

THE  
JOURNAL  
ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL  
INSTITUTE OF CANADA



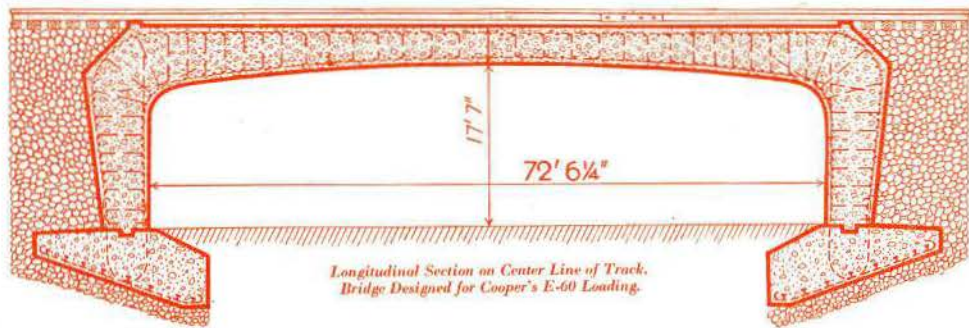
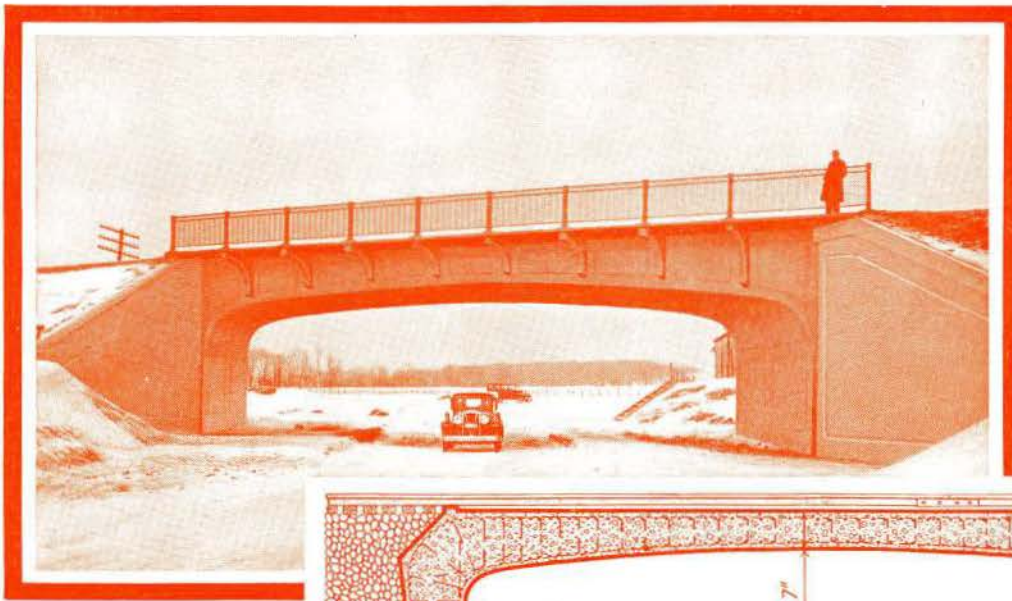
Vol. XI, No. 5

MAY, 1934

TORONTO

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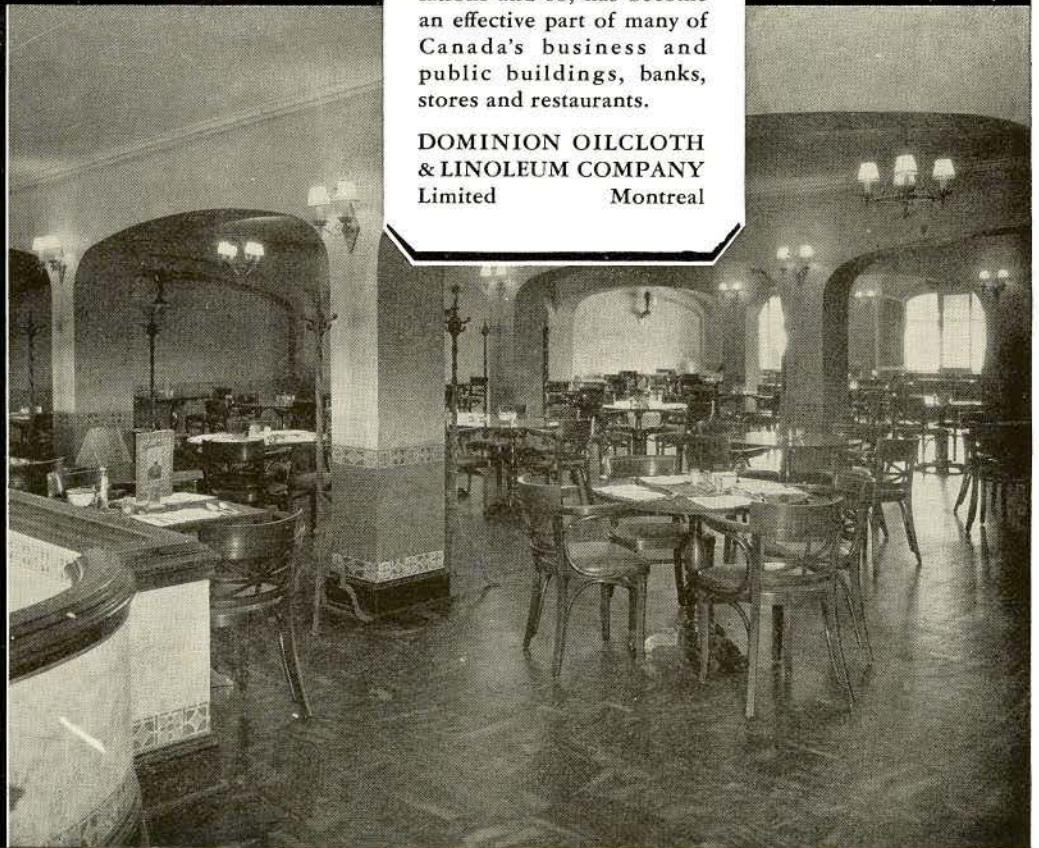
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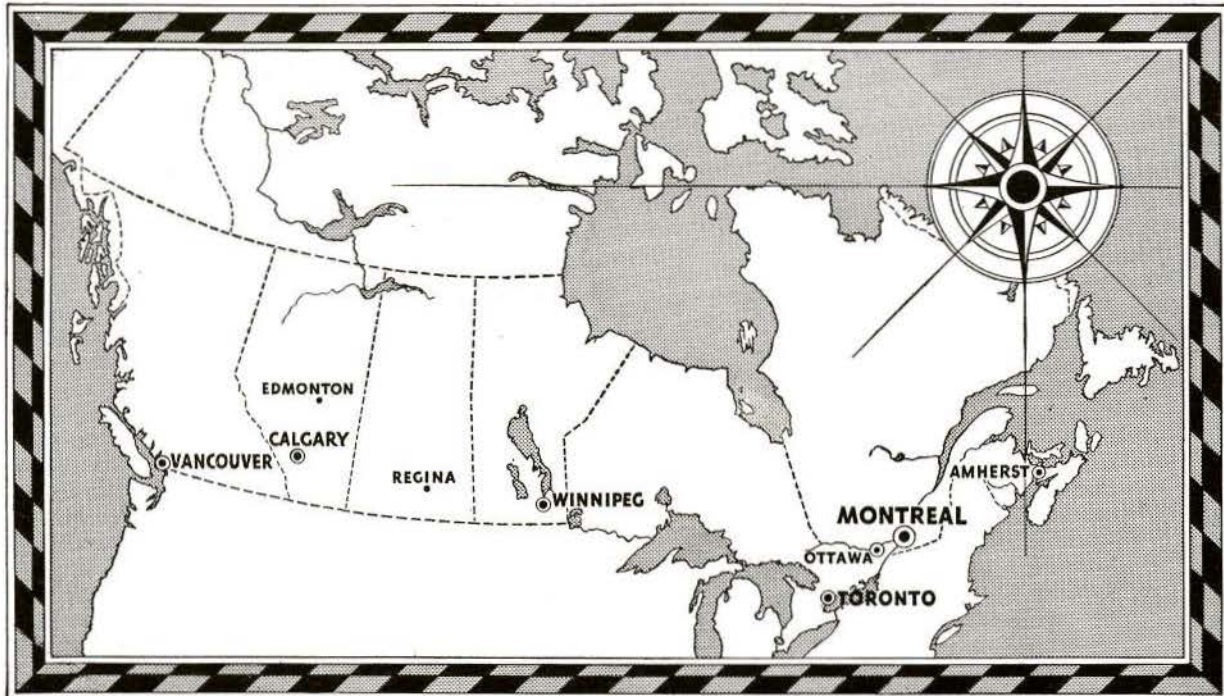


