Politics Vs. Architecture

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New York was being ruled by Boss Tweed and his corrupt cohorts.

"There's an honest graft and America are still getting rich via "honest graft." It's called responsible because it doesn't involve outright stealing; but it is definitely morally dishonest.

In an effort to keep this type of "honest graft" out of the architectural profession in the state, the Louisiana Architects Association is going to sponsor legislation in the coming session which would amend the process of selecting architects for state jobs. The LAA hopes to remove the selections from the realm of political favoritism.

Last year the LAA completed a study on the selection of architects for state projects. The association found that during the previous five years, roughly 53 per cent of the construction budgeted by four of the state's largest agencies was awarded to 10 architectural firms. The top firm received almost 22 per cent of the construction from these agencies. Such unequal distribution indicates that selection was surely influenced by politics.

Board of Selection

The LAA hopes to solve some problems with its new legislation on selection of architects. The bill would create a Board of Selection to choose architects for state jobs. The board would include a licensed architect and a licensed professional engineer. The governor would appoint one of the members of the board, but would not sit on the board himself.

The legislation also would set up standards to be used in employing architects, and would outline the method of selection. Architects would be selected from a list of three or more names recommended by the agency which would use the building. The Selection Board could not reject all of the names recommended except for written reasons.

The LAA realizes that no single piece of legislation is going to cure all problems in state construction, but if it is passed, this bill could be a step in the right direction in assuring that the architects who receive state jobs are more skilled in architecture than in politics.