

REAL ESTATE GOSSIP

Labor Disputes and the Building Market.

AS TO VOLUME OF BUSINESS

Bearing on the Question of Too Many Houses.

SOME NEW WORK IN PROGRESS

Matters of Interest in Various Sections of the City—Buying and Building of Houses.

A lockout or strike in the building trades is not at any time a welcome prospect to those engaged either directly or indirectly in those activities. At the same time there are periods when such an interruption to the current business would be looked upon as more unfortunate than at others. Just now, when there is not much being done in the way of building, and with the prospect that the season which has just opened does not promise a great deal in that direction, anything which would tend to stop the tide of business might not be regarded as of much consequence, owing to the lack of volume.

The falling off in the amount of building in this city began last year and appears to continue to the present. There is not as much being done in the way of providing for private needs as distinguished from public as was the case last year, and to a much greater degree than was the case the preceding year.

The Public Buildings.

The large public buildings which were begun several years ago are now nearing completion, and the amount of money that is to be spent on them during the current year is not large as compared with previous seasons. The office buildings for the houses of Congress and the National Museum building and the one for the Agricultural Department, all of which will rank with the large public buildings, are not yet started, and no new undertakings of a similar character have as yet been authorized by the government. The amount of money that will be spent here this year for such purposes on the part of Uncle Sam, while by no means small, yet does not run up to the record in that respect of the two past years.

There has also been a falling off in the amount of the private building, but in that particular Washington does not stand alone among the cities of the country. The shrinkage in the building activities has been general, and it is one that is not entirely unwelcome to those who invest their money in this way and to owners of property. The rate of operation has been so rapid that the fear has been expressed of overdoing the market and producing something in the way of a decline in prices.

Rents and Values.

Here the apprehension has been felt that the city would be overbuilt, so rapid and in such volume have the houses and apartments been put up. The development of the city in late years has been without precedent, but, strange to say, there has been no shrinkage either in rents or in values.

It is not believed that the city is overbuilt, but at the same time it is felt that condition could easily be attained, and hence it is that any further development of the city in the way of building is rather welcomed than otherwise. However, it is not felt that anything in the nature of a strike or lockout is needed as a conservative force in the building market, for already operations had been reduced. There was in the first place a halt called in the addition to the number of apartment houses, and this is the second year that very little has been done in that particular.

As to Houses.

This course, which was mainly dictated by those who had to look to the pocket upon as salutary in its effect, for it has allowed time for the market to absorb what has been done and to adapt itself to the large additions to the accommodations of this character, has not been without effect. It is familiar with the market that too many houses have as yet been built.

Still it is recognized there are in the city a goodly number of houses that are sought after by tenants. Generally speaking, such houses belong to the class of those that are somewhat neglected by their owners and are not in as good shape as they might be. They need repairs and probably something to make them conform better to modern ideas and to compete with new houses.

Due to Lack of Money.

At any rate, whether there are too many houses or not, the condition of the money market serves this year as a check upon extensive building operations. It is not easy to get money to build, not because of lack of confidence in the realty situation, but rather because of the general conformity with the cautiousness of those who control money and who elect to sit down slowly until the general financial situation becomes more clearly developed.

In spite of these things, there is quite a good deal of building going on in various parts of the city, but not of such volume as to result in much of such an event there is a general cessation in work. Some men who are building large residences slowly until the general financial situation becomes more clearly developed.

City and Country Property.

The property 1408 10th street, where W. A. Johnson carried on business for a number of years, has been disposed of by Mr. Johnson, who has retired from active commercial life in this city and has gone to live in the country. The property, which consists of a three-story building with a store on the first floor and the upper floors used as apartments, is being sold by S. A. Drury for the latter's country place near Dickerson Station, on the Metropolitan branch of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad.

