

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. V

NOVEMBER, 1917

No. 11

Shadows and Straws

THE INDUSTRIAL HOUSING EMERGENCY, in its relation to the war, seems to be involved in a maze of obscurity. The original committee of the Council of National Defense, charged with the task of investigating the situation, made its report to that body more than two months ago. Its findings must have been either incomplete or unsatisfactory, for the Council immediately began holding hearings which apparently had no other object than the verification of the evidence presented by the committee. This process did not produce any tangible result, and we may suppose that it still left the whole question where it was at the beginning, since a third committee, of which Mr. Otto Eidlitz, of New York City, was made chairman, was charged to cover the same ground. This committee reported directly to the President and his cabinet, we believe, and while the substance of the report has not been made available, press reports indicate that it carried definite recommendations and made plain the fact that a shortage of houses was seriously interfering in the production of many vital necessities of war. Subsequent to that report, there have been rumors to the effect that financial aid would be extended to one or two housing undertakings which had been begun, or which were ready to begin, but which had been stopped by shortage of money. Other rumors were to the effect that the whole matter, with the possible exception of such action as we have mentioned, would be left to be dealt with by Congress at its next session.

THE SHIPPING BOARD, which has separate authority for dealing with the house-shortage, has, according to a press report, enlisted the services of Mr. Flannery, President of the American Vanadium Company, whose task will be

to see that housing accommodations are provided, as fast as possible, for workmen in the shipbuilding centers. On the other hand, it is also rumored that the Shipping Board's Committee on Housing will be merged with a general Commission or Administration, which will deal with all housing undertakings in which the Government has an interest. What the policies of this Commission will be is still left largely to conjecture, although current opinion inclines to the belief that it will devote most of its effort to financing private undertakings with government funds, and will commit the Government to actual participation in land-purchase and house-construction only when no other solution can be found. In contrast with such a procedure, assuming it to be the one to be followed, we have the experience of England, as narrated elsewhere in this issue by our special correspondent, Mr. Frederick L. Ackerman.

EXPERIENCE IN THE REGISTRATION of architects is developing at a rapid rate. The annual report of the State Board of Registration in New York state presents some very definite data upon which to base preliminary conclusions.

Total applications received during the first two years since the law went into effect number 1,991; of these, 175 were withdrawn, 1,367 have been approved, 358 have been disapproved with the recommendation that they be not given certificates without examination, and 89 remain to be given final consideration.

No examinations have been held for the admittance of new practitioners. Only two applications as yet have been received for registration upon examination.

During the year the Board has approved 350 applications for registration, making the total registration on September 13, 1917, 1,367. One hundred and eight applicants appeared before the Board during the past year for personal hearings, most of them in appeal from previous disapproval of their applications, and some upon request

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Institute Business New Members Elected

Delbert K. Perry, New Britain, Conn. Connecticut Chapter.

Frederick C. Lebenbaum, Chicago, Ill. Illinois Chapter.

Clark C. Wright, Chicago, Ill. Illinois Chapter.

Clarke Waggeman, Washington, D. C. Washington Chapter.

Nominations for Officers

To the Secretary of the Institute:

For the office of President of the American Institute of Architects, which is to become vacant at the close of the present year,* the undersigned members of the said Institute do hereby, in accordance with Article IX of the By-Laws, submit their petition for the nomination of Mr. Burt L. Fenner, of New York City.

John M. Donaldson, William B. Stratton, D. J. von Schneider, Charles Kotting, F. J. Winter, Arthur H. Scott, William Reed-Hill, John Scott, James B. Nettleton, and Hugh B. Clement of the Michigan Chapter; Edward A. Crane, John Hall Rankin, John P. B. Sinkler, E. P. Bissell, and George I. Lovatt, of the Philadelphia Chapter.

*By vote of the last Convention, the present officers hold over until their successors are chosen at the next Convention, tentatively fixed for the spring of 1918.—Editor.

Obituary

Frederick C. Bonsack

Elected to the Institute as a Fellow in 1897
Died at St. Louis, Mo., September, 1917

Isaac S. Taylor

Elected to the Institute in 1884; to Fellowship in 1889
Died at St. Louis, Mo., October 28, 1917

A. J. Bloor

Elected to the Institute as a Fellow in 1861
Secretary of the Institute 1874-77; 1881-83; 1887-89
Died at New York City, November 19, 1917

Book Reviews

The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina. By Alice R. Huger Smith and D. E. Huger Smith. 128 illustrations from drawings by Alice R. Huger Smith. Photographs and Architectural drawings by Albert Simons. Limited Edition printed from type which has been distributed. 387 pages. 8vo. \$6 net.

