.

Louis De Coppet Bergh was born December 20, 1856, and died in Washington January 27, 1913.

Mr. Bergh was educated in the Royal Polytechnical School of Stuttgart. While in practice, he built many churches in different parts of the country: The Church of the Covenant, in Washington, and the Church of the Indian school, at Hampton, being well known.

Mr. Bergh's education being largely engineering, he acted as expert architectural and sanitary adviser to Mayor Strong during his administration, in New York. He was Past President of the Department of Architecture, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences; Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; Fellow of the American Institute of Architects; author of "Safe Building Construction," in two volumes, published in 1908.