

Outlook Optimistic for 1921

(Continued From Page One)

be relieved of the excess profits tax millstone. I believe the business skies are brightening and that within a few weeks we will see evidence of stability and increased activities in all lines. The present situation calls for patriotic optimism and cooperative action. We must approach our readjustment problems with the same spirit of patriotism as that which characterized our activities during the war.

The business man must be satisfied with a fair profit; and labor must strive for the highest efficiency in production. There must be no "slackers" anywhere along the line. The policy of demanding a maximum wage for a minimum production is economically unsound. We are now paying the penalty for such an absurdity. We must all make up our minds to work more, spend less, and be satisfied with a fair wage and a fair profit. Such a policy will help materially in clarifying the commercial atmosphere and in bringing us back to normal.

By HARRISON WALTERS,
President of the Building Contractors' Association of Indianapolis.

ANY ATTEMPT to forecast the outlook for building and construction work for 1921 to be other than pure guesswork must take into careful consideration many and varying factors, some natural and incident to the business at all times, and some arising entirely out of the present peculiar conditions incident to the readjustment of all business.

Natural influences are without doubt the predominating factors at this time. It is difficult to see any indication of a season of exceptional activity.

These factors might be generally summarized as follows:

Need of new construction and reconstruction due to normal progress.

Catching up work deferred on account of war activities and abnormal war-time costs.

Supply of labor.

Supply of materials.

Transportation.

Consideration of these factors singly and in their relation to each other shows an unusually favorable outlook.

CONSTRUCTION NEED ACUTE

The need for new construction is acute, especially in housing, to the extent of being a national problem. Schools and educational institutions are in such condition as to seriously impair their efficiency due to lack of buildings and extensions.

Recent reports of investigations of our State institutions show conditions that are shocking beyond belief. Modern, safe, sanitary buildings must be provided at once if we are to avoid the consequences of actual criminal neglect.

Deferred private projects, many with plans completed and publicly announced, amount to a large volume.

Labor is plentiful and as a consequence shows a marked tendency to increase its efficiency. An excessive surplus of labor is never a desirable condition, but a healthy competition is the most effective stimulus to maximum production.

Labor that has a healthy interest in its job very quickly disposes of the strike agitator and petty trouble maker.

Material supplies are available in practically all lines, with stocks on hand or production facilities to insure deliveries.

Transportation shows a decided improvement.

All of these conditions are favorable, in fact, would seem to indicate an ideal situation with respect to supply and demand.

The most important and really determining factor is, of course, in capital necessary to finance construction enterprises, without which the need, however

urgent, cannot be translated into demand. Herein the unnatural or special factors incident to the times have a very great influence.

PLEASING BUT MISLEADING.

Public improvements must depend wholly upon taxes and a very vital issue is raised at once regarding tax revisions. Already many short-sighted policies are being considered—some going so far as to advocate curtailment of all public improvements, under the pleasing but entirely misleading name of economy. These economists seem utterly incapable of grasping the fundamental principle that the source of all taxation is the earnings of capital and the earnings of labor, and both must be kept constantly at work and earning. Diversion of present tax income to the most useful and beneficial purposes of public improvement should and doubtless will be given serious consideration.

Announcements of prices of building material will in a great measure affect the situation. Radical reduction of prices is very unlikely. A tendency toward stabilization of price levels is to be expected and will undoubtedly create a feeling of confidence on the part of investors in new construction. Profit returns from finished usable structures can safely be expected to far outstrip economies gained by waiting lowered costs for a period of at least several years.

Suggested revision of Federal income tax looking toward exemption of income derived from and income invested in home building would undoubtedly stimulate home owning as well as attract investors.

Careful consideration of all phases of the situation falls to reveal any reason why building and construction industry should not proceed with confidence on the part of all, especially when we consider that this industry is very closely interlinked with our industrial system and consequently must move proportionately with all other lines, and the further fact that the keenest minds of the greatest industrial country on earth are concentrated on the problem of a safe adjustment to normal conditions.

By GEORGE C. CALVERT,
Manager Indianapolis Clearing House.

