HOUSTON IN RETROSPECT.
(By William Ward Watkin, in Texas Commercial News.)

Houston, as the most rapidly growing city of the Southwest, is attracting national attention. Is the growth sound? Is Houston a safe investment? Is the faith of the people of Houston in their city based on fact?

It was my privilege at this season of the year 1926 to be quoted in your magazine, telling of the city as I first saw it in 1910 (a city of one short business street), and of its amazing growth within 16 years.

As I look back upon it, with the ordinary conservatism of the New England Yankee, I really wonder why in 1910 Houston people expected to see the city lead the South. Except that nearly everything, except the people themselves, needed to be changed, I still fail to see the seed of the ambition. But there is no denying the ambition was there and was real.

Houston’s people — native-born Texas people — have made Houston their vision. Others have helped, others have become enthusiastic, but Houston has been self-made. I remember distinctly the saying, “Once you have tasted the water of Buffalo River, you will come back to Houston.” Why such an absurdity? No one ever drank those waters, splendid aridian water was the rule. I see in it an idealism — Houston’s friendliness — Houston’s hospitality — Houston’s fair play to all, was a charm which even oil-covered waters could not destroy.

If the picture of 1910 offered, as it surely did to the investor, opportunities, hidden but intensely real, we can with profit read again the words of Francis Bacon: “There is surely no great wisdom than well to time the beginnings and onsets of things.”

Houston, much as it has done, is in its infancy. Its ocean trade is only attracting its initial attention—its manufactory is in its swaddling clothes. Its farming territory is primitive—not a single element of ultimate dimension, but still it is itself diminutive.

Behind Houston lies a state empire, rich in untold wealth of every conceivable kind—it, too, is in its beginning.

In 1915 I had the temerity to suggest to the mayor of the city that time was opportune for the creation of a civic center. My scheme was modest (the clearing away of old buildings in two blocks from Travis to Lamar, and Commerce, that the new court house and the old city hall might—with open space in the center of the city—form a center)." Years have passed. This space has reached vast values, and a few weeks ago Houston voted a civic center about our new library, embracing some ten blocks of property. Whereas such an idea in 1915 was visionary in the extreme, in 1927 it is a commonplace and receives a popular vote of 6 to 1.

Cities grow according to the vision of the builders. Unity of purpose, directness of action and end, high-standing enthusiasm are the known attributes of Houston and its leading citizens. Faith in cities is faith in the individuals who make up the aims and ideals of their cities. Behind Houston a vast country beckons, rich with opportunity. Houston steps forward, ready to be at the forefront of its awakening.

THE STATE’S LOSS.
Dallas News.

Announcement that the inability of the two houses to agree on the location of the first of two state psychiatric hospitals provided for by the Thirty-Ninth legislature has resulted in failure to make any appropriation for the institution at all is not pleasing news. It is not a reassuring thought that the bickering of politics and legislative jealousy has occasioned a postponement of treatment that might save good citizens of the state.

The loss is not that of Dallas nor of Galveston. Either city would have been glad to add the psychiatric hospital to its available medical science resources. Dallas because the needed addition would have gone far toward perfecting its status as a great medical center for the Southwest, and Galveston because it would serve not only that purpose on a smaller scale, but would add to the constructive value of study and research in mental diseases at the State University. But in neither case has the city considered the desirability of location as a local matter. From the viewpoint of serving the greater number with greater facility of transportation, Dallas is the logical place for the first hospital. But the legislature would have served the state better in selecting either city rather than in no selection at all.

In providing for two psychiatric hospitals, the legislature recognized a need and took steps to arrange...