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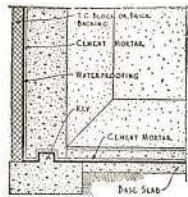
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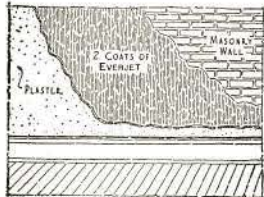
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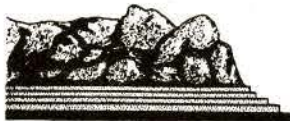
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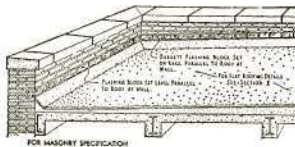
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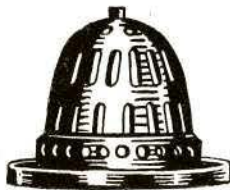
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## ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA

Serial No. 105

TORONTO, MAY, 1934

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### CONTENTS

A HUNDRED YEARS OF ARCHITECTURE IN TORONTO, BY E. R. ARTHUR.....	75
A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR C. H. C. WRIGHT.....	78
WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM STATE HOUSING IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES, BY JAMES H. CRAIG, M.R.A.I.C.....	79
A TRIP TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, BY SIR RAYMOND UNWIN.....	84
CORRESPONDENCE.....	86
CIRCUMSPICE.....	87
NOTES.....	88
R.I.B.A. PRIZES AND STUDENTSHIPS 1934-1935.....	88
BOOKS REVIEWED.....	88

### PLATE ILLUSTRATIONS

RIVERBEND SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, WINNIPEG, MAN.....	FRONTISPIECE
MUNICIPAL OFFICES—HIGH WYCOMBE, ENGLAND.....	82
ENTRANCE DETAIL, MUNICIPAL OFFICES—HIGH WYCOMBE, ENGLAND.....	85

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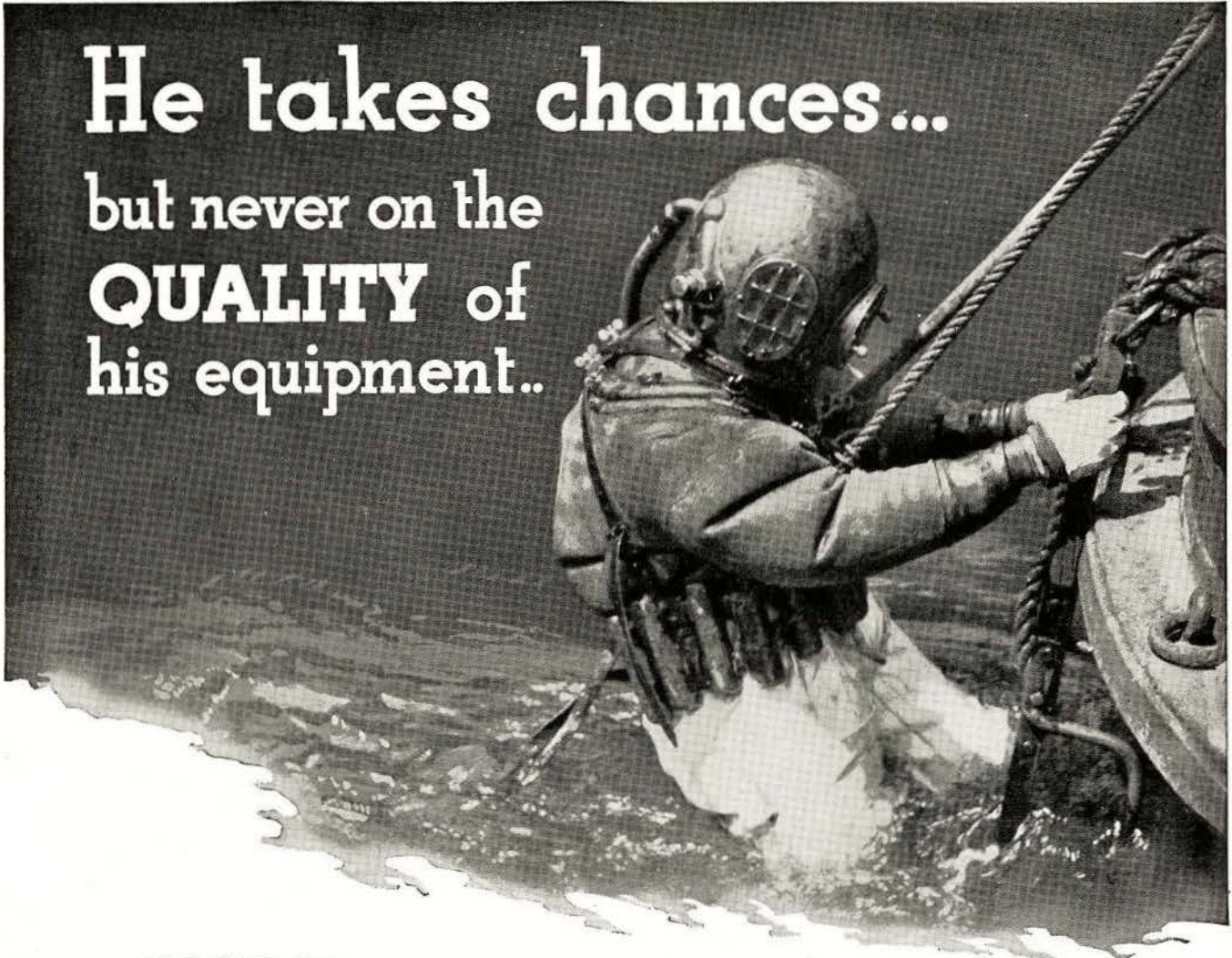


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# A HUNDRED YEARS OF ARCHITECTURE IN TORONTO

BY E. R. ARTHUR

*Editor's Note: The following article was written expressly for the Centennial Number of the Toronto Daily Mail and Empire and is reproduced herewith by kind permission of the Editor of that paper.*

**A**RCHITECTURE in Toronto since 1854 may be likened to a fine old man gradually losing his faculties until, coinciding with the arrival of the railway in 1854, he went quite insane and remained in that unfortunate condition, with occasional flashes of intelligence, for forty-six years. Since 1900 the state of the patient's health has been reversed—he has been reasonably intelligent with marked signs of a return to his former vigour and gradually diminishing recurrences of insanity.

By 1854, the colonial period was coming to an end. Though the general standard of taste was still high—higher certainly than it is to-day—the growth of the saw-mills which circulated plans of villas and stock mouldings, and the influence of inferior building in England and the United States steadily undermined that regard for simplicity and honesty in design which was characteristic of the colonial builder. When Toronto was given its charter, the Grange was 17 years old, the first wing of Osgoode was five years and Chief Justice Sir William Campbell's house which still stands at the top of Frederick Street, was an infant of 12 years. Later, it is true, there were larger and more pretentious houses, but most of the 19th century buildings we admire to-day were built before 1854. Out of a list of perhaps one hundred, I must mention the Canada Company's building (1807), Bishop Strachan's House (1818), and the very fine Parliament Buildings of 1832.