LEARNING house statistics do not furnish an exact representation of economic conditions, but they are a very reliable indication and, so considered, form an interesting and informing illustration of activities in the field of commerce. Following, month by month, are the Indianapolis clearings in even thousands of dollars for 1919 and 1920:

	1919	1920
January	67,409	81,863
February	49,115	73,428
March	57,917	84,546
April	62,167	75,317
May	62,811	78,308
June	64,383	81,281
July	56,044	87,560
August	73,554	81,453
September	72,451	77,039
October	71,987	75,444
November	71,144	70,468
December	76,510	72,000
Total	810,109	941,930

The entire year of 1920 shows a gain in the volume of clearings over the preceding year amounting to nearly \$132,000,000, but it also shows a marked break in the line of advance occurring in the late summer and continuing to diminish in succeeding months. These figures generally correspond in time with the lowering movement in commodity prices and I think chiefly reflect diminishing costs rather than diminishing volume of business, although it is undoubtedly true that there has been

a considerable diminution in volume of business. It is true to say that this country, as well as the rest of the world, is in the throes of a drastic economic readjustment; and this process, while well advanced, is by no means complete. Economic readjustment means inevitable economic friction because the various elements that enter into our economic life do not change instantaneously and concurrently as at the touch of a magic wand. Changes are effected slowly by action and reaction, by struggle and compromise, until in time, by the sure processes of natural law, a harmonious balance of interests and activities is restored. Receiverships and strikes, legislative nostrums and commercial depression are manifestations of this economic friction; and it is impossible that the world should accomplish its new adjustment of interests and values without feeling the pangs of the process. Indianapolis has thus far fared well (although it could not entirely escape a share of trouble) and the promise for the new year is good. Our banks have for a long time been carrying a heavy load of loans and money has been "tight." Loans are still heavy, but the movement toward liquidation has begun. We are undoubtedly working toward a sounder economic condition, but it is a movement which must be accomplished with caution and with conservative intelligence and cooperation of all branches of productive enterprise.

By JOHN B. REYNOLDS,
General Secretary of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.

EVERYTHING indicates that 1921 will be a good year for Indianapolis. Many retailers have had the best Christmas business in their history. One local department store did more business on the Monday before Christmas than on any other two days in its half-century existence. One large business before Dec. 18 than it did in the entire month of December, 1919. The volume of photograph business in one music house practically equaled that of last year. There is no reason why retailers should not have a continued increase during the coming year.

Indianapolis jobbers have been making time considerably for the last sixty days. Not only have orders been slow in coming in, but because of the shutdown of factories over the country, merchandise has been even harder to secure than it was back in the times of under-production. However, what is true of Indianapolis retailers is true of retailers over the entire Indianapolis territory. Merchants have enjoyed practically growing monthly and yearly business, when they anticipated having much less, with the result that they are generally starting the first of the year with smaller stocks than they have carried for years. This can mean only one thing: an immediate resumption of buying as soon as inventories are taken.

Manufacturing in Indianapolis during the last thirty days has been very spotty. Some food lines, such as the packing industry, have been going ahead at practically 100 per cent. In some other lines, such as the manufacture of automobiles, production has dropped considerably, though most people seem to forget that during the month of December and the first two weeks in January automobile factories are frequently closed, or running with greatly reduced forces.

Indianapolis industry is so diversified that there is no reason why there should not be plenty of work for every one during the coming year. Furniture men expect to open up immediately after the Grand Rapids show, although they may not be running at full capacity until spring.

Indianapolis is a quality automobile manufacturing city. The Stutz, the Marmon, the H. C. S., the Premier, the National, the Cole and the Lafayette are not ordinary cars and do not sell for low prices. The prospective purchasers

of such automobiles have not been so shaken by the period of readjustment through which we have passed as have been the buyers of cheaper cars, which are not produced here in any quantity.

I look for a quick return to normal times in the city. There is nothing, in my opinion, to prevent a healthy business should be on the road to normal within a few weeks. There will be plenty of home-building this spring and summer, and I hope that sensible plans for improving and beautifying Indianapolis will not be forgotten. With the decrease in the price of steel there is no reason why the many contemplated business buildings should not be under actual construction as soon as weather opens up, and the revival of hitherto postponed work as well as the inquiries regarding new buildings.

A falling market, an increased demand for all classes of building, larger stocks of material on hand from which to draw, and the revival of hitherto postponed work as well as the inquiries regarding new buildings.

Banks in Indianapolis are in a healthy condition. This city has been known for years as a panic-proof city, and periods of readjustment such as we are passing through are handled with ease by Indianapolis financial institutions. Indianapolis is growing. It is estimated that the increase in population during 1920 was a little more than 10,000 people. There is no reason why it should not continue at about this same rate during the coming year.