If this book serves to remind us of how Charleston has been swept by fire after fire, battered by war, and shaken by earthquake, it also serves to make us thankful for what has been spared. The text, while largely devoted to an

account of the families whose houses are described, makes a vivid story of the life of the city, so strangely isolated by the Civil War. The illustrations—of houses, gates, doorways, winding stairways, paneled rooms, mantels, and rambling porches—many from drawings by Miss Smith, make an even more vivid picture of an epoch which still haunts us with its suggestive charm of a more leisurely existence. The book also contains a number of measured drawings, though on a small scale, and makes mention of numerous architectural quaintnesses of practice. It is especially interesting to have recalled to us at this moment the fact that, after the great fire of 1740, the General Assembly of South Carolina fixed the price of building materials and labor for a period of ten years!

Aside from the interest which this work will have for the architect, it seems safe to say that no future student of Charlestonian life can ignore the careful research embodied in its text.—B.

The New Tax on Professional Incomes

Mr. Frank E. Davidson, of Chicago, a member of the Institute, has made the following computation of the income-tax law as applied to professional incomes. No official interpretation seems to have been made, although those who appear to be expert in this matter do not agree with Mr. Davidson. Possibly, in the next number of the Journal, we shall be able to state the case definitely. Mr. Davidson's computation is as follows:

If an architect is a single man and has an income of \$10,000, he must first pay 8 per cent on the difference between \$6,000 and \$10,000, or \$320, but in computing his tax under the two regular individual income-tax provisions of the old law and the new, this tax of \$320 would be deducted from the income of \$10,000, leaving \$9,680, from which must be subtracted the exempted amount of \$3,000 provided in the old law, on which he would pay the 2 per cent normal income tax. This tax of 2 per cent on \$6,680 would amount to \$133.60. Then, under the new income-tax law, the professional man with the \$10,000 income would have to pay another 2 per cent on his income over the limit of \$1,000 set in the new law, or 2 per cent on \$8,600, which would amount to \$172.60. His total income tax will, therefore, be \$627.20. A corporation having a net income of \$10,000 will be taxed as follows: Normal tax 2 per cent on \$6,000, or \$120, plus an additional 2 per cent on \$8,000, as per the terms of the new revenue law; in addition to these direct taxes an additional surtax will be levied of 1 per cent on \$2,500 and 2 per cent on \$2,500, making the total income tax for the corporation equal to \$355.

Thus, by the plain provisions of the income-tax laws, a corporation having an income of \$10,000 must pay an income tax of 3.55 per cent, while a professional man or individual having identically the same income will be compelled to pay an income tax of 6.272 per cent.

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. V

DECEMBER, 1917

No. 12

Shadows and Straws

OVER THREE MONTHS have elapsed since the shortage in workmen's houses was brought to the attention of the Government. During that period the question has been under consideration by the Council of National Defense, but at this moment (December 15) the nation remains in ignorance of its cogitations and looks in vain for any evidence that the problem has been grasped in any sense commensurate with its magnitude.

As one tries to divine the reason for this, two prime factors seem to evolve out of the mass of testimony and speculative criticism. First, we have not the background which enabled England to meet her own similar problem with a foresight and an energy which are revealed in the article by Mr. Ackerman which immediately follows. Secondly, the problem, at some point in the Council, has encountered a mind not possessing the imagination to visualize either the necessitous character of modern war, the scale of its demands, or the methods by which, and by which alone, we may stimulate our industrial production to the maximum. In these days one hesitates long before resorting to criticism of any of our national war activities and the methods by which they are administered. Everyone desires to be patient, to realize the intricate nature of our problem and its consequent requirement for time in which to organize and coördinate all the ramifying factors. But the time has assuredly come when it becomes a national duty to point out that industrial production cannot be stimulated by machinery alone, and that failure to grasp the problem of providing houses for workmen, in which they may enjoy a measure of comfort

and rest, is failure to make war as England and Germany are making it.

In Washington, one senses the feeling of timidity in meeting the problem. It is said that "the country is not ready" for any such far-reaching solution as England found it necessary to adopt. One hears that "our problem is different," and that we must meet it in our way. All these things contain a modicum of truth, but the fact is that we are not meeting the problem at all, except in sporadic cases, and that even then we are not meeting it as we should.

Allowances must be made for the confusion into which the question has been thrown by the multitude of selfish interests which have sought advocacy of this plan or that, according as it affected their own individual interests. Nothing has contributed more toward obscuring the really fundamental factor of federal recognition of the problem than the thrusting forward of every conceivable sort of scheme by which houses might be built or workmen might be sheltered. Instead of throwing light on the problem, they have shadowed it with doubts and suspicions, and we are the more emboldened to say this since President Wilson himself, in his message to Congress, took occasion to indicate that the profiteers have not all been regenerated by war. They have shown themselves in the discussion of homes for workmen, as elsewhere, and have done a damage to the nation of which time will show the full extent.