Even in the last phase the colonial style was not altogether barren. It produced the Ward and all the fine little cottages bounded by Queen, Parliament, George and Front Streets. It produced Yorkville and Cumberland Streets and the nice "New Orleans" house on the south side of Maitland Street near Yonge. Before the railway reached Toronto, two of our finest city buildings were completed. They were the Commercial Bank on Wellington Street (1843), now owned and occupied by Messrs. Clarkson, Gordon, Dilworth, Guilfoyle and Nash; and the Cawthra House (1852) at the corner of King and Bay Streets. Both buildings are in the Greek style. The Greek style here, and it is to be found in scores of farm houses and public buildings, was an offshoot of a world-wide movement in art and literature. The British Museum in London, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, the Palais de Justice in Brussels, the University of Virginia and St. Andrew's at Niagara-on-the-Lake are all in the same manner. The old Commercial Bank

with its severe, grey stone walls and lofty windows has those solid qualities of security and dignity which we, in Canada, associate with banks. You feel only the best people had dealings with it, and the manager was a person to be reckoned with in the community. It is the old gentleman of Wellington Street compared with which the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, who has just had her face lifted, is decidedly flighty.

The architect was William Thomas of whom we read in an obituary of 1860: "To him we owe some of the finest buildings of which our city can boast. He was one of the first to discover the use which might be made of the white brick peculiar to Toronto."

He designed St. Michael's Cathedral (1845), St. Lawrence Hall (1850), the gaol (1858) on Gerrard Street east, and Oakham House (1848), his own residence on the southwest corner of Church and Gould Streets. St. Lawrence Hall and the Commercial Bank are certainly his best buildings. His three sons, Alberti, Cyrus and Richard, were all pupils of Upper Canada College and all were architects. Without changing his name, Alberti would have been out of place in any other profession.

The architect of the Cawthra House, Wm. Hay, was an interesting character. He designed a number of buildings here between 1852 and 1860, including Yorkville Town Hall, St. Michael's College and St. Basil's Church, the General Hospital on Gerrard Street and Holy Trinity Parsonage and Parochial Schools. His wife died in 1860, and Hay returned to Scotland, where he remarried and built himself a fine house called Rabbitt Hall at Portobello. He seems to have spent the remainder of his life on the restoration of St. Gile's Cathedral. A bas-relief medallion was placed in the vestibule of the cathedral in memory of Wm. Hay, "whose knowledge of ancient ecclesiastical architecture is only equalled by the refined taste and artistic skill which he brought to bear upon the work."

Hay left Canada in 1860 because of his wife's death, but, if during the rest of his lifetime he received photographs of contemporary Toronto buildings, he must have rejoiced in the mediaeval quiet of St. Gile's and the seclusion of his Rabbitt Hall. If architecture were not so permanent, it might, in its worst forms, be amusing. A really dreadful picture rarely depresses the spectator. It may leave him a little uneasy that, but for the accident of birth, he might have lived in an age

that produced such things, but in his own home he turns it to the wall if it is a wedding present, or puts it in the furnace if it is not. Similarly quite vulgar women in watering places like Coney Island or Blackpool may cause a smile. One need not live with them, and one is certainly not compelled to do so. Not so with architecture—generations yet unborn will gaze at the Legislative buildings in Queen's Park and the new East Block, Government House, Victoria College and the City Hall and wonder that such things could be. In an architects' Utopia a disposition to arson would be one of the great virtues.

We have now arrived at a strange period in the history of the city's architecture—the thirty years or so before the Boer War. It was not, as a stranger

Yet as a profession the architects are deeply indebted to these "giants" of the 19th century. (Richardson weighed over 300 lbs., Storm was a large man and I forget the weight of the Parliament Buildings.) They brought tremendous enthusiasm and considerable learning to the service of architecture, and they established the Ontario Association of Architects. That they failed to produce a single building of distinction may be explained by the general level of taste throughout the world. The seventies, eighties and nineties were all equally naughty, everywhere, and in all branches of art.

The strange history of the building of the Parliament Buildings in Queen's Park may not be known to everyone. A competition was decided upon for a



PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, TORONTO



NEW EAST BLOCK—PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

might guess, a time of architectural stagnation. The city was growing in all directions (quite uncontrolled, of course) and architecture was a live art. It was alive rather like the Polish woman who, though dead, retained some of the colour of life and her blood was still warm. She was kept thus by narcotics given during her illness, and the priest refused to bury her. In the late 19th century the dead corpse of mediaeval architecture was given frequent and powerful injections of Romanesque architecture compounded on the Plains of Lombardy, and in spite of everything, the architectural priests refused to bury it.

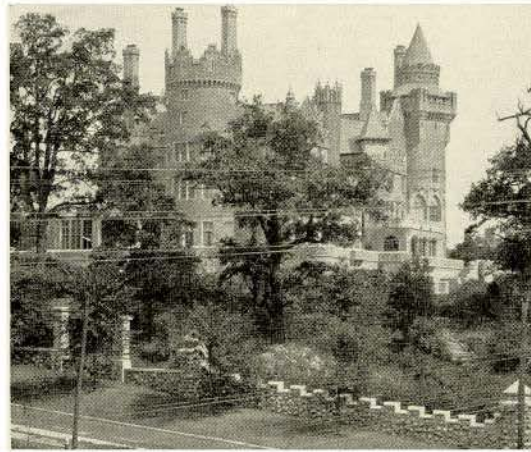
The high priest of the Romanesque cult was the American, H. H. Richardson of Boston. All our local architects were proud to be his disciples, and to have served as an apprentice in his office for one or two years made a man the envy of his less fortunate fellows. Rarely has a single individual wielded so great an influence on the architecture of his day as Richardson, and one can only regret that he was so completely ignorant of its real nature and purpose. Buildings inspired by the master in Boston, but designed by his devoted pupils here, include the York Club and most of St. George St.; a good deal of Rosedale, Jarvis Street, the old Canada Life Building, the Confederation Life and the old Bank of Commerce.

building to cost not more than \$500,000, and the following judges were appointed: the Premier, Hon. Alex. MacKenzie, who was in the stone business; Mr. Storm, the architect, and a Mr. Waite. Mr. Waite was an Englishman in practice in Buffalo. The story goes that he was a blacksmith who, on a bank holiday, had his head read by a phrenologist, who advised him to be an architect. We do know that he had great social gifts and was an experienced poker player. The result of the competition upon which our architects were engaged for some months was that Gordon and Helliwell (both of whom are alive to-day) were placed first; Smith and Gemmel, second, and Darling and Curry, third. Prices were obtained on the winning designs which were found to cost between five and six hundred thousand dollars. The government was alarmed that their estimate had been exceeded even by 10%, and the matter was shelved. In the meantime Mr. Waite was endearing himself to the powers in Queen's Park, and, "judge and all" as he was, prepared a plan which seemed to the Legislature the very embodiment of their dreams. His plan finally took form in 1892 as the present noble edifice erected at a cost of \$1,227,963. In his spare moments Mr. Waite designed the old head offices of the Bank of Commerce and the Canada Life Assurance Company, all of them unusual, but

substantial, monuments to a man's charm and skill at poker.

There were but few bright spots in the architecture of the second half of the century. The firm of Cumberland and Storm had the courage to complete Osgoode Hall in the manner in which it was started, and, while they cannot be given all the credit for the exterior, parts of the interior show

sentimental interest in mediaeval architecture may be understandable in a university, there is no limit to the heights or depths to which romanticism may lead us. Casa Loma, of course, takes the palm or the biscuit or whatever inexpensive prize we may award it. I often wonder why the Walpoles, the Beckfords and the Pellatts use artificial stone. I suppose battlemented castles are meant to be



"CASA LOMA," TORONTO



THE COMMERCIAL BANK, WELLINGTON STREET, TORONTO, (1845)  
NOW OCCUPIED BY MESSRS. CLARKSON, GORDON, DILWORTH, GUILFOYLE AND NASH

that the taste of an earlier age was not altogether dead. University College (1856), which is largely Cumberland, is their best efforts in the Mediaeval style, and Victoria College which is pure Storm, their worst, but the Gothic revival which could in England produce only the British Houses of Parliament, the Albert Memorial and the St. Pancras Hotel could not be expected to do much better on North American soil.

Radford, in Old St. Paul's, showed a more sympathetic feeling for the Gothic than any of his contemporaries, but without the guilds of glass workers and stone and wood carvers the very heart and soul were taken out of the style. While a

seen by moonlight and as Mae West would say "The silhouette is the thing." Massey Hall, with a pseudo Italian exterior as a compliment to visiting Carusos, an interior in the manner of the Alhambra at Granada, and a stage of Gothic panelling, may serve as an example of the confused thought of a few decades ago.