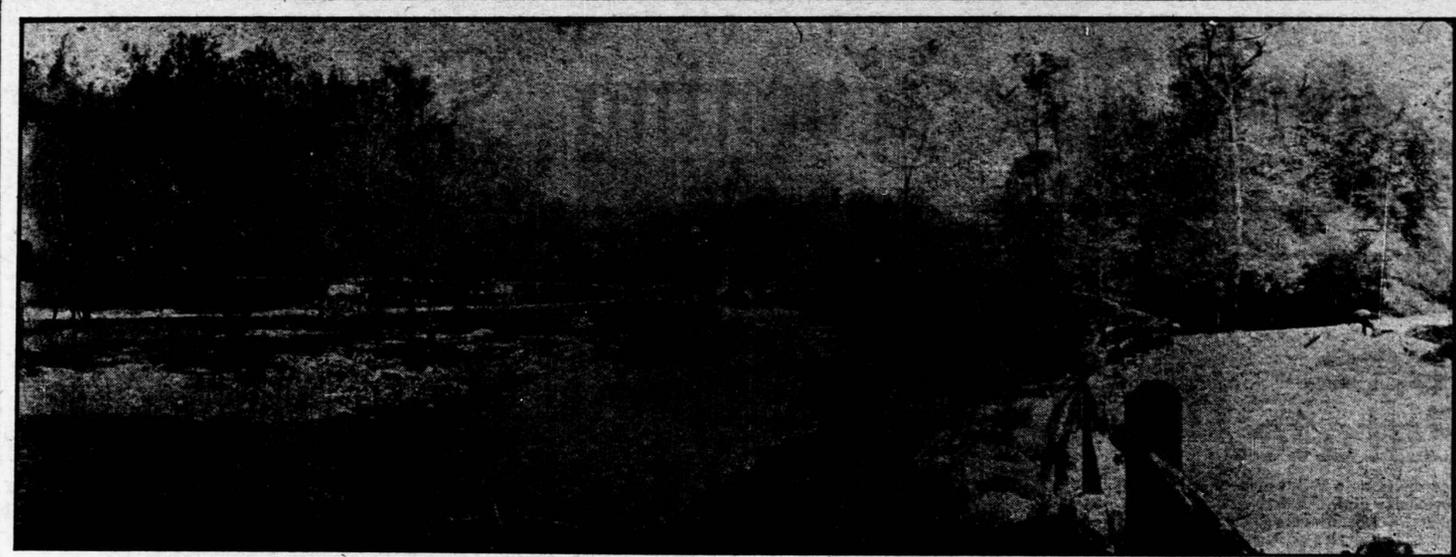
A New Rental Idea.

A new idea in this city along the line of facilitating the renting of office rooms has been put into operation by the A. F. Fox Company, which has charge of the renting of the office-room portion of the new building which the Metropolitan National Bank has erected on 15th street on the site of the building which it occupied for so many years.

OUR NATURAL BRIDGES.

World's Greatest Ones So Far as Known Are in Utah.

From the National Geographic Magazine. It is not generally known that the three greatest natural bridges in the world—at



PANORAMIC VIEW IN ROCK CREEK JUST NORTH OF PIERCE MILL.

(Photo by Staff Photographer.)

least so far as present knowledge goes are located in an almost inaccessible portion of southeastern Utah.

The country is uninhabited and uninhabitable for the greater part, the only settlement of any account being the small town called Bluff, on the San Juan river, and the nearest railroad station being Dolores, in Colorado, 105 miles eastward.

The country of the natural bridges can be reached via Bluff, going by wagons to the latter place, then on horseback with pack train.

Last year a member of the National Geographic Society equipped an expedition with surveyors and artists and sent it out to make a careful study of the bridges. No one should think of going into this region without having thoroughly studied all the conditions. The few guides that have been there have a very limited knowledge of the country, and the main and side canons so cut up the country that a party may easily become lost.

No one there has a very limited knowledge of the country, and the main and side canons so cut up the country that a party may easily become lost. The August bridge is the largest, the measurements being: Height, 255 feet; span, 320 feet; width in narrowest part, 35 feet, and thickness, 85 feet.

Next comes the Caroline bridge, with height, 182 feet; span, 250 feet; width, 40 feet, and thickness, 60 feet. The smallest is the slender, graceful Edwin bridge; height, 111 feet; span, 205 feet; width, 30 feet, and thickness, 50 feet.

The August bridge was so named in honor of the wife of Horace J. Long, who there visited the bridges company with James Scourp. Mr. Scourp, it appears, had visited these bridges previous to this time, and in showing Long the way to estimate the height of the bridge, he was named the Caroline, after his (Scourp's) mother.

So far as Scourp knew, the bridges were first discovered by Emory Knowles in 1853, and he himself visited them in company with two cowboys, Tom Hall and Jim Jones, in the fall of that year.

The next party to visit this section, so far as known, was that promoted by the Salt Lake Commercial Club during the winter and spring of 1905. The Edwin bridge was named at this time after Edwin F. Holmes, who organized that party and who also equipped the latest expedition.

CURIOSITIES OF MEASUREMENT.

Different Lengths of a Mile—How a Road was Determined.

