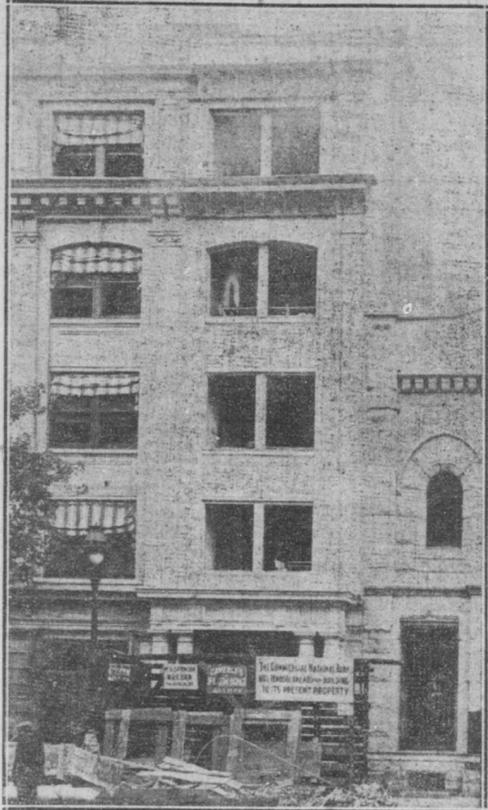


# BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT



Addition to Commercial National Bank, Fourteenth Street.

## DOWN OLD INDUSTRY

### Recession of Lake Texcoco Stop Fly Catching.

#### IT IS OF ANCIENT ORIGIN

Insect Indigent There Widely Used for Food of Caged Birds and Fancy Poultry—Was Prized Back in Aztec Days—Flies Practically Pickle Themselves in Water.

The oldest surviving industry on the American continent is in imminent danger of extinction, and the fly catcher of Lake Texcoco, Mexico, will be forced to turn his hand to some more modern and lucrative calling. Lake Texcoco is rapidly receding, and the fly, which for ages has been the food of caged birds and poultry, is vanishing from its chosen haunt.

Even in the days of the Aztecs, Lake Texcoco was famous for its fly resources, and fons of the insects were caught annually to be used as poultry food. In more recent years the product became even an article of export, large poultry raisers in Germany and this country looking upon the flies from Texcoco as a choice tidbit for fancy stock.

Flies Pickle Themselves. Lake Texcoco flies practically pickle themselves. The insect has the habit of swimming close to the surface of the water and is caught with a large net requiring considerable dexterity in handling. As soon as the catcher has spread the net over the flies he plunges it into the water for the purpose of drowning the flies and curing them.

Owing to the alkaline matter in the water pickling is completed almost instantly. The insects are then spread over large sheets and dried in the sun. After this they are packed in sacks ready for shipment. It is claimed that as food for caged birds of all kinds and young fancy poultry, they are unexcelled.

The fly-catching industry of Lake Texcoco is the subject of the first commercial treaty made in North America, and at the same time was for many centuries a monopoly which was granted distinguished Aztec warriors by their sovereigns. Netzahuacoyotl, emperor of the Aztecs, signed a treaty with the Casique Chimalpopoca of Tenochtitlan, in whose territory the lake then lay, by which a number of Tencan Aztecs were permitted to catch flies on the lake in order that the sacred quetzals of the Great Teocalli of Mexico City might enjoy this delicious food. The industry was the subject also of other treaties.

The few men still engaged in the business have to eke out a living now by shoveling soda from the old lake bottom, and in a year or so the fly-catcher of Lake Texcoco will be no more.

## BUILDING ACTIVE AT CITY'S CENTER

Continued from Page One.

lower story by the Charles J. Cassidy Company. B. Stanley Simmons prepared the plans. A large storeroom is being made, with the entrance to the office suites above. This part of the building was for many years the office of W. B. Hibbs & Co. before the erection of the new building in Fifteenth street.

The remodeling of the Ebbitt House is going rapidly forward, Boyer & Smith being the builders. The north front of the building is being much changed, and will have a much more modern appearance when the contractor is through. The west front is coming in for corresponding changes in the exterior, and the buffet and rattskeller rooms are now beginning to assume form. The old hotel will be renovated throughout and made into a modern building.