The name of Frank Darling will always be respected by our generation. He lived in both centuries, but, even in his earlier work, he seemed to be searching for a saner and simpler architecture than that round about him. He alone seems to have had an appreciation of those abstract qualities in design such as proportion and composition which

make great architecture. With his partner, Dr. John A. Pearson, he designed a number of houses of which Sunnybrook for Mr. Kilgour, Dr. Grasett's house on St. Clair, Sir Joseph Flavelle's and Mrs. George Deek's on Admiral Road are his best. Among public buildings his firm designed the Bank of Montreal on Front and Bay Streets, and the General Hospital.

There was a time when institutions like the banks imported American architects. Those days happily are gone, but the Bank of Toronto head office and the office building next the Royal Bank on King Street, which are the work of Carrere and Hastings of New York, had a salutary effect on our local Romanesque school. It would be difficult to choose the best buildings in our modern Toronto, and I can only refer to a few in a general way. There are the fine buildings on the west side of University Avenue; the new University buildings and Hart House, the Bank of Commerce, the North American Life and the Canada Permanent Building. The stores are alive to the advantages of well-planned floors and dignified exteriors, and Eaton's and Northway's show the trend in modern store design. One has only to compare the old Union

Station with the new to see what strides we have made in the last 50 years. It is a pity that the Royal York did not follow the style set by the Union Station instead of "going Romanesque" even if it is more competent Romanesque than we had yet had.

A review of the architecture of Toronto would not be complete without mention of the School of Architecture at the University. Probably half the buildings designed since the war have been done by graduates of the University, and a number of the younger ones serve as draughtsmen in the larger offices. The inference is not that they are better men than those trained under the old pupilage system which produced some great men, but the effect of five years' study of architectural design and kindred subjects cannot help but have a profound effect on the architecture of the city.

The reviewer of Toronto's architecture in 2034 will have seen great changes. I am sorry that it was not my privilege to report at this centennial on slum clearance, a comprehensive town planning scheme and the removal of the Hydro-Electric poles, but I must leave him something to crow about.

---

## A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR C. H. C. WRIGHT

Professor C. H. C. Wright, who is retiring as head of the School of Architecture, University of Toronto, after forty-four years of service, was paid a very high tribute by the students of the school on April 19th, 1934, when he was presented with

an illuminated address in which was recorded their keen regret upon his retirement. The text of the manuscript, which was signed by representative students of each year, reads as follows:

### *PROFESSOR CHARLES HENRY CHALLENGOR WRIGHT:*

*Words are inadequate to express our feelings of regret on this the occasion of your resignation from active leadership of The School of Architecture. We would take this opportunity of assuring you, if assurance is necessary, that among your many admirers and friends there are none more sincere and devoted than we, and none who feel more deeply that your leaving is a personal loss. We will miss your leadership and friendly counsel, but the recollection of your pleasant and enjoyable friendship will be ever present in our thoughts and although absent from our midst you will not be forgotten.*

*WE cannot enumerate your many estimable and admirable qualities and traits of character which have attached and endeared you to us. You have been kind and understanding in your disposition towards us and your resignation will be a loss that will be widely felt by the University and in particular by us, the students of the School of Architecture.*

*ALTHOUGH this school loses a generous, large hearted, and valuable leader, a man who has ever been ready to assist in the up-building of our school, sparing neither time nor expense in extending its interests, we do not feel that you are going out of our lives. Your leadership will live in our affections and we hope to be able to meet and renew our friendship often. We hope that you will live to enjoy many years of useful life and the knowledge that you have the wholehearted appreciation of the students, who have been your special care, will, in a measure, compensate you for the obligations your position has entailed.*

*AS a Teacher you have sought to inspire rather than demand; to convince rather than coerce; to reason rather than argue; to suggest rather than command; to encourage rather than flatter; and to enlighten rather than prejudice.*

*AS a Man you have been accurate and broad in your knowledge, true and strong in your emotions, pure and noble in your character. Your ability and power have given you an active part in the building up of our school here, and in the architectural profession throughout the province.*

*WE congratulate you on your forty-four years of service to our school and to our chosen profession,—and to you, Sir, as a teacher, counsellor, and friend—we render this tribute of our affection and extend our heartfelt good wishes for all your future years.*

# WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM STATE HOUSING IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES?

BY JAMES H. CRAIG, M.R.A.I.C.

**P**ROGRESS toward economic recovery in England and in the United States is being observed with keener interest by Canadians than the progress of other countries toward the same goal. That permanent progress is being achieved in Great Britain is demonstrated by the provisions of the recent budget wherein the income tax was reduced by six shillings in the pound. Also it is generally conceded that the United States has progressed far along the path to better times since Mr. Roosevelt became president a little over a year ago.

In the United States until recently the construction trades and dependent industries have been idle, whereas in England the National Housing Programme has maintained activity in this field for more than a decade. Therefore intelligent Canadians interested in public affairs are weighing the part played by subsidized slum clearance and housing for low-income groups, in bringing about recovery in the British Isles. They are also interested in methods which have been adopted in the United States during the past year as a counterpart of those existing in Great Britain, and because of our geographical relationship to our nearest neighbours, the methods adopted there become a matter of paramount interest, particularly in view of the fact that the depression on this continent exists primarily in the permanent goods industries.

England and Wales have built over 2,062,000 houses since the war, or twenty percent of all the houses in the country, and the United States has launched a programme of low-cost housing and slum clearance which will involve the expenditure of hundreds of millions of public funds. The important countries of Europe have adopted similar programmes to aid in conquering the depression, and it must soon become apparent to all but the defeatists that Canada must adopt similar measures to ensure economic recovery in this country.

Public men, including the prime minister, the Right Honourable R. B. Bennett, and the Honourable H. H. Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce, have publicly advocated slum clearance and the construction of low-cost housing as proper avenues for enterprise at this time, and throughout the country such programmes have many advocates. In Toronto an advisory committee has been sponsored by Mayor Wm. J. Stewart, and the Honourable Herbert A. Bruce, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province has accepted the chairmanship of this committee.

At its recent annual meeting in Montreal, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada passed a resolution which asked the prime minister at Ottawa to include in the appropriation to be voted for public works construction an amount to finance low-cost housing and slum clearance. It was suggested that an advisory committee be established under the National Research Council for the administration of this fund. The preamble to this resolution stressed the desirability of adopting as a recovery measure, government financed undertakings, which, in addition to accomplishing the desired end, would effect a more widespread distribution of purchasing power than any other type of construction.

The existence of the slums of sweated labour, and of inadequate wages to maintain a decent standard of living are all symptoms of huge and profound maladjustments which go very nearly to the roots of our social system. In Canada we are unwilling to uproot our institutions and cast precedent aside to attain a doubtful millennium. We prefer to advance from precedent to precedent, but we dare not mistake *laissez-faire* for progress, and the precedent of all western countries is demanding that we look to our slums and substitute adequate housing for the obsolete and often unsanitary dwellings which now house the lowest income groups in our urban centres.

Both Great Britain and the United States offer us a wealth of precedent. Since the war the record of low-cost house construction is the brightest in the otherwise dreary course the motherland has had to pursue along the path of social revolution, as deep and as bloodless as the industrial revolution in which, a century ago, she led the world. The United States followed in the path of the industrial revolution, but only since March, 1933, has she followed England in the path of social revolution, which, on this continent, was more than a decade overdue. In England the trend toward socialism has been more marked than that in the United States where the measures adopted have been directed toward the elimination of the objectionable features of the old order.

In England in the fourteen-year period ended March 31st, 1933, well over half the 2,062,000 houses built were subsidized by the state and by the municipalities. State and local subsidies totalling £149,000,000 were granted to assist in the construction of 1,122,000 houses, the average grant being approximately £133 per house. To date

this subsidy would represent approximately thirty percent of the cost of a £400 house. However, as the subsidies are paid annually over periods varying from twenty to forty years, the total subsidy per dwelling in many cases will more than double this amount. Of the houses subsidized 704,000 were built by municipalities and 418,000 by private enterprise. More than a million of the houses built were constructed definitely for the lowest income group under the supervision and control of the ministry of health. The minimum standard for the dwellings built since 1924 has been three rooms, a separate bath room and a kitchen, and usually a sizable garden. Where conditions permit separate houses, not more than twelve houses to the acre are permitted in urban centres, and eight in rural districts. England is learning the truth of Sir Raymond Unwin's words that there is "nothing gained by overcrowding." The subdivider is being succeeded by the town planner, and the garden city principle in planning is superseding the obsolete methods which still pertain to a measure in Canada.

