

“Building in War Times”

(World War I)

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Building in War Times

WITH the entrance of this country into the great world war there was a not unnatural fear in some quarters that our building activity might be greatly curtailed. Reports received from all sections of the country, however, are to the effect that the building industry has been stimulated and that we may even make new records in that line. The demand for iron and steel for shipbuilding and military purposes may cause a stringency in this branch of the market, but it has merely led to a general decision to take up "all masonry" construction.

the provisions being made for war supplies. The United States is called upon to finance a great part of the war costs as well as to fight shoulder to shoulder for the principles of democracy.

"The closing days of the Liberty Loan bond campaign showed activity in every section of the country to raise the funds needed for the government's part in the world war, and business men throughout the land are awakening to the fact that loan subscriptions, based upon future earnings, will be broken promises if there is an unwise and sudden interruption of the business of the country. The *Chicago Tribune* in commenting editorially upon the question of 'Building in War Times,' says:

"The Illinois legislature has abandoned its plans for extensive building operations in the state departments and institutions, and with the ear of faith we already hear applause the country over. Bravo! Let cities, commonwealths, and the Federal Government follow suit!"

"To which impending outbursts we reply, 'Be orthodox, brethren, but don't be more orthodox than his holiness the Pope.' Paris has not suspended public building operations because of the war. Neither has Berlin. To curtail such operations, if by curtailment you mean putting a check on wild and wanton extravagance, is doubtless advisable. Self-confessed pork barrel expenditures must halt and there are other pork barrels besides the celebrated cask of iniquity at Washington. Pork kegs we might term them. States and cities have each their own. Away with such! But not with the long-projected and long-needed improvements that have an incontestable value. Just



BANKING OFFICE OF BROWN BROS. & CO., NEW YORK

At Hanover and Beaver Streets. Architects: DeLano & Aldrich, New York. Built of Georgia white marble from the Georgia Marble Co. General contractors: Marc Eidlitz & Son, New York. Cut stone contractor: J. J. Spurr & Sons, Harrison, N. J.

While every one complains of advancing prices for most commodities, stone and materials for building have gone up but very little in price. The result is that the shrewdest students of conditions are united in advising owners to "build now."

A very admirable article on the subject appears in the *Buffalo Commercial*, and this is well worth quoting in full. The writer says:

"The preservation of property in this country is as much of a factor in the success of the United States in the world crisis as the mobilization of armies and

because we are no longer in a position to throw money about, it does not follow that we must scrimp or perish. Neither does it follow that scrimping will prevent our perishing. It may even help us to.

"As we look at it, a quietus clapped on legitimate public building enterprises would rank with the mania for private economy that is now impoverishing milliners and dressmakers and many a distressed tailor. Fine—is it not?—to see her ladyship economize by starving her modiste! Inspiring to see her husband economize by skinning his tailor! For that is what it

comes to. And they call it patriotism. Patriotism! Ye gods and little fishes! One plain duty of patriotism in war time is to keep the pot a-boiling. Waste is wicked, but legitimate spending a virtue. Within the bounds of reason, go on spending. It promotes 'business as usual.' It steadies the state. And what applies to the individual applies equally to municipalities, commonwealths, and the federal government. Let there be no havoc wrought in the building trade and its half dozen allied industries in the name of patriotic economy. To put a peremptory quietus on legitimate and sorely needed public building projects is to sow disorder, unrest and distress at the very time when such calamities would work a maximum of mischief. Let us keep our hair on. In avoiding waste, let us also avoid the economy that in the end spells extravagance."

"Build and Build Now," is the appeal of another leading journal of the country in calling upon all branches of business throughout the country to keep the ship of state on an even keel through the troubled waters of the war crisis. It says:

"We have a big job on hand, but we are going to put it across successfully with the aid and co-operation of several other big nations. At the same time let us remember that we need more business, not less. The only business that is going to 'bust' is the partnership between 'Me Und Gott.'

