

... and Capitol Architect

Most of the marble has been spilled on Capitol Hill, but better late than never is as appropriate a sentiment in architecture as it is in politics. The naming of George White as Architect of the Capitol is also appropriate: he is an architect and a vice president of the American Institute of Architects, a fact that represents a stunning and welcome departure from recent practice in which professionalism has been eliminated in favor of party service. The appointment is good news.

However, Mr. White will have a few nonarchitectural problems. His job is a direct gravy line to lucrative commissions and construction contracts in Congressional home territories. It has been a traditional stronghold for political balance of payments. His Congressional clients are the gentlemen who have asked for, and obtained, the most mediocrity for the most money—and the most marble and concrete—and the worst buildings in the history of public construction. For sheer architectural malapropism it is a hard act to follow, but an easy one to improve on.