

# HOLING THROUGH

NEWS BULLETIN OF **THE MOLES** • 11 W. 42ND STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

An Organization of Tunnel and Heavy Construction Men

FEBRUARY, 1948

## Gen. R. A. Wheeler and W. A. Durkin Receive Moles' Construction Awards

Carl Swenson Directs Ceremony as Gen. Somervell and R. E. Dougherty Introduce Winners—C. B. Spencer Presides at Dinner

OUTSTANDING CONSTRUCTION ACHIEVEMENT was rewarded at a dinner ceremony Feb. 4 in the grand ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel, New York, when 671 Moles members and their guests witnessed the presentation of bronze plaques and citations, constituting The Moles Awards for 1948, to Lieutenant General Raymond A. Wheeler, Chief of Engineers, Department of the Army, Washington, D. C., and to Wil-

liam A. Durkin, president, Walsh Construction Co., New York.

### *Spencer Presides at Dinner*

President Charles B. Spencer opened the proceedings by telling how The Moles were organized and how the society, since the first Award dinner in 1941, has attained its present position of im-

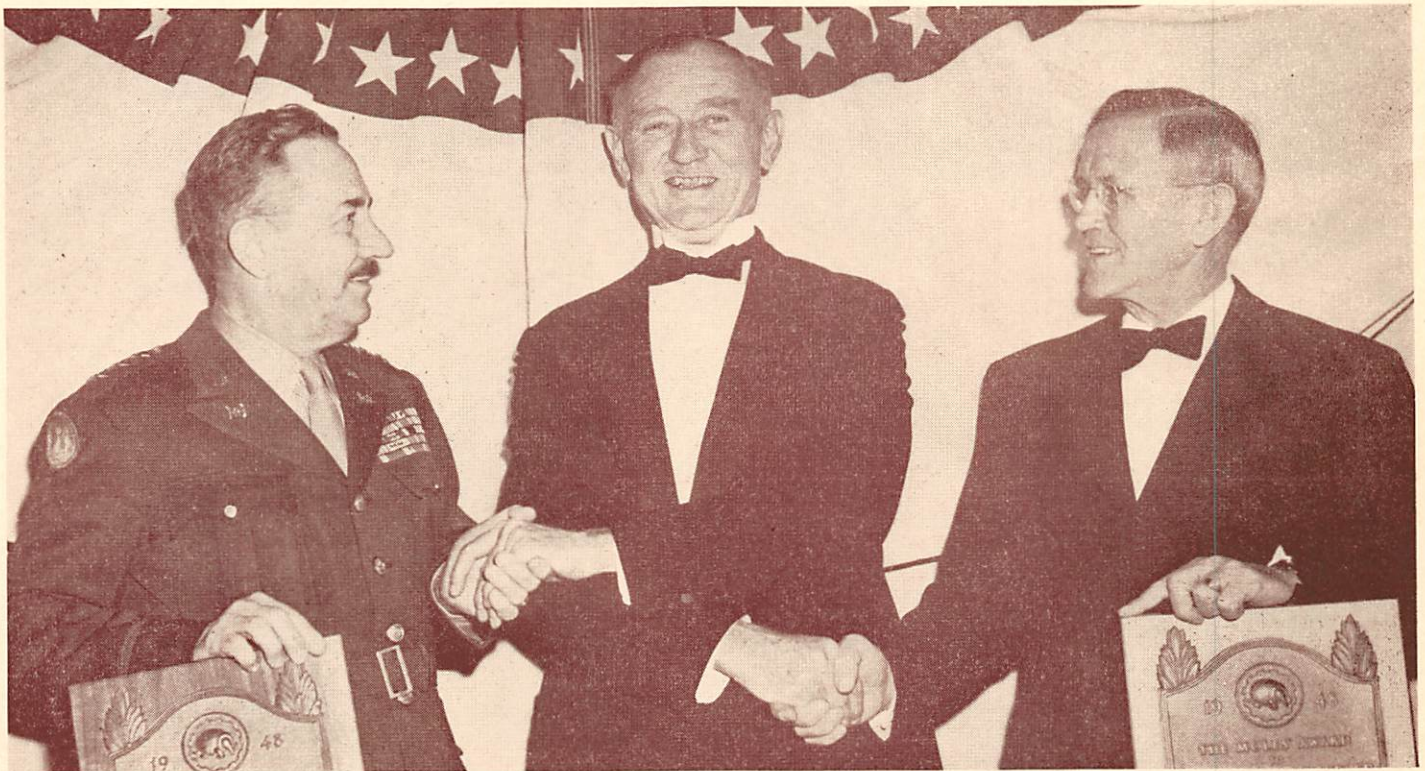
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## Steers Named for Moles' Presidency