Indianapolis is very fortunately situated, with its income balanced by both agriculture and industry. Its industrial base, as mentioned by the Chamber of Commerce, is as follows:

By JOSEPH J. SCHMID,
President of the Indianapolis Real Estate Board.

THE outlook for real estate business in 1921 looks promising for several reasons, as follows:

The builder is not able up to this time to show any reduction in labor, and this forms quite an item in construction. The prospective home builder is putting off until he actually knows that he will be able to build for less in 1921 than in 1920. However, there are a number of items that enter into the construction that are already reduced, such as plumbing, lumber and cement.

The latter part of 1920 found quite a number of buyers saying they would wait until the drop in real estate came before buying, as they thought it was too high. The possibility for any marked reduction in 1921 is unlikely for the reason that the growth in Indianapolis has been steady and healthy. Let us assume that some buyers paid just a little more in 1920 than they might possibly pay in 1921, but they have enjoyed their homes by having been settled, and permitting them to pursue their occupation without having the load on their mind as to how they might have to take care of housing their families in 1921.

There are a good many of the older houses in Indianapolis that will be purchased, some remodeled and changed to the required needs of families that possibly could not be reproduced under new construction for from 75 to 75 per cent more than what they will pay for the older property.

So with this situation before us it looks as though 1921 should be a good year and the usual investor is buying now and always will.

By WILSON B. PARKER,
President Indianapolis Architects' Association.

A year ago, any attempt to forecast building activities for 1920 would have been purely speculative, but the prospects for the coming season are apparently so well substantiated by recent conditions that the future appears very promising.

While last year was not dull in the building line, as evidenced by the volume represented in the building permits, it was fraught with much concern for owners and builders, with high prices, uncertain deliveries and protracted delays, and the character of the work limited to a large degree to chiefly industrial expansion.

Since the beginning of the war, architects have been under more or less stress, dating from the total abandonment of all except purely essential building, to the following uncertain years when prohibitive costs caused the cancellation or postponement of numerous projects.

Hence the hopeful tendencies now manifest in the offices of the architects may prove a fairly safe criterion that an era of much building is now under way. The reasons appear to be as follows:

A falling market, an increased demand for all classes of building, larger stocks of material on hand from which to draw, and the revival of hitherto postponed work as well as the inquiries regarding new buildings.

A falling market benefits both owner and builder, the owner in case he builds on a per cent basis, and the contractor who is now able to submit a flat price without undue concern. Peak prices have no longer prevailing a builder can figure with the knowledge that his maximum price will not increase with new and fluctuating reports, and he must cover himself in order to come out whole.

Labor apparently is more temperate in its demands, and exhibiting saner ideas regarding the meaning of a full day's work. In consequence, those contemplating building find it now possible to build without fear of starting on an adventure into the realm of the unknown, and the speculative builder is enabled to plan his operations with an assurance of profit. Reports from material and supply houses indicate a readjustment of prices for the coming year. In addition, the many reductions already noted. Comparative prices of a few materials when at the peak of high costs, with current market prices are encouraging, as shown in this brief schedule:

	1919-20	1920-21
Cement, per bbl.	\$ 4.25	\$ 3.25
Com. brick, per M.	17.50	17.50
Fram. Lumber, per M.	21.00	45.00
Multiple flooring, per M.	210.00	135.00
Y. P. flooring, per M.	120.00	80.00
Steel, per ton	105.00	68.00
As. P. Glass, 40	40	27

Skilled labor prices will perhaps vary little, but common labor will be cut down to a considerable degree, advice from other States pointing to a drop of 15 per cent to 30 per cent decrease.

The demand is still greater than the supply for all classes of buildings, and now for the first time in three years it would seem as if the opportunity to build without fear had arrived.

Store rooms are greatly needed, office space is at a premium, and the housing situation practically unsolved. School buildings, postponed from insufficient funds to meet high costs, will this season be resumed, likewise many hospitals, community buildings and hotels, while a greater activity in church erection is apparent.

With factories now with increased stock and warehouses again being filled, material should be more easily obtainable, and the former trouble of failure to obtain shipments, not a present cause for building delays and loss of time.

Reports from builders and architects throughout the State indicate preparations for handling a busy year.

By DWIGHT A. MURPHY,
President of the Indianapolis Association of Credit Men.

IN the days of John Barleycorn it was not an infrequent occurrence for individuals and offices groups of individuals on New Year's Eve to engage in a celebration of the arrival of the New Year. Sometimes the celebration ended in a drunken debauch which left the participants in a more or less serious condition, the seriousness being governed by the degree in which the participants disregarded the natural laws governing eating and drinking. The time for recovery of the victims depended on the extent in which these laws were violated and on the constitution of the offender. To some the debauch proved fatal.