Julius Garfinkle will soon be the possessor of one of the finest-looking business places in Washington. The corner building is being raised to the height of the older structure, and many changes are going forward in the interior of the store to suit the added space. The construction is in the hands of Charles P. Langley.

In the northwest corner of the Corcoran Building the Cafe Republique is begin-



Constructing New Roof at the Palais Royal.

## BUSINESS OUTLOOK NOT PESSIMISTIC

### Crops Fair and Trade in Large Volume.

REVIEW BY CHICAGO BANK

While Financiers and Industrial Chiefs Face Disturbing Conditions Results in First Half of Calendar Year Are Encouraging—Bright Spots in Horizon Pointed Out.

In its annual crop and business report, the Continental and Commercial National Bank of Chicago has some interesting and timely things to say about the business situation, which are not all gloomy or pessimistic. It is frankly admitted that the business of the country has had to face some serious problems this year, but the fact is pointed out that they are neither insoluble nor panic inspiring.

Summing up the adverse conditions of business during the first half of the year, the report says: "Early in the year the unsatisfactory state of our foreign trade occasioned grave concern. With our imports passing all records, the prices of our principal products above an export basis and our trade balances falling toward the vanishing point, how were we to settle the enormous indebtedness that is constantly accruing from the so-called 'invisible' items that enter our account with Europe? These are the expenditures by tourists, freights paid to foreign shipping, interest and dividend payments on our securities held abroad, individual remittances, etc."

Need Merchandise Balance. "A large merchandise balance in our favor is needed to offset these items, and in its absence we must either borrow, which is a temporary expedient, or sell securities, which means that the security market must come down to an export basis, or we must ship gold out of our bank reserves. With bank loans at a high level, heavy gold exports are a serious matter, while the other alternative, lower prices on securities, is certain to be more or less disturbing. The situation was finally relieved by the latter process; gold exports were stopped by the sale of large blocks of bonds, and our standard stocks are now at a level where there is a broad international market for them."

Other disturbing influences of the year mentioned are court decisions under the anti-trust act and the controversy over the freight rates. No effort is made to take sides in this controversy, the subject being dismissed with the reflection that when the question is finally settled the law will probably be such as to enable industrial enlargement to go on in a normal manner and so enforced as to protect the rights of the public without the waste of excessive competition. The demands of wage earners is briefly discussed as well as the special difficulties experienced in particular industries. Coming down to the more hopeful view of the situation, the report continues: "The output of pig iron in the United States for the first half of 1910 exceeded that of any other six months of our history, being 15,012,382 gross tons of 2,240 pounds. To comprehend these great figures it is necessary to compare them with 11,022,346 in the first half of 1909, and 6,918,004 in the first half of 1908 and 12,418,044 in the then record-breaking first half of 1907. The altered policy of the railroads as to improvements has reduced the demands upon the steel mills, and at the first symptom of accumulating stocks, the trade, anticipating price cuts, reduced its purchases. Production, however, has been only slightly curtailed."

Decline in Building Trades. "The building trades had a phenomenal big half year in the first half of 1910, under the stimulus of cheap building material, but the first half of 1910 was only slightly behind that record, the total of permits in cities where a record is kept



Glover Building in F Street.

being \$332,031,401, as against \$328,983,238. Building materials are all somewhat higher than a year ago. The lumber industry complains most of present conditions, but it is in a chronic state of overproduction, with new mills always under construction. This may sound strange for an industry in which the raw material is rapidly vanishing, but the eagerness of timber owners to realize on their property creates the condition.

Despite the unfavorable developments we have referred to and notwithstanding some discordant notes, the general tenor of replies to our letter of inquiry is confident and encouraging. The country is prosperous. There is work for everybody, in many localities complaint that production is restricted for want of labor and the competitor of employers is pushing wages steadily higher. It is interesting to note the complaint everywhere that the automobile industry is making labor scarce and dear, for it illustrates how each development of civilization reacts upon the condition of the humblest member of society.