Nominating Committee Offers Slate of New Officers and Trustees for Vote at Annual Business Meeting May 5

J. RICH STEERS, JR., president, J. Rich Steers, Inc. specialists in pier, dock and all other types of waterfront construction, and now first vice-president of The Moles has been selected by the Nominating Committee as candidate for President of The Moles, heading the slate of new officers and trustees that will be voted upon at the annual business meeting May 5. Mr. Steers' organization,

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WINNERS OF MOLES AWARDS for outstanding construction achievement, LIEUTENANT GENERAL RAYMOND A. WHEELER, (left) Chief of Engineers, Department of the Army and WILLIAM A. DURKIN (right) president, Walsh Construction Co., receive from CHARLES B. SPENCER, (center) Moles' President, bronze plaques at dinner ceremony in Roosevelt Hotel, New York, Feb. 4, attended by nearly seven hundred leading construction men and engineers.

(Continued from p. 1)

which has been active in the field of heavy construction since 1900, is now busy on contracts for rebuilding harbors in Greece and is constructing ferry slips on Staten Island for New York City's Department of Marine and Aviation.

William V. McMenimen, chairman and the other members of the Nominating Committee, Frank Loughman, Ralph L. Johnson, Charles de Leon, Thomas Crimmins and Frank W. Barnes, have offered for vote by The Moles membership at the annual meeting May 5 the following slate of new officers and trustees:

**PRESIDENT:** J. RICH STEERS, JR.,  
president, J. Rich Steers, Inc.  
**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT:** CARLTON S. PROCTOR,  
Moran, Proctor, Freeman & Mueser  
**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT:** JAMES F. SALMON,  
Arundel Corp.  
**SECRETARY:** WILLIAM W. HANLY, JR.,  
Hanly Co.  
**SERGEANT AT ARMS:** EDWARD J. MAHONEY,  
Mahoney-Clarke Inc.  
**TREASURER:** RALPH W. ATWATER,  
Shultz Dredging Co.  
**TRUSTEES:** HAROLD W. RICHARDSON,  
Executive Editor, *Construction Methods*; FRANK W. LOUGHMAN, Ace Builders Supply Co., Inc.; FRANCIS J. JORDAN, Poirier & McLane Corp.; and CARL L. SWENSON, Foley Bros., Inc.  
The foregoing nominees have been selected to fill vacancies created by the expiration of the terms of office of the following officer and trustees: Charles B. Spencer, president and the following trustees: Frank M. Loughman, John S. Macdonald, William V. McMenimen, James F. Salmon and Robert K. Tomlin.

## Moles Members Win High Offices in A.S.C.E.

New officers of the American Society of Civil Engineers installed at the 95th annual meeting of the society in New York Jan. 21 included three prominent Moles members:

Col. Carlton S. Proctor was elected vice-president of the A.S.C.E. Zone 1 (New York City). Edmund A. Prentis was chosen as a Director for the New York City District.

Richard E. Dougherty, newly elected Moles' member, who made the address sponsoring member Award winner William A. Durkin at the Award Dinner, Feb. 4, was installed as president of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

## Moles Awards

(Continued from p. 1)

portance in the construction industry. After a brief interlude in which J. Rich Steers, first vice-president, identified the guests of honor seated at a V-shaped table on the dais, Mr. Spencer resumed his address by attributing the growth of The Moles "to a small group of men, increasing from year to year, who believe that our profession is founded not only on technical skill but, still more important, on integrity and high standards of ethics."