For the last few years business has been on a kind of a "spree." Economic laws seemed no longer to rule and business, some of it, "lost its head." It seemed to lose sight of the fact that sometime the price peak must be reached and the frenzy of buying come to an end. The peak was reached, the demand did recede, cancellations began to be frequent, and we have arrived at the "day after" stage. Business has a headache. To those individuals and business enterprises that have most flagrantly violated the laws and rules of the game it may prove fatal. All business will bear the resultant marks of its orgy, but that portion which is fundamentally sound will recover. Nineteen hundred twenty-one will be the period of recovery. As usual, during the period of recovery, the patient will have time to do some very straight, careful thinking along the line of business ethics which will result in a better business conscience. Conscience is the good for business as it is for an individual. A better business conscience means fewer cancellations of orders, less perpetration of fraud, more truthfulness in financial statements, fewer suspicious fires, establishment of courts of commercial arbitration and, best of all, a finer sense of confidence, respect and cooperation among all business men.

Prosperous times are wasteful times. A ready market and wide margins of profit result in rising wages, lower labor efficiency, and a laxness in business management. We already have a declining market and 1921 will doubtless see some reduction in wages and a great improvement in the efficiency of labor. The loss of a job by an indifferent workman will have a tendency to make him work on his toes and his credit will be high. The coming year will see, in the words of J. H. Tregoe, secretary of the National Association of Credit Men, "a great reduction in labor cost if not in the labor wage."

Nothing short of a business depression could bring about this corrected condition.

Another, and probably the greatest aid to the recovery of business, lies in the hands of the credit men of the country; the men who pass on the extension of credit. The National Association of Credit Men is made up of representatives of more than 33,000 of this country's leading business firms. These men are constantly studying all the elements that are essential to a business enterprise and entitled to credit. Many a business has been saved by them and its creditors by the wise, constructive criticism of an alert credit man. Because a bill cannot be paid when due does not necessarily prove the debtor either crooked or insolvent. In 1921 there will be a more widespread cooperation between creditor and debtor than ever before. Arbitrarily to close in on a delinquent debtor and compel a receivership or bankruptcy proceedings will not be the rule in 1921. Deposition will prevail to the end that the debtor as well as the creditor may be saved. This sort of spirit, and this alone, will save many a business enterprise in this crisis.

Another recognized agency which will have a stabilizing effect on business and should contribute to its speedy recovery is the Federal reserve system, which includes the possibility of a money panic. Summed up, business has been on a drunk, is now sobered up, is thinking seriously now to bring order out of confusion, and its creditors by the wise, constructive criticism of an alert credit man. Because a bill cannot be paid when due does not necessarily prove the debtor either crooked or insolvent. In 1921 there will be a more widespread cooperation between creditor and debtor than ever before. Arbitrarily to close in on a delinquent debtor and compel a receivership or bankruptcy proceedings will not be the rule in 1921. Deposition will prevail to the end that the debtor as well as the creditor may be saved. This sort of spirit, and this alone, will save many a business enterprise in this crisis.

By WILLIAM F. EVANS,
Prosecuting Attorney.

I ENTER the office of prosecuting attorney with no entangling alliances. I have called about me, deputies who, I believe, will function efficiently in the places to which they have been respectively assigned. I shall constantly strive to enforce the law. I do not believe that a lax policy of law enforcement is popular. On the contrary, most people expect their prosecuting at-

torney, at all times, to endeavor honestly, conscientiously and faithfully to enforce the law as it is. I expect to be criticised by many, but I hope that my administration will meet with the approval of those people in this community who really want to see the law enforced.

By WILLIAM T. RASMUSSEN,
County Inheritance Tax Appraiser.

THE business of this office has been increasing heavily the last year and we have tried to handle it with the greatest care and in the shortest possible time. In compiling our yearly report we find that our work for one year and six months was within 5 per cent of the entire business of the previous six years, which goes to prove that the attorneys practicing probate law in the county of Marion have waked up to the fact that the law of inheritance plays a very important part in the handling and settling of estates.

There are perhaps 250 of the 750 or more attorneys practicing law in the county who handle probate work and we are trying to give them our cooperation and very best help in this particular practice. We fully believe that the coming year will bring an increased revenue from this office. In view of the fact that we have established new methods of handling and disposing of estates, such as having every administrator or executor of any estate file a report in this office, giving in detail all assets and liabilities, no matter how small. Also a method by which all real estate belonging to the estate of a deceased person can be so checked in the clerk's and recorder's office, as to clear all title in any estate being settled or sold.

