ARCHITECTURE IN TEXAS.

Shall one look for architecture in the broad domain of this great pioneer state, shall one reasonably expect this art to have yet taken serious form where the pioneer stage is so shortly passed?

To those who understand the spirit of Texas, this query is answered in a determined and wholehearted affirmative.

Yes, Texas has the beginning of a great architecture and as rapidly developing vision and appreciation for the beauty of its future building as is to be found anywhere in America.

Tradition in architecture exists in the missions of the Spanish monks, where the splendid ruins, carefully treasured, stand on high rolling lands with clear and beautiful outline against an ever-azure sky. For the architect, Texas has a noble spirit to live his work with a tremendous seal to justly memorialize that spirit. The beauty of the spirit of freemen at the Alamo, told in as brilliant a heroism as exists in tradition of English-speaking races, is still the background of Texas character. We are only little over two generations beyond that inspiring age.

We have a state whose boundaries are those of an empire, whose wealth is annually amassing in tremendous measure, and whose resources in agriculture, minerals, manufacture and commerce have scarcely been more than entered upon. For the architect, these tell of a story yet to be written into brick and stone, upon a setting offering every opportunity, from the level, flower-carpeted
lands of the Coast to the broad, almost endless rolling reaches
of the plains with their lofty altitudes and their clear skies.

Twenty years ago the people of Texas were not ready for
serious study in architecture. Their cities were but the hasty and
unstudied building of a generation which had seen them change from
small hamlets to increased populations nearing the hundred thousand
mark. But the vision of the Texan is wide. He thinks in no small
terms. Once the reality of the future became apparent, the thought
of the Texas cities widened to receive and nurture architectural
beauty in a manner which would not have been true in the older
eastern cities in fifty years. That which is shown to be the
possibility of beauty is accepted and fostered almost immediately
and steps toward its realization are quickly begun.

The architects of the state are for the most part young
men, and their training has been largely in the universities of
the eastern states and in foreign travel. I know I am safely
stating their position when I say that not a single one of them
would exchange his practice for that of an architect in an eastern
metropolis. Here we see our buildings arising as the first measure
for the future, and for a future that will be a glorious one.
Bright skies, rich shrubbery, flowers in bloom and lawns in perfect
green for ten out of every twelve months; space wide and generous;
these are the settings which permit the building to soften into
perfect charm as it ages. As compared with the dull skies, the
closely spaced buildings, and the accumulation of dirt rather
than charm, the architect chooses the Texas setting. Our cities
are building at the present time, in ever-increasing number, sky-scraper office buildings, banks and hotels, but already the knowledge that congestion begets waste and loss is being appreciated and even this type of building is seeking larger sites and de-centralizing in its choice of sites. Space, of which we have a limitless abundance, can be used in a noble way, and I look for an appreciation of this in a new and more serious study through the coming decade. This year our schools have set the minimum measure of their schoolhouse sites at ten acres. This will make for beautiful community building with proper setting; room for beauty as well as room for play.

Above all, Texas changes rapidly. Where we plan for beauty this year, next year sees our first image well on its way toward reality and a wider imagination seeking further expanding of the possibility. We are today building in a city upon the distant plains of northwest Texas a technological college where, when we turned the first spade of soil, our plans had already been made for a college of six thousand students; ten years will see this approaching the fulfillment of that vision. The architecture of Texas must as it increases in the means to create noble building, perform embody the splendid history and character of the pioneers. It should never, because of the perpetuation of this character, lose itself completely in commonplace repetition of the cities of the Atlantic seaboard. Even as its opportunities are increasing and nearly measureless, so are its divergences real and full of meaning. Its acceptance of civic responsibility for building for
the future promises to architecture a rightful and enviable position and to the architect all opportunity for planning with an imagination stimulated to the most serious and sincere effort.

This, briefly, is architecture in Texas— an inspiring opportunity to see a tremendous spirit arise clothed in fitting form and grace.