#### Volume of Business Large.

"The volume of business has been large, but there are frequent complaints that competition is sharper and the margin of profit smaller than ever, that labor is dictatorial, and that improved methods are constantly required to offset its demands. But the story of industrial progress reads like that from the beginning.

It is a common expression from the smaller cities and towns that nothing is known there of business reaction or of threatened trouble save what comes from the few large centers. To them the country seems very prosperous and conditions sound. Many of them express some impatience over the conservative attitude of the banking fraternity, whom they accuse of being frightened at shadows. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the note of warning was well sounded and that a wholesome effort to check the expansion of credits has been made, and the country is in much better condition because of it.

"The entire West has been enormously, almost wildly, prosperous. The basis of this prosperity has been the high prices for farm products, which have furnished the farmers with the means to build better homes and barns, drain their lands, buy improved machinery, enlarge their farms, and in not a few instances commit the oft-heralded offense of buying an automobile. We have made considerable inquiry into this, and our information is that the farmer who buys an automobile generally pays cash for it and is better able to own it than most of the town purchasers. It is probably of more real utility to him than to any other class of purchasers.

"Elsewhere we deal at some length with the causes of the stringency over the West in the spring months of this year. Evidently the heavy transactions in land which are reported from so many localities in the West were the principal factor in it. Undoubtedly there has been considerable speculative buying, for speculation is inevitable in any kind of property that is rapidly rising in value, but the basis of the whole movement is the high prices for farm products.

"The movement of young people away from farms is checked. The results will be beneficial to the country. The rise of food prices will be checked and some reduction from the price of meats in the last year no doubt will be made. Few observers believe that the price of good tillable lands will have any serious decline, but the investments have been very heavy and but for the conservative policy adopted by the country bankers a few months ago might have become dangerously extended.

"If the corn and cotton crops fulfill their present promise the country will have a solid basis for another year of substantial prosperity. The Northwest has been hurt by a short crop, as Texas and Oklahoma were hurt last year, but the latter have done well this year, and a good average for the whole country seems to be practically assured. The industries and enterprises of the country will go forward upon this with renewed confidence and energy."

## WASHINGTON MODEL IN STREET PLANS

### Other Cities Fail, Where It Is Correct.

WISER METHODS REQUIRED

Most American Municipalities Confronted with Problem Difficult to Solve—Growth from Small Beginnings Leads to Narrow Thoroughfares and Congested Conditions.

In most cities the older portions have grown from small beginnings and the street plan has been the result of chance. Occasionally a city is created upon a site deliberately chosen, as Washington was. In such cases an opportunity is offered to create a plan peculiarly adapted to the special development in mind. There are a few other instances in this country where the future possibilities appear to have been realized. Indianapolis and Detroit might be mentioned.

In New York City the commission created in 1867 to prepare a street plan failed to anticipate future growth. This commission appeared to believe that the chief traffic would be across the island from the North River to the East River, and east and west streets were laid out with only 200 feet intervening, while the north and south avenues were placed from 700 to 900 feet apart. The values of real estate having become enormous, it is now impracticable to correct mistakes in this original plan within reasonable limits of expenditure.

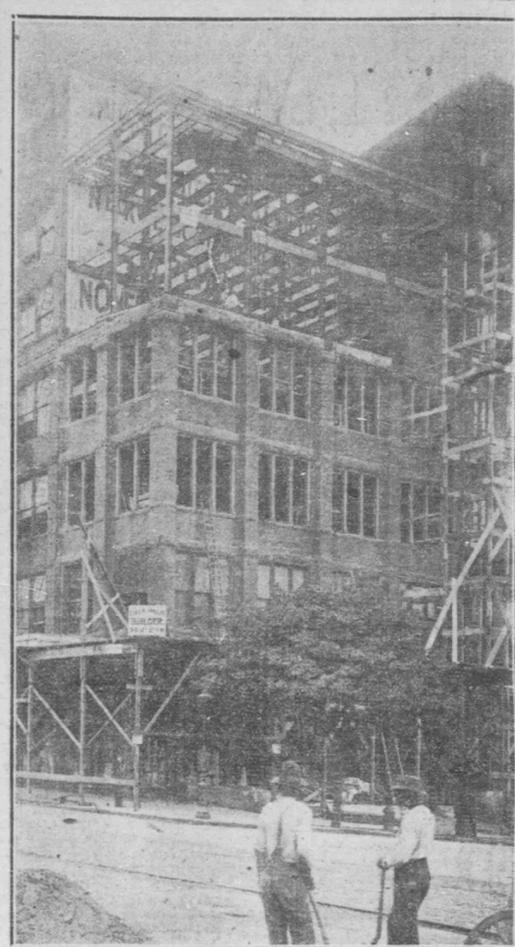
#### Diagonal Streets Important.

