

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

By M. M. UPSON.*

Custom decrees that at each convention some statement be forthcoming from your president. Whether this is a penalty inflicted by the Institute upon itself or by a chief executive upon himself, deponent sayeth not. It is expected that I shall spread before you a detailed résumé of the unprecedented records of the past year, that you may be shown the pinnacles of 1927 achievements, and that you may be taken up to great heights from which the future of the industry may be viewed. To proceed upon this program I hesitate. My reason for my reluctance may be illustrated by an incident I experienced in California. I am sure you who hail from this wonderful golden state, which I so truly admire, will forgive a betrayal of one of its very few eccentricities.

I attended as a guest one of the celebrated Chamber of Commerce luncheons in the fair city of Los Angeles. It was held in the then new, beautiful and impressive Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel. I was told that there were twelve hundred people in attendance—ladies and gentlemen—seated in the spacious and highly decorated ballroom. It was an unusual sight—an inspiring spectacle. The president arose and addressed the meeting somewhat as follows: "Ladies and Gentlemen, Members and Guests of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles. You are assembled here today—the largest, the greatest Chamber of Commerce in all the world—here in this magnificent hotel, the most beautiful hotel edifice not only in this country but in all the world—here on this glorious day, this perfect California day, where we are blessed with the most wonderful weather in all the wide world. And while we are assembled it is fitting that I should tell you another record—one of our members has today paid his dues to this Chamber of Commerce for fifty years in advance,—an unprecedented accomplishment, a record before all the world!"

Imitative of our enthusiastic Californian, we can say with perfect truthfulness that we are here today assembled in the greatest convention that the American Concrete Institute has ever held.

It is fitting that we should step aside in our mad rush and pause to watch this procession of achievements as it passes by. The progress is rapid and sure, but unless we stop to measure the distance traveled we little appreciate how far we have come.

In 1904 we met to discuss machinery mixers, handling devices, forms, and the like. Today we use a vocabulary then unknown—workability, fine-

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ness modulus, water-cement ratio, inundation, etc., etc. They all constitute milestones to mark advancement, and seemingly they appear more and more frequently during recent years.

It is but yesterday that we learned to predetermine with pencil and paper the strength of a mixture given the physical characteristics of the aggregate. And it has been even later that we have been able to establish a control that gives a concrete of uniform strength and characteristics. We are blossoming from the bud of guesswork to the full and glorious bloom of scientific certainty.

With each development comes a new field of inquiry which promotes increased productivity. They all lead to two great goals; namely, better product and lesser cost.

The American Concrete Institute aims, first, to assemble these facts as they develop; and second, to pass them on to the concrete-using world. We gather and we sow. Education is as important as is development. What gain to the industry, if a favored few hide their bits of truth, and the great outside world sails blindly on ever encountering uncharted rocks, courting disaster after disaster?

The confidence of the public comes from satisfactory performance. One failure vitiates a dozen successes. The weak link determines the strength of the chain. For this reason your board of direction is endeavoring each year to extend the influence of the Institute. We were less than five hundred in 1920—we are now more than twenty-five hundred strong.

We find that we must secure and print longer and more expensive papers; that we must communicate more frequently and more intimately with our members. All of this costs money, and for that reason last year we increased our dues. The increase is small and we believe is justified by the accomplishments.

Consider the contributions to the industry that have been forthcoming in this convention. I shall point to but a few of the high lights:

Let your minds dwell for a moment on the influence upon the quality of the concrete work of the world if the Concrete Primer which Mr. McMillan has so ably assembled can be placed in the hands of our construction superintendents and foremen. A new light and a better understanding of old facts will guide them away from many pitfalls.

So, too, will Mr. Lord's paper and the E-1 report constitute a new bible of designing facts, of inestimable value to concrete engineering. These are illustrative of the milestones that make and guide our forward progress.

The co-operative effort of the cement manufacturer has also greatly aided. Early strength cement solves problems of construction and cost which have hitherto baffled our greatest skill. Better quality and more uniform quality of cement make possible increased economy and scientific control. Light aggregates are now approaching with a promise that they will open to cement, doors that heretofore have been completely closed.

It is astounding to observe how this young stranger (Mr. Portland

Cement), who first came to our shores from foreign lands only a little more than a quarter of a century ago, has found his way into the homes and hearts of our best construction families. First he was received only by retaining walls, foundations and dams. Then, that brilliant amalgamation with the steel family provided him entrée to seemingly every construction aristocracy: buildings, bridges, roads, docks, bulkheads, pipe, piles, bins, tanks and even ships. One by one the lords of construction have opened their doors to this young stripling, until his popularity has carried the industry off its feet.

Of the \$6,000,000,000 spent last year in construction, almost \$2,000,000,000 represent structures in which concrete is the dominant material. In other words, one-third of the money spent in building goes into structures which are essentially built of cement in one form or another. If all this can be accomplished in a little more than a quarter of a century, with no precedent or scientific data for a foundation, what, with our present knowledge, may be expected within the next 25 years?

Two years ago we stood aghast at a 300-ft. reinforced-concrete arch. Today we watch with equanimity the erection of a span covering 650 ft. Who dares to measure the accomplishments of the future?

As light aggregate finds its way into the industry in commercial quantities and at lower cost, many of our present limitations in design and construction will disappear. Again the avenues of advance open, and who can say how far they will lead. This is but one of a dozen new developments which are creeping into the industry. Our eyes are blurred and bewildered as we try to gaze into the future. The world lies at our feet!

Our able secretary has very aptly stated the aim of our organization: "To provide a comradeship in finding the best ways to do concrete work of all kinds, and in spreading that knowledge."

Here lies the strength of our effort—a society numbering 450 eight years ago—2,500 today, and possibly and probably 5,000 five years hence—each member working shoulder to shoulder in earnest and honest endeavor to find co-operative ways of helping the cement world.

All great commercial and industrial attainments are based on this principle. This has been the source of America's unprecedented industrial success. Men have assembled in friendliness and a spirit of co-operation to solve great problems. They have been willing to sacrifice personal opinions and ambitions on the altar of tolerance and scientific advance. No problem can withhold its secrets against such tactics. No community can withstand the sales propaganda thus initiated. By such methods all avenues shall be open to our bidding.