

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. V

JANUARY, 1917

No. 1

Shadows and Straws

NO FIGHT AGAINST THE Omnibus Public-buildings Bill has ever assumed such proportions and intensity as that which now engages the attention of Congress and the entire reading public of the United States. The attacks are not by any means confined to the laity. Representative Frear, of Wisconsin, spoke at length on January 7. His remarks have not been exceeded in the vigor of their denunciation, and they may be epitomized in the following:

"I speak in opposition to the pending \$35,000,000 public-building bill which we are told will pass at this session. Judging from past experience the bill will be loaded down at the other end of the Capitol with from \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 more 'Government monuments,' so that it promises to rival the \$43,000,000 river and harbor pork barrel passed at this same session of Congress. The last public-building act was rushed through the House under suspension of the rules. Only twenty minutes were given the opponents of the bill in which to discuss a bill of fifty pages, containing between 400 and 500 items, appropriating over \$40,000,000, and covering extravagant and worthless projects from one end of the country to the other. The House and the public were blindfolded as to facts, and then bound and gagged by a vote of 154 to 30 to stifle discussion."

Mr. Frear's reference to loading the bill down "at the other end of the Capitol," is intended to point out the fact that the Senate has a large share and a large responsibility in this pork-barrel legislation. As indicating at least one opinion in the House over the question of slices and as evidence of the little antipathies which are always aroused by divisions of spoils, we quote from a speech by Representative Borland, of Missouri, at the passage of the 1913 bill:

"The bill contains perhaps less than a score of items that can be attacked on any ground of just criticism out in the country, but contains nearly \$10,000,000 hogshead of pork for the District of Columbia. We are compelled to submit to this unjust criticism from one end of the country to the other of having prepared a pork-barrel bill, when there is not a member of this House that has got more than a slice of side meat compared with this hogshead of pork (Senate amendments). I am disgusted with this high-handed attempt to not only get the lion's share of the pork, but to load all the odium upon the House of Representatives."

AT THAT SESSION IN 1913 to which Mr. Frear alludes, Representative Fitzgerald, of New York, Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations of the House, said, "I denounce as indefensible this method of passing a public-building bill. . . . It cannot be defended from any standpoint of public necessity."

In 1913, criticism of the public-buildings bill reached such a height that Congress appointed a Public Buildings Commission to investigate and report upon the method of making appropriations. Its conclusions follow:

"A general examination of sites and buildings authorized but not consummated has been made and the Commission is satisfied that some appropriations have been made which are not justified. Other authorizations are too large. These authorizations were, it is believed, the result of the present unsatisfactory system of providing for and constructing public buildings."

Postmaster General Burleson, a member of the Commission, submitted a minority report which was as admirable in the lucidity of its analysis and the directness of its criticism as the majority report was weak. From his remarks we quote as follows:

News Notes

Australian Parliament Architectural Competition Postponed

We are informed through the British Embassy that the above competition has been indefinitely postponed.

December Chapter Meetings

At the monthly meeting of the Philadelphia Chapter, the delegates reported upon the Convention and the members were then addressed by Monsieur Victor Horta, Director of the Academy of Beaux-Arts at Brussels who is at present lecturing in this country. Monsieur Horta expressed a great interest in the problems of American architecture and praised the public-spirited activities such as were referred to in the report of the delegates. He touched but briefly upon the circumstances which have rendered him temporarily an exile, and yet left a profound impression of the disasters which have overtaken the members of the profession in Europe. The editor of the Journal reported upon the immediate phases of the public-buildings situation in Congress.

At the regular monthly meeting of the New York Chapter, over fifty members and guests were present to hear the report of convention activities and accomplishments, and later to listen to Mr. Charles Butler, a member and former Recorder and Secretary of the Chapter, who has recently returned from a year and a half in France. His description of relief activities, hospital planning, and actual trench conditions was listened to with the deepest sympathy, a contribution of approximately five hundred dollars from those present being the immediate response to an appeal for ponchos for French soldiers made on motion from the floor.

Mr. W. B. Faville, from San Francisco, presented his slides of the San Diego and Panama-Pacific Expositions, with comments on the methods and characteristics of the designers of the different buildings which greatly added to the interest of the pictures.

Through the kindness of Mr. William H. Brett, Librarian of the Cleveland Public Library, the drawings submitted in competition for the new library were exhibited on the walls of the meeting-room and attracted much attention.

Registration

We are informed that the following opinion has been delivered by the Attorney General of the state of New York in reference to the new law for the registration of architects now in force in that state:

"Section 77 requires that a person who was not practising architecture prior to April 28, 1915, must procure a certificate from the State Board of Examiners in order to be 'styled or known as an architect.' Persons procuring the certificate are to be known as 'Registered Architect,' using the letters 'R.A.' It is therefore apparent that the status of persons who were known as architects prior to

the enactment of the statute is not interfered with and they may continue to be known as architects simply. If they desire the added appellation of 'Registered Architect,' they may apply for certification as will presently be shown. Persons who have not been in practice may not be styled or known even as architects in the future. In order to enter upon practice at all they must qualify as 'Registered Architects.'"

The Executive Committee of the New York Chapter have sent out copies of this opinion with the request that architects note any infringements of the law and lay them before the proper authorities.

State Architects

In the November Journal there was published a brief of the report of the Committee on Professional Practice of the Washington State Chapter in reference to the conditions obtaining in the various states as to the employment of architects by the state. The Committee have asked us to say that subsequent knowledge makes it plain that in Oregon the teaching staff of the School of Architecture in the University of Oregon have only rendered architectural services in connection with buildings which have been erected for the University, for which a commission was paid in addition to the regular salary.

A Correction

The name of W. L. Somerville, architect, of New York, should have appeared in the notice on "Allwood—An Industrial Village," on page 499 of the Journal for December, as associated with Murphy and Dana, architects of New York, in the preparation of plans for houses in Allwood. We regret the omission.

Obituary

Herbert Jaques

Elected to Fellowship in the Institute in 1891
Died at Boston, Mass., December 21, 1916

Otto C. Wolf

Elected to the Institute in 1901
Died at Philadelphia, December 19, 1916

Chas. E. Brush

Member of the Illinois Chapter since 1908
Died at Chicago, November 1, 1916

Mr. Brush was born at Carbondale, Illinois, in 1855, and was graduated from the School of Architecture, University of Illinois, in 1877. His work is best known by the buildings of the Illinois Normal School, at De Kalb, Illinois, and the Lee County Court House, at Dixon, in the same state. At the November meeting of the Chapter, resolutions of regret were adopted in which the Chapter expressed its sorrow and its sympathy for the members of his family.