We regret sincerely that the task of placing this issue before the people of the United States should fall to a publication which serves the organized profession of architecture in this country. We recognize that in small minds we

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Obituary

Alfred J. Bloor

Alfred J. Bloor, Fellow A. I. A., born April 1, 1829, the oldest member of the American Institute of Architects (in date of election), died at New York on November 19, 1917. His decease breaks almost the last link of the chain that united the present members of the Institute with its founders. The older generation has passed away, leaving to their successors the memories of their steadfast efforts for the uplifting of our profession and a unity that was almost unknown in the days of their earlier professional life.

Mr. Bloor was not, strictly speaking, a founder of the American Institute of Architects. He should be considered however, as one of its pioneer members. He was elected to Fellowship on February 5, 1861. The Institute in its early form was organized in 1837 and incorporated April 13, 1857. From the time of his election, through the greater part of his active life, he was constantly in the forefront of its activities. His first office was that of Librarian, to which office he was elected October 22, 1867, the year in which the Institute was reorganized and the Chapter system adopted. As Secretary, he served the Institute 1874-1877, 1881-1883, 1887-1889. He was elected Secretary of the New York Chapter on its organization, March 19, 1867, and retained that office until 1898, when he retired. From that time Mr. Bloor lived much in retirement.

His mind and his notebooks were well stored with historical facts and illuminating reminiscences together with the underlying causes that contributed to forward the growth of the Institute, as well as those that at times seemed to retard its development and which had to be overcome. Modest and retiring, he was at times reticent and difficult to approach, but to those who knew him well and in whom he had confidence and recognized as co-workers, he offered a fund of well-digested information and was ready at all times to help and encourage.

During the years of Mr. Bloor's active life he was a voluminous writer, contributing to professional journals and to the daily press. Two of his more elaborate and well-studied contributions may be cited: His article on the "Origin and Processes of Formation of the Architectural and Art Societies of Europe," 1869, his, so-called, "Centennial Address" to the Institute's Convention of 1876, "A Survey of American Architecture and Architects from Colonial Times."

In the consolidation movement that culminated in the union of the Western Association of Architects with the American Institute of Architects in 1898, Mr. Bloor filled a conspicuous place, both as Secretary of the Institute and, perhaps in a still more important rôle, as delegate from the Institute to the convention of the Western Association in 1886.

He was with the Institute and its founders from the beginning, during its formative stage, and through its gradual development. When he retired from active service those days had passed away. The American Institute of Architects has now become strong in membership and a

recognized professional body, having its own home, the Octagon, at Washington, with its historical background, while the field of the future lies before us, well plowed and prepared for the workers who are now with us and for those who are to follow.

GEORGE C. MASON,
Historian of the A. I. A.

Book Reviews

Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome.

Volume I. School of Classical Studies. Bergamo. Institute Italiano D'Arti Grafiche, 1917. A continuation of the two volumes of "Supplementary Papers of the American School of Classical Studies," Vol. I, 1915; Vol. II, 1908.

In this volume the American Academy in Rome gives expression to what we may call the classical field of its endeavor as distinguished from that in which architecture, sculpture, and painting claim their sphere. How delicate and shadowy is the line which separates these fields is revealed as one turns the pages of this fine modern example of the printer's art. Perhaps the indefiniteness of this distinction seems to be more apparent today, when the convulsive struggles of a world in arms are drawing all values into the crucible where they shall be recast and reissued to mankind. What legends the new coinage shall bear—what decorative elements it shall carry—what new sense of values it will determine and offer for our consideration, no man knows. Yet we cherish an ardent hope that the new currency will be so clear in its import that we shall in some manner be able to use it as legal tender in all the corners of the earth. We feel that it is to be related to humanity and to life, and thus to art and scholarship and culture.

It is these thoughts which are evoked by these Memoirs. It is this dream which pervades us as we note the first article by Jesse Benedict Carter, for it was in these fields that he made his life's contribution. His rare scholarship and unfailing energy remain as one of the bulwarks of the Academy and are recalled in full measure as we turn to the work of those who came under his stimulating and inspiring influence.

So it is, that, whether we respond to the serious and exhaustive study of "The Vatican Livy and the Script of Tours," by E. K. Rand and George Howe; or to the account of "The Aquia Trajana and the Mills on the Janiculum," by Albert William Van Buren in collaboration with Gorham Phillips Stevens; or whether we derive a keener joy from Mr. C. Densmore Curtis's article on "Ancient Granulated Jewelry of the VIIth Century and Earlier," with the illustrations of exquisite art which accompany it; or find a painter's pleasure in the story of Bartolomeo Caporali by Stahley Lathrop, and in the reproductions of his work, of which there are more than twenty; or learn the interesting history of "Capita Desecta and Marble Coiffures," by John R. Crawford; or of "The Military Indebtedness of Early Rome to Etruria," by Eugene S. McCartney, we are conscious of the ineluctable relationship which all of this scholarship bears to the great hope upon which men are leaning now almost as never before.—B.