From the London Globe.

The standard yard prevails throughout the United Kingdom, but the length of the English, Scots and Irish mile is different in each, which is the more curious, seeing that the English and American miles are identical. But the occasional local variations in our English are also even more remarkable. These were perhaps originally due to the inexactitudes of ancient land surveying, which was comparatively of such a free and easy description that the acres of neighboring counties, not to say adjacent parishes, sometimes varied.

A book published in the reign of Edward VI gives the following curious naïve instructions on the subject: "Stand at the door of a church on Sunday and bid sixteen men to stop, tall ones and small ones, as they happen to pass out. Then make them put their left feet one behind the other, and the length thus obtained shall be a right and lawful road to measure the land with, and the sixteenth part of it shall be a right and lawful foot."

This is almost laughable; but we have only to apply to one of the older dictionaries to find that anything like exactness, whether of definition or of fact, is quite a modern scientific development. And the story of the acre is a case in point. It was supposed to have been reduced to a common standard in 1320, but it was not until 1824 that we enacted the statute of 4,840 square yards.

With the loose system of measurement prevailing for the greater part of that long interval, it is not surprising that the so-called "acre" was not so often what the local wisewoman happened to make of it. By long use and wont it seems probable that the discrepancies thus arising occasionally crystallized into customs, of which some examples are given in the following. Formerly twice as large as an English one, while a Scottish acre is larger than ours by more than 1,000 square yards.

According to authorities there are seven different measures still in use, which the acre may be variously defined. Lancashire has her borders acres measured on a customary local scale, while the so-called Cheshire acre is even larger than that of its Welsh neighbor.

HOLLYHOCK'S BEAUTY

AN OLD-FASHIONED FLOWER LATELY COME INTO FAVOR.

From the New York Sun.

A city man who saw in front of a place where flowering plants were offered for sale a placard reading "Hollyhocks" was a little surprised thereat, because he had an idea that the hollyhock was a homely, old-fashioned flower peculiar to older times and to the country and to smaller towns and villages. He remembered himself a time when in such localities pretty nearly everybody had hollyhocks, perhaps a garden of them along on either side of a road path, or such rows bordering the walk from the street to the front door of the house. He recalled how the bees used to get into hollyhocks, and how he used to close up a flower with a bee in it, break the flower from the stalk and hold it up to hear the imprisoned bee buzz.

This man had always liked the tall holly-

BROKER AND CLIENT

THEIR RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER DISCUSSED.

From the London Globe.

The news that the house of lords committee is once more to inspect the ruined frescoes of the palace of Westminster, for himself at a much lower figure, merely utilizing the broker to send buyers to him.

Palace Frescoes.

The real estate brokers of Washington should adopt a form of agency agreement," E. C. Brainerd, a real estate broker, said, "which is fair to the principal and of which no agent who wants to do a legitimate business can justly complain. Conditions would improve and real estate will become very much more salable just as soon as the better class of real estate firms refuse to handle property where the owners have placed it in the hands of numerous agents to sell, and in addition reserve the right to sell it themselves.

A Case in Point.

"A broker cannot guard an owner's interest unless he knows that he is backed up by the owner. For instance, if a broker is offered \$10,000 for a piece of property by a man whom he thinks he can work up to \$12,000, the owner should make him feel safe while he does so. Do not put him in a position where, unless he closes the sale at the lower price, he will find the property sold by another broker to the same customer, or by the owner direct, a unique establishment in the east end of London, prior to being handed over to the agents for sale. The place in question is the pet's or skins are gently deposited. Then they are put into a huge shallow tank and covered over with a liquid containing certain chemical ingredients. After being in steep for some time, parties of men, barefooted and bare legged to the knee, tread about backward and forward, day after day, for a certain period upon each particular skin, and it is this application of the human foot that brings the skins back to a perfect state of pliability.

Big Game Shooting.

How Animal Skins From the Tropics Are Treated.

From the London Tit-Bits.

The many big game shooters among wealthy Britons who go to far distant and wild countries where the lion, the tiger and so on are to be found are always particularly anxious to preserve and to have set up for home display the skins of the animals that have fallen a prey to their prowess.

Unfortunately, the skins thus obtained have often to be treated in a very primitive style in the first instance, from the taxidermist and fur dresser's point of view, and only in a measure should protecting and imperfect preparations they arrive in England as stiff as boards. So stiff and brittle are they, indeed, that unless they were gently handled they would break up into fragments.