In the more successful developments, playgrounds, public parks and spacious school sites have been established at the beginning. In such developments local shopping centres and meeting places are included, and in the best of them housing has been co-ordinated with industrial development.

The use of public credit to aid in housing finance in England was initiated as long ago as 1890 when it became apparent that private capital could not provide houses which working men could afford and which would permit a decent standard of living. Subsidies, however, were first provided under the Addison Act of 1919. At this time the Dominion Government extended loans to the provinces for the purposes of promoting the erection of dwellings following the return of the troops from the war. These loans were for a period of twenty years, and bore interest at the rate of five percent per annum. Here, and in England, housing acts providing for the lending of money or subsidies were repealed in the panic of 1921.

However, only two years of inactivity followed in England, and in 1923 the Conservative Government, under Mr. Stanley Baldwin and Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Minister of Health, passed a new law granting local authorities £6 per house per year for twenty years, and a flat subsidy to private builders. Under this act fifty percent of the cost of slum clearance was born by the state. In Canada, however, the present real shortage of adequate low-cost housing may be attributed in part to our failure to follow the example then set by the mother of parliaments.

In 1924, the Labour Government in England increased the subsidy to £9 per house per year for forty years in urban centres, and to £12-10-0 in agricultural districts.

The following are excerpts from the speech of the minister of health delivered in March of this year, which show that the housing and slum clearance programme in England will be on a larger scale than heretofore, notwithstanding the fact that at present the annual charge upon the exchequer for housing is more than £13,000,000.

"If the slum campaign goes on as it has begun, we shall make certain that nobody lives in a house that is not fit for human beings to live in."

"The government contemplates wide powers for housing authorities compulsorily to acquire overcrowded and other properties as a preliminary to development. The basis of compensation must be safeguarded to ensure a fair price to both sides of the bargain."

"The new bill will contain provisions for the compulsory acquisition of properties suitable for reconditioning. The subsidy or grant will undoubtedly impose a large burden upon the exchequer, but every penny will earn its direct return in slums cleared or overcrowding reduced. It is proposed to provide in the new bill that at the option of the housing authorities, special bodies or local commissioners may be established to take over the management of publicly owned housing estates."

Recently the London County Council elections were held, and a Socialist Council returned. As a result an even more comprehensive programme is now in contemplation for the London area.

In the United States, President Roosevelt obtained a congressional appropriation of \$3,300,000,000 for expenditure on public works, knowing that industrial recovery and the creation of employment was contingent upon the revival of the almost defunct construction industry. From this appropriation there developed the Public Works Administration under Secretary Ickes, and the establishment of a housing division with Robert D. Kohn, New York architect, as director.

Whereas the immediate object of the housing division is to distribute new purchasing power to replace the billions destroyed by the withdrawal of credits since 1929, and to provide employment in the hardest hit major industry of the country, mere recovery is not the ultimate goal, and Mr. Kohn and his associates are making a thorough and careful investigation of all projects submitted in order to avoid uneconomic expenditures on slum clearance or housing projects. Although the chief objective of the "new deal" is to bring about economic stability, its immediate purpose is to restore confidence, private initiative and enterprise, but where local agencies are unable or unwilling to act promptly, slum clearance and housing projects will be undertaken by the Public Works Emergency Housing Corporation (a subsidiary department established for the purpose) upon invitation from local officials and/or groups of

representative and responsible citizens or civic organizations.

In the February number of the *Architectural Forum*, Mr. Kohn states: "It has taken the present crisis in municipal finances to bring about a general consideration of the cost of slums to our cities. Efforts to salvage the credits of municipalities have led to searching analysis of public budgets and demands on the part of citizens to know why city taxes are so high, why cities have to spend so much on police protection, fire control, care of tuberculous and care of delinquents. Holders of real estate in areas adjacent to slums are beginning to awaken to the progressiveness of slum rot as it begins to affect the value of their properties; they are beginning to see that any individual is powerless to check the advance of the blight; and they are beginning to see that only municipal authority can and must stop it."

At the present time in many Canadian municipalities, medical health officers feel restricted in their powers to condemn buildings as insanitary. A dwelling which formerly was served by an outside privy is not made sanitary by locating a water closet in a back shed which is open to the elements and freezes up in zero weather. Nor does it help the situation to install a W.C. in the corner of the dining room. Examples of both these conditions may be found in Toronto and doubtless in other Canadian cities.

City architects also feel their powers to be restricted to the condemning of dwellings or such portions of them as may be in a near state of collapse. Therefore, it is evident that here as in the United States, some authority must be vested with wider powers to condemn dwellings which, through the ravages of time, have become obsolete. The future of such properties ceases to interest real estate agents or builders or loaning companies and becomes a charge upon the public authorities necessitating action by governments.

In the United States as much as 85 percent of the funds necessary for a given undertaking has been offered to private and municipal groups to engage in housing projects. Limited dividend corporations and municipal housing authorities were suggested as desirable agencies for co-operation. It was not long before the housing division found that insofar as private initiative was concerned, even the small equities required were difficult to assemble and the response from this source was unsatisfactory. From municipalities the response was even more unsatisfactory owing to the fact that only two cities in the country had legal authority to engage in housing construction. This obstacle, however, is being overcome by the necessary permissive legislation in various states.

Over \$36,000,000 in allotments has already been granted by the housing division. Many of the

projects submitted were not acceptable, only a small number contemplated slum clearance and very few were for projects which could be self-sustaining at sufficiently low rentals. Projects which might compete with existing adequate housing were viewed with disfavour, and in most cases these called for the improvement of undeveloped land in suburban districts.

Slum clearance and rehousing are considered to be two phases of the same problem. Important consideration with the housing director was that projects involving slum clearance must include a provision for limiting profits on new buildings to be erected by the establishment of a scale of rentals that would make the new structure serve the needs of the people dispossessed in the clearance operation.

Whereas it was hoped that the American experiment would stimulate private enterprise, it is now evident from the experience of the housing division that the trend in the United States is toward municipally controlled slum clearance and housing projects, which, however, must satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Board. All such projects "shall be part of a carefully thought out plan of regional development," and the government is determined that the country must be saved from "a crop of useless monuments to the depression."

In the United States, as in Canada, when housing projects were first proposed, they were met by bitter attacks from speculative builders and real estate firms who believed their markets were to be invaded. Mr. Kohn advises that "wiser councils are beginning to prevail. The government is working through local contractors and providing a spur to future activity." Local architects and legal firms are also being employed in connection with housing projects. Mr. Kohn further states: "The housing it is providing will compete with none produced by private enterprise. It will compete only with housing that has no right to existence. If a dealer in old clothes tried to have the manufacturer of cheap clothing outlawed because he kept people from buying his wares, he would be laughed off the streets; if a dealer in luxury clothes tried to have the cheap clothing store suppressed because people ought to buy his clothes whether they could or not, he would have similar treatment."

In conclusion it should be noted that statistical information relating to state housing and slum clearance methods is now available from France, Germany, Austria, Holland and Sweden, in addition to the countries discussed in this article, and this information deserves the careful perusal of authorities who contemplate legislation for Canada. It is obvious that Canada can be classed with nations who are battling against the depression only when she adopts national, provincial and civic measures to eradicate the slums and improve the housing conditions of the underprivileged classes.





MUNICIPAL OFFICES—HIGH WYCOMBE, ENGLAND

*Charles Cowles-Voysey, F.R.I.B.A., Architect*

*Photographs of Municipal Offices, High Wycombe,  
Courtesy of "The Architect and Building News."*



ENTRANCE DETAIL  
MUNICIPAL OFFICES—HIGH WYCOMBE, ENGLAND

*Charles Cowles-Voysey, F.R.I.B.A., Architect*

## A TRIP TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES\*

BY SIR RAYMOND UNWIN

**T**HE Editor says that my colleagues would be interested in some little account of the visit to Canada and the States to which reference has already been made in the JOURNAL.