A characteristic feature of most American cities is the lack of important diagonal streets leading to some definite point of interest. These diagonals need not be long or straight for their entire distance, but different sections of them should be free from deflections. This is the charm of Washington and of Paris. One may follow the numerous diagonal streets in either of these capitals and be quite sure of reaching some point of interest. While it is often impossible to correct mistakes of planning within practicable limits of expense, there are few cities where conditions cannot be improved.

In many American cities additions have been made by extension of the city limits or by consolidation with other cities. Frequently these additions have been exploited by the suburban developer. They are often so limited in area that it is difficult to do anything but extend the city plan over them. It occasionally happens that an extension of the city limits will include a number of centers of population, and that these are disconnected and could be absorbed in a larger city plan without serious detriment. Areas of this kind are almost invariably traversed by highways which follow natural lines of traffic. They should be made the controlling features of the city plan. They are generally of the ordinary country road width. This will be totally inadequate, but they are usually allowed to remain until they have been so built up as to make a widening expensive.

What then is the logical method of procedure? The first thing is to determine the relative position of the different parts of the raw territory. It will then be possible to proceed with mapping in widely separated sections with a positive knowledge of the relation of the street lines in one section to those in another. The next thing which will demand attention is the system of existing roads. There was, and is, a good reason for these. These roads should form the skeleton of our future street system. Often it will be necessary to straighten them, and in all cases to widen them. They should be not less than 100 feet in width, and in some instances even wider. If the old road has good shade trees, the original highway can probably be preserved for pleasure driving, while another section can be reserved for railroad tracks, and, perhaps, still another for automobiles.

These old roads may have been nearly



Garfinkle Building, Thirteenth and F Streets.

paralleled or approximately radial, while the cross-connections may have been infrequent or unimproved. They must, therefore, be carefully considered. They should be straight between the parallel or radial highways wherever possible.

#### Intervening Spaces Easy.

When these controlling streets have been definitely determined we need not worry about filling in the spaces between. Whether it would be advantageous to have the intervening spaces treated in a uniform manner is questionable. Here where the topography suggests it a serpentine system of streets may be laid out; there a generous depth of lots, with space for gardens may be provided; here again we may find a group of narrower streets compactly built up with secluded courts and small houses fronting upon a little plot of grass.

No reference has yet been made to a system of parks and playgrounds. The policy of most of our cities has been to defer the selection of park sites until the necessity for parks has become apparent. Meanwhile the adoption of a street plan has converted acreage property into city lots, with a great increase in value. If there is a particular bit of woodland, or an elevation with a commanding outlook, or even a piece of low-lying land traversed by a stream which have not yet been cut up into building lots, they can be most advantageously set aside as future parks.

#### Parks Should Be Scattered.

These reservations should be scattered so that there will be some open space within walking distance of every resident. These parks should be connected by adequate roadways, not necessarily straight, or even of uniform width, but contracted where the topography would involve expensive construction and again expanded. In a territory such as we have been considering it may be useless to speak of the grouping of public buildings, for the important municipal centers have already been established. There are, however, minor public buildings, such as schools, libraries, public bathes and comfort stations, police stations, and fire houses, and it would be most desirable to set aside here and there what might be termed "municipal blocks," upon which these buildings could be grouped in a very effective manner.