Some of the rarest and most beautiful skins in the world are treated at a unique establishment in the east end of London, prior to being handed over to the agents for sale. The place in question is the pet's or skins are gently deposited. Then they are put into a huge shallow tank and covered over with a liquid containing certain chemical ingredients. After being in steep for some time, parties of men, barefooted and bare legged to the knee, tread about backward and forward, day after day, for a certain period upon each particular skin, and it is this application of the human foot that brings the skins back to a perfect state of pliability.

Open-Air Sleeping.

From Country Life.

It is not too much to say that to the delicate, highly strung, easily knocked out individual the advantages of sleeping in the open air are enormous. Failed checks take on a ruddy hue, colds are unknown, nerves are forgotten and irritability becomes a phase of the past. A little rest and a little perseverance are the only necessities, and the result is assured.



LOOKING WEST ON G STREET FROM 9TH STREET NORTHWEST.

(Photo by Staff Photographer.)

hock with its big, bright flowers, but he had supposed—this, perhaps, because he lives in the city—that the homely old plant had sort of passed out of fashion until he saw that placard reading "Hollyhocks, and then he learned that in recent years there has been in a way a hollyhock revival, and that now hollyhocks are in demand and increasing in favor.

There would still be found, it was said, in places such as those in which the inquirer had once seen them, the old-fashioned hollyhocks, planted and growing now as ever, though they might now in such places not be seen so commonly, but there were now more varieties of hollyhocks, and these newer or comparatively newer varieties are now to be seen in many places in the suburbs, as they would also be found on the largest and finest of country estates, used in the places last mentioned as adornments of perennial flower beds, or it might be as hedges.

The old-fashioned single hollyhock may still be bought, but the newer double hollyhocks are the kinds now most in demand, and there is now what is called an ever flowering hollyhock, this because it blooms through the season, while the old hollyhock blossomed for a time only and then ceased. While the old-fashioned hollyhock had its flowers simply scattered along at intervals

which are for the purpose to be disinterred from beneath the wallpaper long since drawn over them as a means of decently burying the remains of what had been the young hope of a nation's enthusiasm, once more draws attention to this highly important question of mural paintings in London. These frescoes were themselves the result of a commission, and the fact that this body so poorly understood the atmosphere of their own city that they sanctioned a series of works which, though admirable themselves, could not last for half a century, may perhaps suggest a modest estimate as to the probable outcome of the present inquiry. It seems, however, to be forgotten that the price consort's passion for fresco, which was mainly responsible for the ruined frescoes in the palace, also originated another set in the summer house of Buckingham palace. Men like Landseer, Eastlake, Leslie, Maclean, Dyce and Stanfield worked at these panels, and so long since as 1846 they were published with a preface by Mrs. Jameson. Nothing is heard nowadays of either frescoes or illustration, though the question naturally arises at a juncture like the present as to whether they have fared any better than those in the house of lords. Can any of our readers throw light on the subject?

who wishes to sell should not have a lot of agents working at cross-purposes, each making unwarranted concessions in the hope of closing a sale before some competitor does so.

Where a Mistake is Made.

"The experienced owner or large holder of real estate generally knows when and how to sell, but the great majority go wrong. The average owner thinks he must get it in the hands of as many brokers as possible, and that is where he makes a fatal mistake. For should any of these brokers find a buyer he dare not hold out for the highest price and best terms. Should he do so, the customer is apt to go to another broker or direct to the owner to see if he can't do better.

"The first broker, therefore, is often inclined to intimate that he can sell the property at a much lower price than the owner would actually take, in order if possible to close the bargain before some one else takes it from him, leaving him no profit for all his pains. Thousands of properties are listed on the sales books of many of the real estate firms that are also listed with a dozen other firms, and in many cases an owner will give a broker a fancy price, expecting to secure a buyer

SEEKING THE COUNTRY

One of the Tendencies in the Realty Market.

PROPERTY IN THE SUBURBS

What People Usually Want in Homes Away From City.

MODERN CONVENIENCES NEEDED

Light and Air Expensive in the Modern City, But Much Cheaper Beyond Urban Limits.

The spring is the time to sell property in the country. There is no question about the truth of that proposition, as it has behind it experience, and a good deal of it. Places in the country seem to have no attraction for the average person in the market during the fall or winter months, but when the spring comes men set to work natural for most people to have their thoughts turn toward rural life.