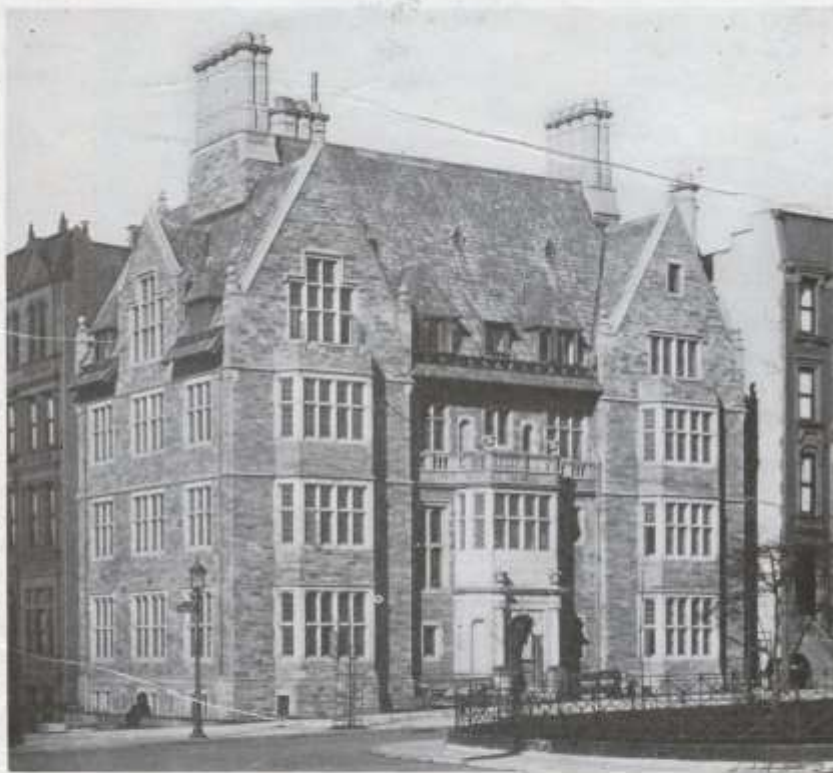
"There should be no curtailment in building and road construction. Let both public and private useful construction proceed. Production and handling of building materials and private construction work are fundamental industries of the country. Any tendency to suspend or postpone building projects is inconsistent with maintaining our prosperity. The country is prosperous. Building investors should not hesitate to go ahead with their plans. Railroads should spare no effort to supply the building industry with the cars needed to transport materials. Government, state, county and municipal authorities should encourage the continuance of all kinds of building. Road and

street improvements in particular should go on unabated. Bad roads and streets are factors of first importance in the present high cost of foodstuffs. Never before was the improvement of highways so essential.

"The lumber, brick, cement, lime, sand, gravel stone and other building materials industries are basic. Neither Government regulations nor railroad restrictions should be imposed unnecessarily to interfere with them. If any action is taken which results in the prostration of so fundamentally important industries, there is real danger of a surplus of unemployed labor, a surplus of railroad cars and a crippling of business that will seriously embarrass the Government in financing the war.

"States, counties and municipalities should not stop road building and other public work. Public officials ought to urge the continuance of public work.

"President Wilson said truly that this is the time to correct our habits of wastefulness. If we were to correct those habits, the waste turned to profit would



RESIDENCE OF JOHN SHERMAN HOYT, NEW YORK

Corner of 7th Street and Park Avenue. Architects: Howell & Stokes, New York. Built of stone from Chestnut Hill, Pa. Trimming of Buff Indiana limestone. Cut by J. J. Spurr & Son, Harrison, N. J.

make this war nothing but a little passing game.

"We may have to face a new disturbing readjustment, but business men will go to the limit to help the Government, and real business men will keep business

speeded up just a little more than it has been in the past."

In a letter voicing the sentiment of the Indiana limestone interests of the country to the Governor of Indiana, R. M. Richter, secretary of the Indiana Limestone Quarrymen's Association, said:

"It is not conceivable that at the outside above 25 per cent. of the population and industrial establishments of the United States can be made to serve war purposes, directly or indirectly. What, then, of the 75 per cent. who cannot enlist, cannot make munitions, but which can support the small per cent which must connect itself with preparation for and prosecution of the war?"