The writer knows of no instance of the formulation and execution of a policy such as has been outlined, but it appears to be so reasonable and logical that it is a matter of surprise that the problem of making a city plan has never been undertaken in this manner.

#### Heavy Tourist Business in Bermuda.

Consul W. Maxwell Greene, of Hamilton, reports that the hotels and boarding-houses of Bermuda have been well filled during the 1909-10 season. The summer-tourist season brings a large number of people to the island. The consul adds that there is apparently no reason why the colony should not become one of the leading resorts of the western world.

Our 5,000,000 of people produce \$15,000,000,000 of manufactured products annually, and receive in wages \$220,000,000.

Modern needles first came into use in 1545.

## FOURTEENTH AND U

### Susy Four Corners Where Car Lines Cross.

BUSINESS CENTERS THERE

Small Traders with Rare Foresight Plant Their Ventures and Grow Up with the Neighborhood—Great Diversity of Mercantile Interests Represented Along This Street.

For many years business has been gradually creeping out Fourteenth street, until it is now one of the principal mercantile thoroughfares of the city. Not that it has large department stores, or that the houses established there are the biggest in their line, but small places of business have been multiplied until it is the home of the baker and small trader, and possibly more lines of profitable retail trade are represented in Fourteenth street than in any other thoroughfare of Washington.

Just as retail trade has been gathering in the street for many years, it has shown a tendency to centralize at certain points. One of these is at Fourteenth and U streets, where the junction of the two lines of the Capital Traction Company are laid down. This point, under existing conditions, is the crossing of the ways, and it is natural that it should become one of the features of this great business street.

#### Two Banks Shield Money.

On opposite corners of U street stand two of the savings banks of the city, the United States and the Fourteenth Street, both of which have met with a good degree of success. The banks are not only a convenience to the business houses located above and below them in Fourteenth street, but they are the depositories of the funds of a large clientele which resides in the vicinity. The financiers who organized these banks established them and have kept them going had wise foresight as to the future growth of Washington.

Nearby is the Philadelphia Oyster House, one of the principal depots of the capital bivalve in its season in the Capital City. H. Ellsworth Sands, the proprietor, takes just pride in a personal letter written to him from the local health department commending him upon the cleanliness and sanitary condition of his establishment.

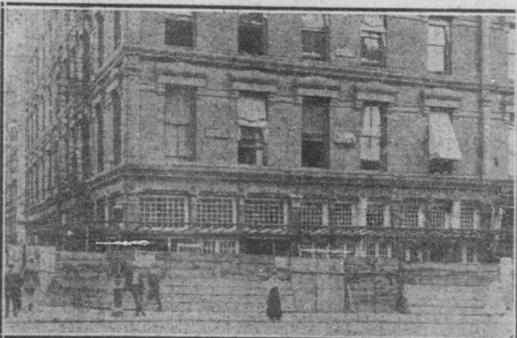
The Mount Vernon Inn has been established about three months and met with success from the start, showing the appreciation of the people of northwest Washington in a convenient place to obtain the Martha Washington candies, ice cream, water ices, and the like for consumption at the place of purchase, or to be taken home. The dinner service is also a departure for the locality and has been well patronized.

#### Home of Automobile.

The Standard Garage is practically at this corner, where hundreds of the machines in fashionable Washington are housed and taken care of. Baum's Fur Shop is another mercantile enterprise which shows the great variety of the business interests gathered in Fourteenth street. Gentner's Pharmacy holds all the specialties of the doctor and the surgeon. Storm & Sherwood provide cream for the morning's coffee, sanitary milk for the growing infants, and dairy supplies for the household of the neighborhood.

All in all, the corners at Fourteenth and U streets is a lively place. As the years go by it will naturally become important in the business life of the city. Land values will increase, larger and better buildings will probably be constructed, and the locality seems destined to be one of the commercial nerve centers of the city.

Over 5,000 gardens are managed in connection with the Austrian schools, and in them the pupils are given expert advice and instruction in horticulture.



Cafe Republique at F and Fifteenth Streets.



Office Structure at G and Eleventh Streets.