This tendency is not brought about by any outside influences, but appears to be one of those natural movements which observers of human nature note in the course of the study of men and women and of what they do and why they do it. Everybody does not choose to live in the country, but there are many who would like to have a place away from paved streets. At this time of the year, as stated, this feeling finds expression more than at any other, and may be accounted for by the fact that when warm weather arrives it is natural to want to have as much space about one as possible, so that the quarters which were cozy and comfortable during the balance of the year appear small and stuffy when the first hot days come.

They Get It in the Country.

Some want to live out of the city to get more room in their houses, others because they like to have a little bit of lawn space about them, where grass and trees and shrubbery will grow, and perhaps where there will be room for a chicken run and a bit of garden. Then, too, there is more chance for the children—places where they can run without being checked by the policeman or of becoming a nuisance to neighbors. There are many other reasons, but there is also another reason, and that is, people want to make their homes in houses where the light and air are abundant, and where there is an abundance of these necessities which it is said cost nothing, but which in the evolution of modern life in cities has become one of the most expensive items in household expenses.

Light and Air Cheap.

It is a great experience for the average householder to have light on all sides of his house and to be able to open windows on two, at least, sides of his room. It is a joy that lasts a good while to have the open air and yet not in the public eye. To the householder who reads a little, the porch is a great resource, not only for rest, but for health.

The advantages of living away from the crowded centers are numerous, and the marvelous growth of the suburbs of the cities in this country furnish substantial evidence of the fact. Development along the same lines have gone on in the vicinity of this city, so that today the population of the city is not so far from the territory of the West, but long ago crossed the boundary lines and occupies the contiguous land in the states of Virginia and Maryland.

Not Real Suburbs.

To a large extent the suburban development of the city has been not so much an addition to the city as an extension. It is true, at the beginning the various subdivisions started with the separation between the houses and an abundance of room. Then as the population increased the houses got closer and closer, until today they are built in rows, and when one goes beyond the old boundaries the result is difficult to recognize that fact from the character of the building.

In fact, some doubt is expressed as to whether this is as any suburbs in the usual meaning of that term. The practice is so general of building on one side of a wide street, or if the opportunity comes a portion is sold there, and the result is a lot set in the middle of a lot, with ample space on both sides. It looks as if the builders of these homes are not in the city, and as it has happened, this expectation has not been very far wrong.

The City Facilities.

There is another characteristic about property seekers in this market, but it is by no means peculiar to this city, and that is the desire and the expectation of people who live in the country to take with them all the comforts and the conveniences to their country homes they have in their city homes. With sewer, lighting and water facilities in connection with rapid street car transit there is no reason why a house located in the country should not be as comfortable as the center of the city should not be highly eligible in this market. In fact such a house would have all the advantages of the city, with the added benefit of plenty of light and air and space, both inside and out.

What Is to Be Done.

The mere consideration of distance from the business center would not weigh very heavily against it in the mind of the average purchaser. Some day property away from the city proper is going to be more generally developed in that way, so that people can find in a house everything they want, and in addition the best of the attractions and facilities which come from its location away from the rush of the throng.

It may seem unreasonable on the part of the public to have such wants as that and to expect out in the country to live exactly as they do in the city. But in spite of that view of the matter, the reasonableness or unreasonableness of such expectations there is no manner of doubt about their being entertained. There are, of course, those who are willing to go without these modern facilities of living, and they become the pioneers, and blaze the way, so to speak, and after a while the close built-up streets come out to them, and then, of course, comes what are known as modern conveniences.

BERLIN POSTAL TUBES.

Connect the Central Office With the Principal Stations.

From the Chicago Tribune.

The Berlin postal authorities are revolutionizing the conveyance of letters and parcels. The idea on which they are experimenting is to have an underground tube with a large enough circumference to admit a man in a stooping posture. These tubes are to connect the central post office with the principal stations and with the district offices.

Two sets of rails are built in this tube or tunnel, one over the other, not side by side. The upper set of rails is supported on the sides of the tube, thus practically dividing it in two. Small carriages, running on two wheels, are automatically driven by electricity along these rails.

No locomotive is used nor is there any attendant with the carriage. As many as six of these carriages can be run together for conveying letters and parcels from the arrival station to the central post office and thence to the various districts, or vice versa.

By this means letters can be delivered in any part of the city in less than a fourth of the time formerly required. So far the scheme is not beyond the experimental stages, but it promises to be a success and the banish from the streets the mail van, with all its poetry and romance.

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PANORAMIC VIEW FROM ELEVENTH STREET, LOOKING EAST ACROSS LINCOLN PARK.

(Photo by Staff Photographer.)