My wife and I, not being liable to suffer either from *mal der mer* or an excessive surplus of pennies, made the voyage out in a cargo boat sailing from Manchester down the Ship canal. We had a very rough passage, being met by repeated storms and arriving about two days late. It was, however, a thoroughly enjoyable trip, so much so that we returned in January by another boat of the same line, on which we were the only passengers, unless 500 four-legged passengers be counted. We were glad to find the cattle seeming very content with the voyage and enjoying their ample rations. The captain said his experience was that horses and dogs are liable to sea sickness but that cats and cattle were generally immune; he did not add with which we were classed! These boats carry not more than eight passengers, who have meals with the captain and chief officers; this makes an interesting and sociable party. Food is good and plentiful. One is in touch all the time with the interests of the voyage and navigation, and we, at any rate, prefer this method of travel to the large floating hotels, except when the extra speed of the latter is an important consideration.

The new methods of navigation which the direction-finding capacities of the wireless beams and the simple depth sounding carried out by other waves sent to the bottom and back again, all added much interest. On the return journey we started from St. John's, New Brunswick, with the thermometer down about zero. The decks were all covered thick with ice. The Halifax harbour was frozen over with a thin coating, which we had to plough through on the way out. This cold lasted two or three days until we reached the Gulf Stream. An interesting feature of the return journey was that we left Halifax near the centre of an anti-cyclone which kept pace with us across the Atlantic. While we were having calm weather all the way we received a heavy swell from a series of storms through which the outward bound ships were struggling. We heard wireless news of these storms day by day and rolled considerably as a result of the swell, but entirely escaped anything more than a gentle breeze all the way.

On the outward journey we landed in Quebec towards the end of October in a severe blizzard and had to take the night train to Montreal to be in

time for a dinner which the architects there had arranged. We awoke in the morning to find that Canada had staged an early winter for our benefit. Thousands of trees were broken down or had their branches broken with the weight of the snow on the still adhering leaves; and when four days later we went west to Saskatchewan, the land was covered with snow nearly all the way. Mr. Philip Turner, the president, unfortunately had to go into hospital for a serious operation, so I had not the pleasure of meeting him. Professor Nobbs and others, however, took us in charge and all the architects and others in Montreal were most hospitable and enthusiastic in their welcome; and were eager to hear how we in England were faring in the long period of depression, what we were doing in regard to architecture, housing and town planning; indeed, they kept me busy with meetings and conferences at which we had most interesting discussions. The architects and other professional men in Canada and in the States have had a very severe time, which they have been facing with courage and resource. The Canadian Government had been following lines very similar to those adopted in this country, affording considerable contrast to the very active and widespread measures for reconstruction and relief which we found had been forced upon the United States Government.

I visited two schools of architecture, that at McGill University, under Professor Traquair, which follows mainly the English traditions, and the French school, which affords a good illustration of the extent to which the French and English traditions, language and habits continue to flourish side by side in the city of Montreal with little or no sign of coalescence. Both schools are well equipped, and the structural and architectural sides of the subject appear to be thoroughly taught. Design in the French school, however, seems to be very much influenced by the comparatively recent French-Canadian tradition prevalent in Quebec, this being the style most familiar to the students of that province; while the McGill University shows little influence from this tradition, and much more from English or American architecture. Modernism has not so far made great headway in either school, though some of the students are obviously interested in it.

From Montreal we went west to Saskatchewan and spent some time on a prairie farm. There we saw country life carried on with little or no money, barter being the chief method of exchange for goods and services.

\*Reprinted from the April 28th issue of the R.I.B.A. Journal.

On our return we called at Toronto and had three more busy days of entertainment and conference. Here again the eagerness to hear about England, its depression, its housing, etc., was embarrassingly great; and a larger audience was reached by a talk over the radio on English housing and planning methods. The University did me the honour to confer upon me the degree of Doctor of Architecture, and clothed me in a garment more gorgeous than I ever expected to stand up in. Our good friend Dr. J. A. Pearson was indefatigable in his kindness and hospitality, and all our colleagues most generous, evincing the heartiest loyalty towards the Institute and great courage in facing the very difficult times through which they had been passing. We saw over the fine lofty building of the Canadian Bank of Commerce which Toronto owes to the firm of Darling, Pearson & Cleveland.

From Canada we went to the States, where the greater part of our time was spent. We called for a day in Chicago. The great Exhibition was closed, and we saw it only from the elevated railway; that view was not very impressive. There we began to hear much about the conditions in America, where they have suffered more severely than either in Canada or at home, the slump in trade and in values having been much more widespread and severe. In America people have continued to think of all kinds of property as likely to increase in capital value; and owing to the rapid progress of the country during the last century, this increase had often been so great as to leave the annual income derivable from the property as rather secondary in importance. In England, owing to long custom and much slower rate of progress, the income derivable from property has generally figured as the more important consideration. I came to the conclusion that this different psychological attitude had exerted a large influence in aggravating both the speculative boom and the slump which followed it. Emphasis on the prospect of increase in capital value tends to put all kinds of real property into much the same category as stocks and shares; and in times of boom the speculation increases and values are liable to be inflated in all kinds of property alike. Where, however, as in England, while emphasis in regard to stocks and shares may be to a considerable extent on the chances of capital increase, that in regard to real property is quite definitely on the income return; the result of this attitude that values of real estate tend to move slightly in the opposite direction to that of industrial stocks and shares; and for this reason a distinctly steadying influence is exerted by real property, which has evidently been quite absent in the States.

I believe this, which some may regard as a mere difference in attitude of mind, has nevertheless

been one of the main reasons of the much more severe character of the slump as experienced in America. The architects had been most severely hit by the depression owing to the absence of unemployment insurance or other measures for mitigating such times. The Americans were dependent mainly on privately raised relief funds; and the extent of these and the generosity with which many who were themselves suffering severe loss contributed to the funds for the relief of those still worse off, reflected the greatest credit on the American people. The sums thus voluntarily raised have reached prodigious figures. In spite of the provisions which had by then been made for relief works and so forth, one large town was setting out to raise another four million dollars in subscriptions at the time when we left in January.

The various organizations initiated by the President for reconstruction and relief have been able to make considerable use of unemployed professional men in carrying out surveys for housing, land surveys for the re-organization of agriculture and other such work. The Americans under the courageous leadership of their President have indeed set to work, not merely to produce some immediate relief and early revival, but to attempt the introduction of the principles of planning in industry, agriculture and commerce, in order if possible to prevent the recurrence of the extreme booms and slumps such as now seem to follow from the haphazard methods of individualism and competitive industry. This attempt is certainly one of the most interesting projects to be found in the world at the present time; and other countries will watch with interest what is being attempted, and should wish the Americans every success in finding solutions for some of the troubles which all civilized countries are passing through.

The depression had not diminished the hospitality of American architects or real estate men, and had indeed increased their desire to hear of the activities which England had been practising in regard to housing, planning, insurance methods, etc., projects which the depression had convinced the Americans that they must follow, adapting them, of course, to their different conditions. Numerous occasions for speeches and conferences were arranged. The President has definitely adopted the policy of finding public credit and public subsidy to stimulate public works and housing on a very large scale. He believes that this will bring relief to unemployment and that the purchasing power thus distributed will contribute to recovery to an extent which will far outweigh the disadvantage of the necessary debts incurred, the interest on which will not prove an undue burden if the ordinary level of employment and prosperity can be restored. . . .

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary,  
Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Dear Sir:

We received in the mail this morning a copy of the R.A.I.C. Document No. 10, being the Canadian Standard Form of Construction Tender. Throughout the depression we have been up against the "bid peddling" situation to a very great extent, and have tried all the means suggested in the form of tender for its elimination.

We respectfully submit that this tender form is practically useless in combating this evil. In the first place, the architect is prevented from calling for new tenders in case the prices are too high. The last paragraph on page No. 2, covers this point. We, as a firm, would not care to submit to this regulation. We consider the owner has a perfect right to call for as many tenders from as many people and as many times as he sees fit. According to this clause he has only two alternatives, either to abandon the whole scheme or to accept one of the tenders submitted. This, in our opinion, is a very vicious clause and should be eliminated.