Each year has shown us where our methods can be improved and we aim to give our very best efforts to aid in this particular phase of law work.

By ROBERT F. DAGGETT,
President Architectural League of Indianapolis.

THE Architectural League of Indianapolis is an association organized for the purpose of bringing about a closer fellowship and cooperation of the architects, sculptors, landscape architects, draughtsmen, painters, decorators and all the allied arts as counsellors or dealers.

Indianapolis offers a fertile field for the activities of just such an organization, because the public is awakening rapidly to the significance and value of good design in architecture and an appreciation of the place of all the allied arts in our scheme of living. The city planning movement is already an established fact. The league, as a whole, will be able to make its influence felt through its special committee on city planning, consisting of W. B. Parker, H. H. Brown and Merritt Harrison, which is prepared to cooperate with any of the authorities who may have control of the city planning problem.

An interesting course of lectures and exhibits has been planned for the winter months. They cover various phases of painting, ornamental iron work, sculpture modeling and landscape work. The next lecture, on Jan. 11, will be on "The Sculptor in Architecture." It will deal more particularly with terra cotta modeling and will be given by a representative of a leading terra cotta company of Chicago. All of these lectures and exhibits, which are given absolutely free at the Art Institute, are the means of increasing public appreciation.

The league is responsible for the local atelier of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, which is a national organization offering a system of instruction in architecture, decoration and sculpture, similar to that of the Ecole-des-Beaux-Arts of Paris. Several problems have already been sent in to New York for judgment and interest among students is increasing. At a recent judgment in New York the following awards were received by students of the atelier: R.

Karl Galbraith, Class A, second medal; E. E. Davenport, Class B, mention; F. M. Manker, Class B, mention.

Other activities which are contemplated are a competition for several types of plans for small houses, publicity for good architecture by means of a series of well written articles for the public press, similar publicity for the artists and sculptors of the community and an effort to establish in the public schools a course in the appreciation of architecture, city planning, and the allied arts.

The officers of the league are Robert F. Daggett, president; Harold Haven Brown, first vice president; Mrs. Myra Richards, second vice president; Clarence T. Myers, secretary, and Fernor S. Cannon, treasurer.

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PROMISES BOOST FOR PLAYGROUND

Park Board Wishes One in Every 5-Block Radius.

Plans to increase the number of city playgrounds until there is one within five blocks of every child in the more thickly settled districts are under consideration by the board of park commissioners. Acquisition of land adjacent to ten public school buildings for installation of play plots thereon is being discussed. This would make a total of forty such places in the congested sections. Schools where land may be bought are as follows:

No. 3, Rural and Washington streets;

No. 22, South Talbott and Arizona streets; No. 24, North and Agnes streets;

No. 44, Twenty-First and Sugar Grove streets; No. 35, Capitol avenue and Twenty-Eighth street; No. 41, Rader and Thirtieth streets; No. 58, Linwood and New York streets; No. 65, Eleventh street and Traub avenue; No. 70, Central avenue and Forty-Sixth street, and No. 43, Fortieth street and Capitol avenue.

Playground equipment could be installed on these additional lots at small cost, according to Superintendent of Parks James H. Lowry.

Special to The Times.

BROWNSTOWN, Ind., Dec. 31.—A telegram received here today stated that Mrs. Catherine Rodman, widow of the late Dr. William Martin Rodman, is dead at the home of her granddaughter, Mrs. George Klaus, in Belzoni, Miss.

Mrs. Rodman, who was past her eighty-sixth year, was for many years a resident of this city, but since the death of her husband, more than ten years ago, had made her home with the daughter at whose home she died, and another granddaughter, Mrs. Charles H. Kraus, Jr., of Indianapolis.

Funeral services will be held here Sunday at the Methodist Church, after which interment will be made by the side of her husband.

Report Shows Kansas Trade Court Is Busy

TOPEKA, Kan., Dec. 31.—The annual report to the new Kansas court of industrial relations to be submitted to Governor Allen today shows that since it was established it has had twenty-eight industrial cases docketed. Twenty-five of these cases were instituted by workers, two were instituted by the court on its own motion, and one was brought to the court by capital. In thirteen cases wage increases have been allowed and three cases wage increases have been denied.



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