

The Fire Safe Building

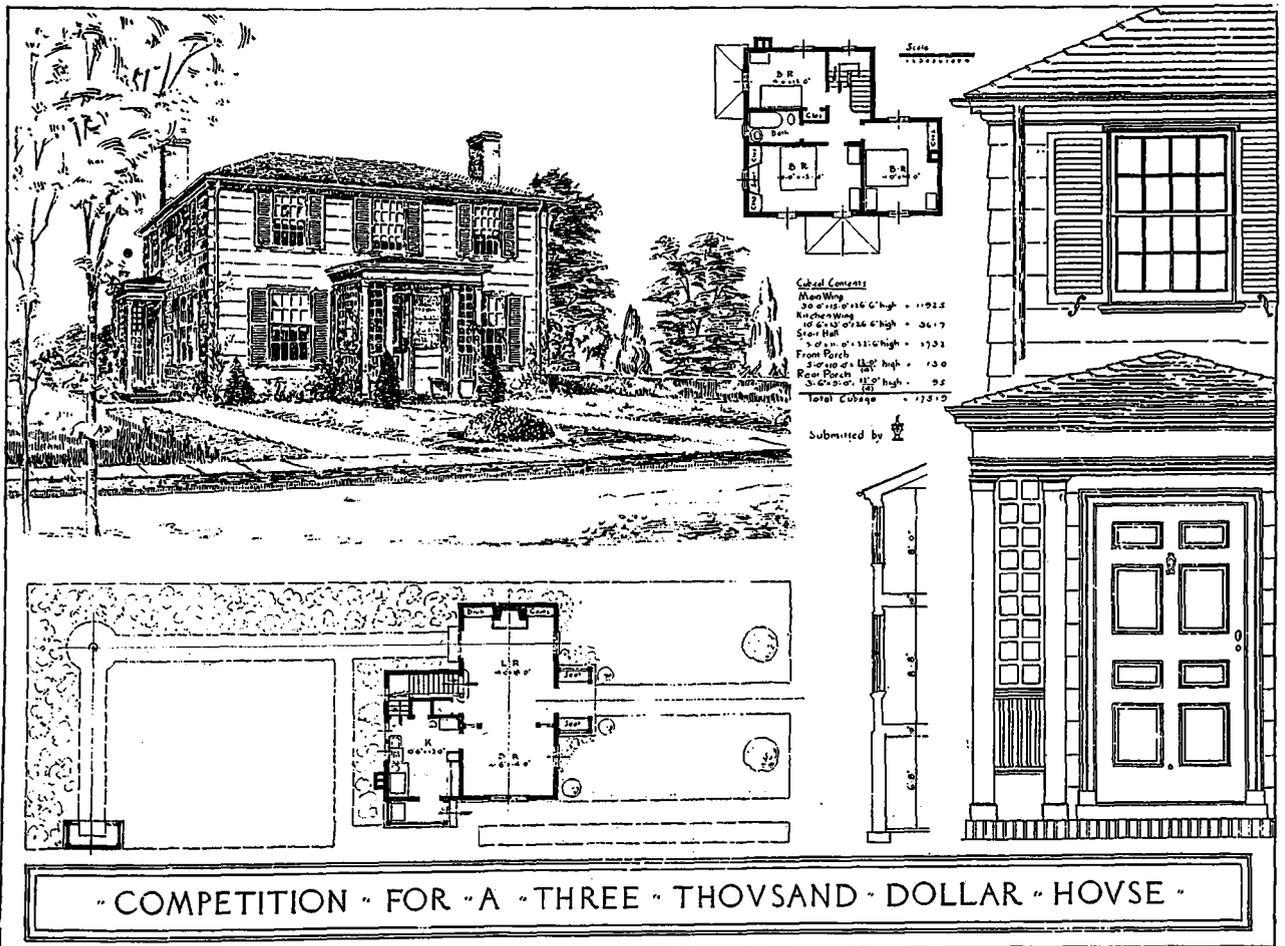
By A. W. ECHBERG

BESIDES a fire loss of about \$25,000,000 per annum this country now carries the excessive cost of insurance, the vast sums spent for fire-fighting equipment and up-keep of fire departments in all our cities, the lost sustained in case of fire, in time, loss of prestige, loss of customers, the cost of renewing the insurance upon resumption of business, and the dead expense while the business is suspended. Besides this, there is very little property insured to its full value, so that even if some insurance is carried, the owner will have to stand a good share of the direct loss. Taking all these items into consideration, the total loss to this country amounts to a really appalling figure.

But what are you going to do about it? It is not within the scope of human possibility to entirely prevent fires, but it is possible to reduce the fire hazard to a minimum. At an expense insignificant as compared to the saving in property and trouble, it is possible to so equip buildings as to render a serious fire practically impossible.

This discussion does not attempt to enter into the merits of different methods of fireproofing the structural parts of a building, or the relative value of different materials used for that purpose. The necessity for providing such fireproofing is well recognized by even the layest of laymen. It is proposed to take up here the question of interior fireproofing, "the kind that safeguards life and contents," as the need for proper equipment of buildings to prevent incipient fires from spreading, and to safeguard the exits to prevent loss of life, is not so well understood or so thoroughly realized.

The first attempt to provide exits in case of fire for the occupants of a building was the outside fire escape, which even up to this time disfigures so many buildings in our cities. While they have no doubt served their purpose in some cases, they have in numerous instances failed, sometimes on account of flimsy construction, and again on account of inadequate upkeep, as the metal work has not been painted, but allowed to rust and become deteriorated, so that when



FOURTH PRIZE—BY FREDERICK J. HARBURG, NEW YORK CITY.