My next objection is the list of sub-contractors. We have always held that under a contract there is no implied right permitting the contractor to sublet any of his work. Subletting, if carried to its logical end, might easily result in the general contractor being merely a broker, taking the profit but actually performing none of the work of the contract. This situation has actually existed on a number of important contracts in this country, the contractor making a substantial profit on the whole transaction without employing a single workman or without buying a single dollar's worth of material.

The subletting of any part of a building contract is, in our opinion, a distinct privilege or concession granted to the contractor by the architect. Our attitude is, therefore, that unless such sub-contractors are proper and fit persons, in our opinion, to do the work and are being paid a sufficient sum of money to enable them to do the work properly, we must insist on the general contractor carrying out all the work of the contract himself. After all the contract is with him and it is he whom we hold responsible.

Therefore, we consider that the *contractor has no right to sublet*, as implied by this tender form, *nor any right to substitute other sub-contractors*. There is only one way in which this evil can be eradicated and that is for architects to firmly adhere to the above principles, which we believe are correct in law.

In our own office we have found it necessary to prepare a list of people who are satisfactory to us as possible sub-contractors and to insist that the contractor in his tender must not carry as a proposed sub-contractor any person whose name does not appear on this list. The list is kept small for obvious reasons and the tender must include the name of the proposed sub-contractor and the amount of his sub-tender. In addition to this approved list, the architect is perfectly within his rights to call for separate trade tenders from as many people as wish to tender. This obviates the objection that by providing an approved list he is shutting out desirable tenders. This scheme works and we know of no other scheme that does.

We do not consider that the architect is part of the building industry except insofar as he should be in control of that industry's relation with the buying public. He represents the buyer in the first instance and subsequently is the arbiter of the contractual relations between the buyer and the seller. His position is potentially one of great power and if he is to survive he must exercise that power firmly and with justice

to all persons in the industry. He, alone, can eliminate "bid peddling" and its resulting evils, and to do so he must get in the driver's seat and stay there.

Yours very truly,  
Mathers and Haldenby, *Architects*

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Messrs. Mathers & Haldenby,  
Architects,  
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Sirs:

Your letter of the 11th instant regarding R.A.I.C. Document No. 10, Standard Form of Construction Tender, has been forwarded to me by the secretary for reply.

As chairman of the committee responsible for the document, I wish to thank you for your comments which are sound and quite in accordance with the views of the R.A.I.C. members of the joint committee.

Two years ago the question of remedial measures to be taken with regard to the matter of "bid peddling" was referred to the joint committee of the R.A.I.C. and C.C.A. by the executive committee of the Institute. I take it from your letter that you feel that it is a matter that should have been handled by the architects without consulting the contractors. There are others that hold this same view.

With regard to the second paragraph of your letter. I do not quite understand your objection regarding the calling for additional tenders. It is not the intention to prevent an architect calling for new tenders on a project after making radical changes materially affecting the price, but it does militate against the architect who is playing one contractor against another, and to give him the opportunity to call for new tenders after making some minor changes in plans or specifications. This is an entirely unethical practice and probably did not occur to you, but unfortunately there are some architects and owners who use such tactics. In any case I do not see that the elimination of this clause would strengthen the document with regard to its main purpose, the elimination of "bid peddling;" on this I think you will agree.

As to the list of sub-contractors. If a statement from those tendering is not called for, does it not allow the so-called "broker contractor" to submit a tender? In other words, on a public building where an architect may be required to advertise for tenders, there is no way of distinguishing between the tender of a firm doing their own work and one that intends to sublet most of the trades. Here again, would the elimination of this clause strengthen the document with regard to its main purpose, i.e., the elimination of "bid peddling?"

With regard to your own office practice of naming a list of sub-contractors satisfactory to you. This is quite a common practice and one that is to be commended. It is, however, a practice that could not be universally applied. For example, on public buildings such as schools where the law requires that any firm be allowed to tender. In any case I do not see that the use of the standard form would prevent you or any one else from following your usual procedure.

You have summed up the situation very clearly in your last paragraph, and I assure you that the committee are entirely in accord with your views that if the architect is to survive "he must exercise his power firmly and *with justice to all persons in the industry.*" This was, I believe, one of the reasons for submitting this question to a joint committee of the R.A.I.C. and C.C.A.

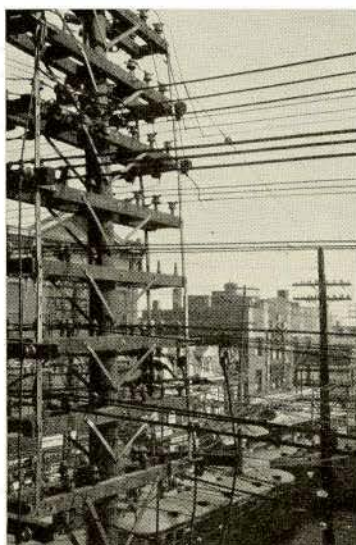
Yours faithfully,  
W. L. Somerville.

## CIRCUMSPICE

We take pleasure, mesdames et messieurs, in announcing the Centennial Year of the city of Toronto. The City Hall is suitably, so very suitably, bedecked and bedizened with bunting, and a large "muriel" symbolizing progress adorns the space usually occupied by the "Welcome mat" of the Rotary Society. From a hundred pulpits and a' and a' from a hundred pulpits and a' we have heard that in the last 100 years Toronto has witnessed the invention of the washing machine, electricity, the telephone and the steam engine. In the present wave of popular enthusiasm we do not pause to question whether these marvels of science were actually invented in Toronto, but go

our way waving little triangular flags designed by Colonel Marani (*F.*, I think) and singing songs selected by Mr. Barry Cleveland (*F.*).

Now as educated people we architects know that Toronto did not produce the inventor of the steam engine (after all Hitler has made wilder statements without even the excuse of a centennial). We know all about Stevenson and the kettle and Alfred and the griddle cakes, but our claims to be the City of Homes and the centre of the finest electrical equipment in the world rest on firmer ground. If we cannot claim Volta and Watt, Ampere and Galvani as citizens, we did produce the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen. The first picture, therefore, is electrical.



*It is not, as you might have thought, a street in Harbin after the Japs had demolished it, but is a view taken from the window of Mr. William Lyon Somerville (*F.*). (We apologize for bringing in the names of all these Toronto architects but this is our centennial number). Every architect in the Queen City has a similar prospect, but we have chosen Mr. Somerville's because not only is he treasurer of the R.A.I.C., but chairman of the editorial board and a "bravo" from him means a lot to "Circumspice."*

*For those who like their city entrances to be Porta del Pallios or Popolos we might explain that we are an informal people. We prefer Omaha to Bath, our gardens are open to the street and in the newer suburbs our back yards are quite unconfined. In fact, if some frightful snob desires the old fashioned privacy of the back yard, he has to appeal to the Municipal Railway Board which passes on all matters of taste in Ontario. The conscious informality and planting shown in the entrance to Toronto is therefore not in imitation of a gold rush town but represents one hundred years of development.*

*The City Hall—Boston Cream Pie from the Recipe Book of Mrs. H. H. Richardson. The windmill is, of course, symbolic. We in Toronto are unique in the Dominion in our close affiliation with Holland—we are Dutch in our system of local government and educational system; quite Dutch in our town plan and every parade of any size is preceded by Wm. of Orange in effigy on a white horse.*

We conclude with these charming lines, "There are no trees more beautiful than the elms which line our streets. Abana and Pharpar, those rivers of Damascus, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals compared with the thundering Don and the mighty Humber."

## NOTES

The annual meeting of the National Construction Council of Canada will be held in Toronto on May 17th, 1934.

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Irene Vautrin, M.L.A., past president of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects, and a member of the executive committee of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, was recently appointed a member of the Cabinet, without portfolio, in the Provincial Legislature of Quebec. Mr. Vautrin has also served as Deputy Speaker of the Quebec Legislature.

\* \* \* \*

Professor Ramsay Traquair, head of the School of Architecture at McGill University, left on April 23rd for a visit to England. Professor Traquair is expected to return early in July.