"Business men are inclined to proceed with caution but not with timidity," said a prominent New York builder. "There has been a general question in everybody's mind whether the Liberty Loan would be a success. Had the full amount not been subscribed it would have been an indisputable sign to building interests everywhere that America was afraid, not of war, but of keeping our heads above the industrial waters during the period of the war. With the loan more than 50 per cent. oversubscribed, any business man can see that not only is America able to finance the fight, but has confidence in the immediate business future. If it didn't have this confidence the money would have been hoarded, not placed in the very hands of the Government that contemplates a \$7,000,000,000 expenditure?"

This is the sentiment that seems to be pervading the entire building field. It was voiced and informally discussed on the floor of the Building Material Exchange, in the meetings of the Building Material Dealers' Association and in the Building Trades Employers' Association conferences. It is shown in labor circles by the fact that the building labor situation at present is entirely free of disturbance, the last question in issue, the lockout of the plasterers, having been adjusted.

Suggestion for a London War Memorial

Writing to a London newspaper on the subject of "War Memorials," a correspondent says:

"What a great nation, a nation which with all its shortcomings has proved itself, in this day of supreme trial, the greatest nation on earth, requires is a memorial that shall live through the ages to come. There stands in the midst of the Empire, and in the midst of the great City of London, a Tower, which was built some nine hundred years ago by William the Conqueror, and which still stands in stately grandeur to this day. Thousands and tens of thousands of British people visit the old Tower of London every week, and probably not one of these but notices, at any rate on its most conspicuous side, a great blot on its surroundings. Close to where the Bulwark Gate once

stood, and within a stone's throw of the scaffold on Tower Hill, where so many of the bravest and best of Old England suffered, an enormous pile of the most hideous warehouses raise their horrible heads over the sacred scene. But not only are they in themselves an eyesore and an offence, but they also block out from view and touch one of the oldest and most famous churches in English history, Allhallows, Barking. And now to business. If the Empire as a whole, or Great Britain alone, or even the City of London by itself, wishes to raise a memorial to our dead heroes which will live through countless ages to come, they cannot do better than place it alongside the old Tower of London. To do this they must buy out and level to the ground the warehouses and other buildings that intervene, so that Allhallows, Barking, directly faces the Tower. The ground thus reclaimed should be laid out as a decent, plain, green garden, and in that garden erected a monument in keeping with its surroundings to commemorate the Great War and all our brave sons who have fallen for so great ideals."

Limestone Marl in Holland

What gold was to the Californian forty-niners, limestone marl is, on a smaller scale, to the inhabitants of southern Limburg. Claims are being staked, deals in "rights" are plentiful on the "marl exchange" and every one who owns a few square yards of land is busy working his little marl mine, if he has nothing more to do it with than a pickax, a spade and a hand barrow.—In short, every south Limburger has caught the marl fever, and talk about nothing else.

South Limburg is rich in limestone marl, a mixture of calcium carbonate and clay, which occurs in the form of rock marl, ordinary marl and loose marl. Up to the outbreak of the war only the rock marl was used, being quarried for building material. Since the beginning of the war it has been found that the loose marl is valuable as a fertilizer and useful in the cardboard industry, the manufacture of glass, and in the sugar and cement industries. Then the hitherto despised marl suddenly took on the guise of potential gold, and its exploitation soon assumed large proportions.

Tax on Marble Quarries at Carrara

Consul General David F. Wilber writes from Genoa as follows: An official decree published May 2, authorizing certain changes in the tax levied on marble extracted within the limits of Carrara, provides that a portion of the proceeds of the tax may be used in meeting the expenses of constructing and operating the port of Carrara. It stipulates, however, that the city must contribute not less than one-fourth of the gross proceeds of this tax to the marble workers' relief fund.