

FACT AND COMMENT.

It was not to be expected that the City Council's so-called "zoning" scheme would find favor with those whose property interests are adversely affected, and in the light of the vigorous protests that have recently been filed it would seem that the city guardians have paved the way for a battle in the courts. If, as the Wilshire Improvement Association contends, the Council's zoning ordinances, in imposing too drastic limitations on certain business enterprises necessary to the convenience of certain neighborhoods, have seriously jeopardized many investment properties, it would be much better to recall the obnoxious legislation and make a fresh start. This obviously would be the better plan, rather than to persist in sustaining an untenable position while dragging many innocent property owners into expensive litigation.

Viewing the situation impartially, it would seem that the Council has acted on the faulty premise that all business should be driven from a wide area assumed to be purely residential. Few dispute the fact that we need a broad, sensibly-arranged zoning plan that will tend to enhance the beauty and architectural character of the city; but this does not imply that the subject should be handled as fish to some and flesh to others. Quite to the contrary, it should be the aim of the Council and all responsible city-planning authorities to "zone" the municipality as a whole instead of piecemeal, and with a view to carefully balancing every section as to its residential, business and industrial requirements. As long as our municipal managers think of the city in the narrow terms of a single section or a single neighborhood, they will invite just such protests as have arisen over their seemingly ill-advised zoning regulations which have aroused the combative spirit of the Wilshire district.

Movie Benefits.

Not everybody is agreed as to the effect of motion-picture studios on the property values in certain residential districts. Some hold that the advent of the film producer, wherever he has planted his feet, has ushered in the original twenty-four-carat dawn; that ere he came we were moneyless, dispirited, luckless, grayed in our poverty, as it were, but now that we have him we have acquired a kind of Monte Christo outlook over the whole world. It sounds well as one stands on that side of the street.

But here arises a citizen to express a contrary view, one accepted to be sincerely said because it carries a price which most of us dislike to pay. Aubert E. Bruce, a resident of Hollywood, with offices in the Hollingsworth Building, has written the following communication to the Fact and Comment man apropos the little hornet's nest stirred up recently by the disconsolate pleasure man who blew a hot blast of pent-up wrath at our want of municipal fellowship:

"I have been a resident of Hollywood for ten and one-half years. All the real estate I own in the world is in Hollywood. Personally, I would be willing to see a depreciation of 50 per cent in the value of my holdings if we could be rid of the moving-picture industry."

We read Mr. Bruce's missive twice without finding an answer either to convey commendation or rebuke. Perhaps he has attended a recent Broadway film performance and there acquired a jaundiced view of life. In any rate, his statement is sweeping in that it fails to give honor where honor may be due. If his mind runs back for a stretch into the family affairs of Hollywood, he will recall that, ere the film man came, it slumbered peacefully and remotely, with no greater excitement than picking poppies on its hillside to stir its veins. Now it teems with life. Progress has certainly hit its highest stride in Hollywood, and with progress has come prosperity, plus a slightly swelling chest.

We are not sure that Hollywood should deery the actor. Certainly there is no evidence that it has learned to despise his coin. There have been times when we seriously regretted what the movie man has done to certain spots along our once-beloved Sunset boulevard, but that defacement has been a sort of

60.40 transgression, with the Hollywood property owner on the long end of the guilt. We know, too, that Hollywood has acquired habits of thrift, as regards the rental obligations of not alone the actor but the world at large that in many instances, since the supply of roofs began to run low, have stopped neck and neck with the spiritual instincts of the man who invented the famous wooden nutmeg.

—o— Overlooking a Bet.

Seldom does it come to pass that a Los Angeles realtor is found asleep at his post, with a real, live "selling prospect" in sight. Yet here is an example which proves that all things are not seen alike through the same telescope.

In the Fact and Comment columns last week we referred to the flaccid treatment recorded last winter's acute housing shortage by two "investigating" members of the Los Angeles Realty Board, who dismissed the widespread clamor for living accommodations as a "rumor." That this was an ill-chosen term was indicated in the several commendatory communications which our criticism evoked. However, we are always hopeful of men at some time reaching the mending point in human error; and opportunity still seems open in this instance.

Truth is never as unpleasant as it seems to those who would avoid its penetrating light. About everybody is aware that last winter, at the height of the tourist rush, there was a serious housing shortage, and not a few went unaccommodated. If those realtors recently charged with an inquiry into the facts dispute this point, we are in position to put them in touch with the facts.

It may be, however, that not everybody, particularly among these "investigating realtors," is aware of the tremendous volume of building which has been accomplished since last winter's housing troubles became known. In round figures, about \$3,000,000 worth of buildings, including dwellings, flats and apartment houses, have been risen each month for the last six or seven months. According to the Realty Board's own statement, in the three months covering January, February and March of this year, a total of thirty-one apartment houses, two hotels, twenty-six flats and 1638 dwellings were erected, valued at \$6,377,003. It is estimated that these housing accommodations will care for 9915 persons.

The full building program, of course, is not complete and will not be for some time. But meantime, as it occurs to the Fact and Comment man, it seems better business and clearer logic for the Realty Board to spread broadly what has been actually accomplished to meet next winter's demand for tourist accommodations than to soft-pedal the subject because some fear to tell the whole truth about last winter's shortcomings. The time and place to have done some good missionary work, with pictures of the rows upon rows of new flats, apartment buildings and homes recently completed and others rising, would have been at the recent Kansas City convention of the National Association of Real Estate Boards. Every realtor with even the remotest interest in Los Angeles would have been glad enough to see this visual evidence of our building thrift.