\* \* \* \*

The annual meeting of the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Association of Architects was held at the School of Architecture, University of Toronto, on May 4th, 1934. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

*Chairman*—R. W. Catto  
*Vice-chairman*—B. Evan Parry (F)  
*Secretary*—E. R. Arthur  
*Treasurer*—Eric Haldenby

\* \* \* \*

The exhibits shown in the architectural section of the spring exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal, while not numerous, included a fair representation of residential work and a number of commercial and ecclesiastical buildings. Mr. W. S. Maxwell, president of the R.A.I.C., and Mr. L. A. Amos, president of the P.Q.A.A., acted as the jury of selection.

\* \* \* \*

M. Jacques Greber, an eminent French architect who recently delivered a series of lectures at the Ecole Polytechnique, Montreal, was the guest of honour at a dinner tendered to him at the Windsor Hotel by the council and past presidents of the P.Q.A.A. on April 24th, 1934. Following the dinner, Mr. Greber delivered an address at the rooms of the P.Q.A.A. on Modern French Architecture.

\* \* \* \*

Low cost housing schemes are being considered by government and municipal authorities in several of the provinces. In Nova Scotia, the premier has proposed a housing scheme for Halifax, under which \$200,000 will be expended as a beginning to improve housing conditions in that city. In the city of Winnipeg, plans for a low cost housing scheme estimated to cost \$1,700,000 were laid before the special civic housing committee of the Winnipeg City Council by a group of Winnipeg architects. In Toronto, the city council has appointed a special committee, headed by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, to investigate slum conditions and submit their recommendations for a low cost housing scheme for the city of Toronto. In Montreal, a new slum clearing and housing plan calling for an expenditure of \$104,000,000 is being studied by the executive committee of the city of Montreal at the suggestion of the mayor.

\* \* \* \*

### R.I.B.A. PRIZES AND STUDENTSHIPS 1934-1935

The Royal Institute of British Architects announces competitions for the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships for 1934-1935, which include the Victory Scholarship, the Tite Prize, and the Owen Jones Studentship.

The subject of the competition for the Victory Scholarship will be "A Boarding School for Girls."

The subject of the competition for the Tite Prize will be "A Private Open Air Swimming Bath."

The subject of the competition for the Owen Jones Studentship will be "An Exhibition Hall in the New Premises of the R.I.B.A."

Copies of the conditions for these competitions can be obtained from the Secretary, R.A.I.C., 74 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario.



## BOOKS REVIEWED

MODERN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN. By Howard Robertson, F.R.I.B.A. Published by the Architectural Press, London. Price \$4.50.

Mr. Robertson, the author of this volume, is a very well known English architect, being a member of the firm of Easton and Robertson. He is also principal of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, and is the author of "The Principles of Architectural Composition." His opinions and conclusions on the subject of Modern Architectural Design should therefore receive the careful consideration of all architects, whether of the traditional or modern school of thought. Mr. Robertson does not attempt in any way to make a plea for so-called "modernism," but he has attempted to deal with certain aspects of design from the standpoint of the practising architect of the present day. The numerous illustrations selected for the book cover a very wide range of modern buildings in England, France, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and the United States.

Mr. Robertson points out that the actual problem of building has become more complex throughout the ages; and that with increased complexity has come the need for greater method in design. While there may be differences of opinion on the question of aesthetic values in what is commonly termed "modernism" in architecture, it is admitted by everyone that the architect must keep abreast of all structural and mechanical developments in present day building, and it is on these grounds, if on no other, that Mr. Robertson's book should be read and carefully studied by members of the architectural profession.

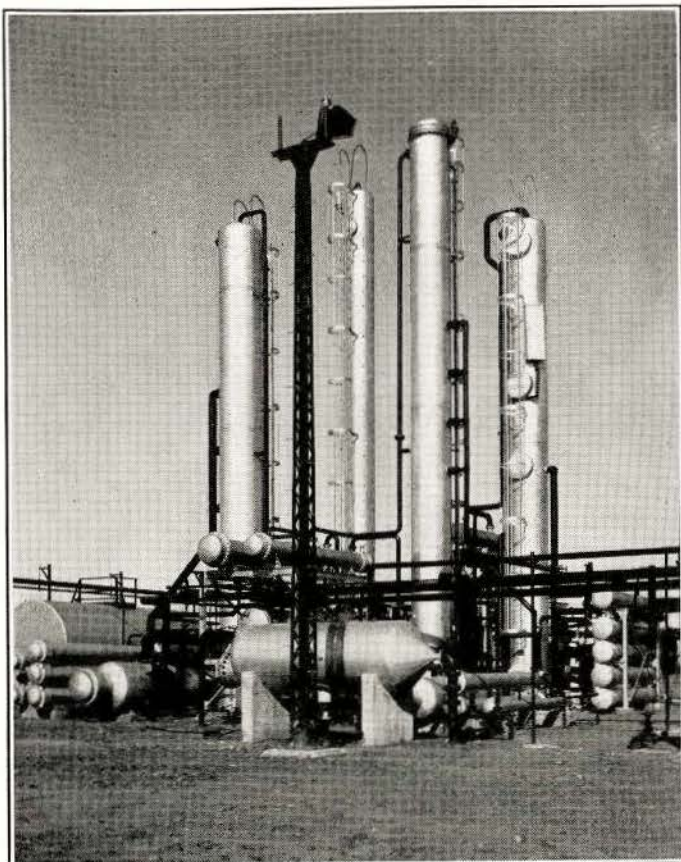
The book is 6" x 9" in size, and contains 220 pages, with 106 illustrations. —I.M.



CONTEMPORARY BABYLON in Pencil Drawings. By W. K. Oltar-Jevsky, with introduction by Harvey Wiley Corbett. Published by the Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., New York. Price \$5.00.

Mr. Oltar-Jevsky has attempted in his beautiful pencil drawings to capture the spirit of New York City, the "Contemporary Babylon." The author has confined his impressions of New York to a series of sketches which furnish a broad cross section of the city interpreted as Mr. Harvey Wiley Corbett states in his introduction, "Artistically, dramatically, and with a clear cut simplicity which brings forth the essential elements and gives not only the foreigner who has never come to New York, but the American familiar with it, a better idea of what he likes to think New York looks like."

The book is beautifully made and contains 22 large drawings 5½" x 11", printed in colotype on special paper. The volume is 9½" x 14¾" in size. —I.M.



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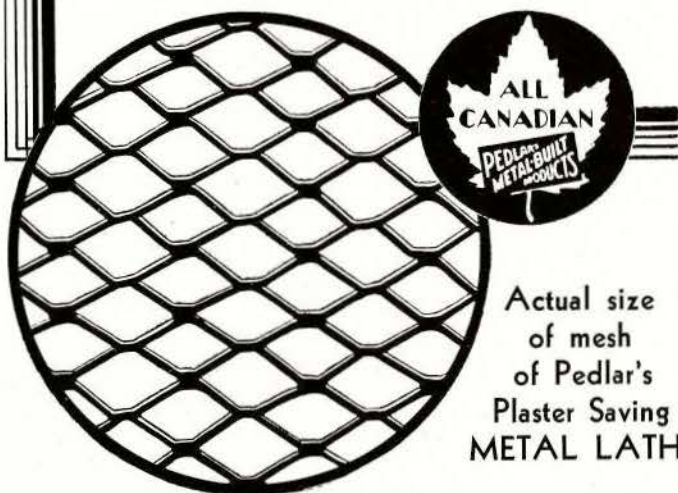
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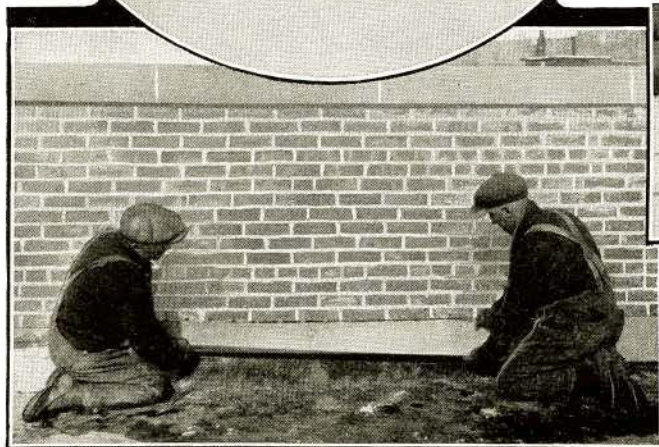
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