### Swenson Directs Ceremony

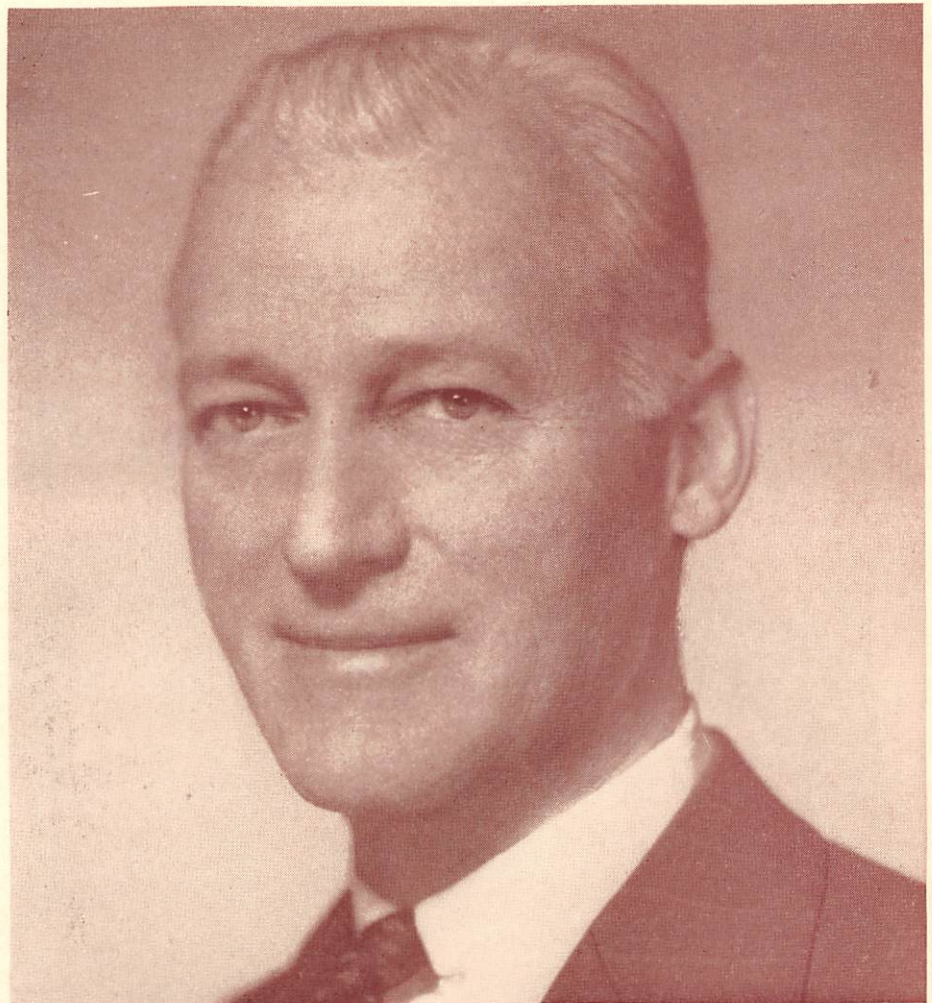
Mr. Spencer then turned the conduct of the ceremony over to Carl L. Swenson, chairman of the Award Committee. "Prior to 1931 when a group of contractors got together to bid Hoover Dam," said Mr. Swenson, "every contractor was a rugged individualist and group bidding was rare. With the advent of Hoover,

## Governor of Illinois Salutes Gen. Wheeler

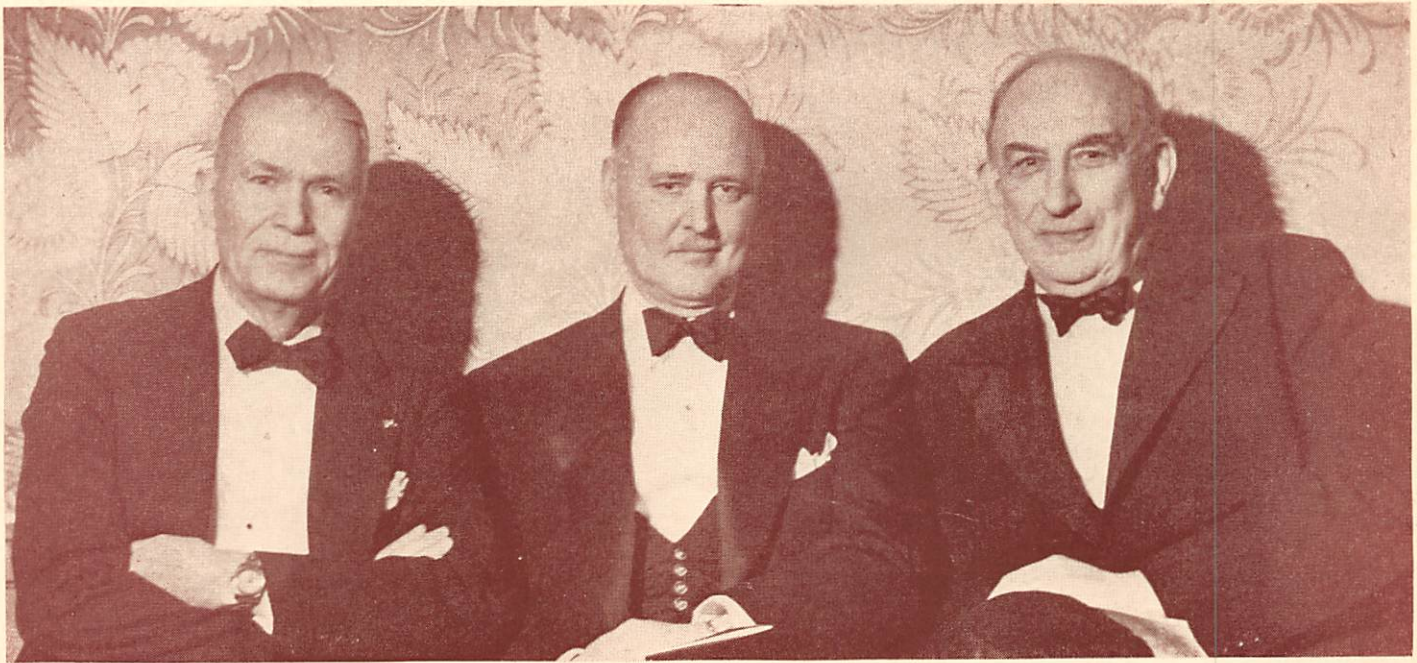
Congratulating General Raymond A. Wheeler, a native of Peoria, Ill., on the winning of The Moles non-member Award, the Hon. Dwight H. Green, Governor of the State of Illinois sent the following telegram to Award Committee Chairman Carl L. Swenson:

"Please convey my hearty congratulations to Lieutenant General Raymond A. Wheeler for the well-deserved honor being accorded him by your organization. Illinois citizens are proud of the record made by this native to date. I hope tonight's Award Dinner will be highly enjoyed by all members and guests."

Coulee and Shasta dams, however, a major portion of the construction industry has shown a tendency to pool their resources, organization and plant for large projects. The important thing today is having the right equipment. To-



NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT OF THE MOLES is J. RICH STEERS, JR., president of J. Rich Steers, Inc., New York contractor specializing in waterfront construction. He heads slate of officers and trustees submitted by William V. McMenimen, chairman of Nominating Committee, for vote by Moles membership at annual business meeting May 5.



PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS AT AWARD CEREMONY were CARL L. SWENSON (center) chairman of Moles' Award Committee and GENERAL BREHON SOMERVELL (left) president, Koppers Co., who introduced GENERAL RAYMOND A. WHEELER, non-member Award winner and RICHARD E. DOUGHERTY (right) president, American Society of Civil Engineers and vice-president, New York Central Railroad System, who spoke for WILLIAM A. DURKIN, member-Award winner.

day our competitor is a partner; tomorrow he is on the other side of the fence. Quite a departure from thirty years ago when competitors crossed the street to avoid meeting each other!"

Awarding agencies and contractors, Mr. Swenson warned, must balance construction programs and bids with the availability of specified materials and must more evenly distribute the risk load. The contractor today, he said, is the only one who guarantees everything.

Mr. Swenson then introduced General Brehon B. Somervell, president, Koppers Co., and Richard E. Dougherty, vice-president, New York Central Railroad System, and newly elected president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, who had been chosen to sponsor the two Award winners and present their citations and bronze plaques.

#### *Somervell Introduces Gen. Wheeler*

Speaking for General Wheeler, General Somervell reviewed the brilliant achievements of members of the Army's Corps of Engineers. He said:

"Long, McNeill and Whistler were among our great railroad builders. Bonnevill, McClelland and many others pioneered the West. Meigs, Greene and Casey were among those called to build some of our great works such as the nation's Capitol, the Washington Monument, the Washington Aqueduct, the Congressional Library, the Water Supply of New York, and many other outstand-

ing engineering works during the early years.

"In later times Gillespie, Goethals, Jadwin, Greene, Hodges and Seibert are all well known for their works on rivers and harbors, highways and other federal works.

"In World War I, Goethals, Jadwin and MacArthur are well known to you. In World War II, MacArthur, Styer, Wheeler, Sultan, Covell and Leavey in the Pacific and Southeast Asia; Lee, Larkin and now Clay as the head of our activities in Germany, with many others in Europe, made outstanding contributions to our victory.

"Graduating from West Point in 1911, General Wheeler saw service in Mexico, later in France in World War I, in numerous peacetime assignments on river and harbor and other civil work of the Corps of Engineers, and during World War II service in the Middle and Far East as Deputy Supreme Commander of the Southeast Asia Command, and lastly as Chief of Engineers. He brings to that high office the distinction won through years of high achievement in all the tasks which have fallen to his lot."

#### **Gen. Wheeler Responds**

In accepting the non-member Award General Wheeler said, in part: "This honor conferred upon me tonight is unlike any other that I have been privileged to experience in my career. Reaching into the field that is in essence nonmilitary, it touches the secret of all American progress, for from the very beginning,

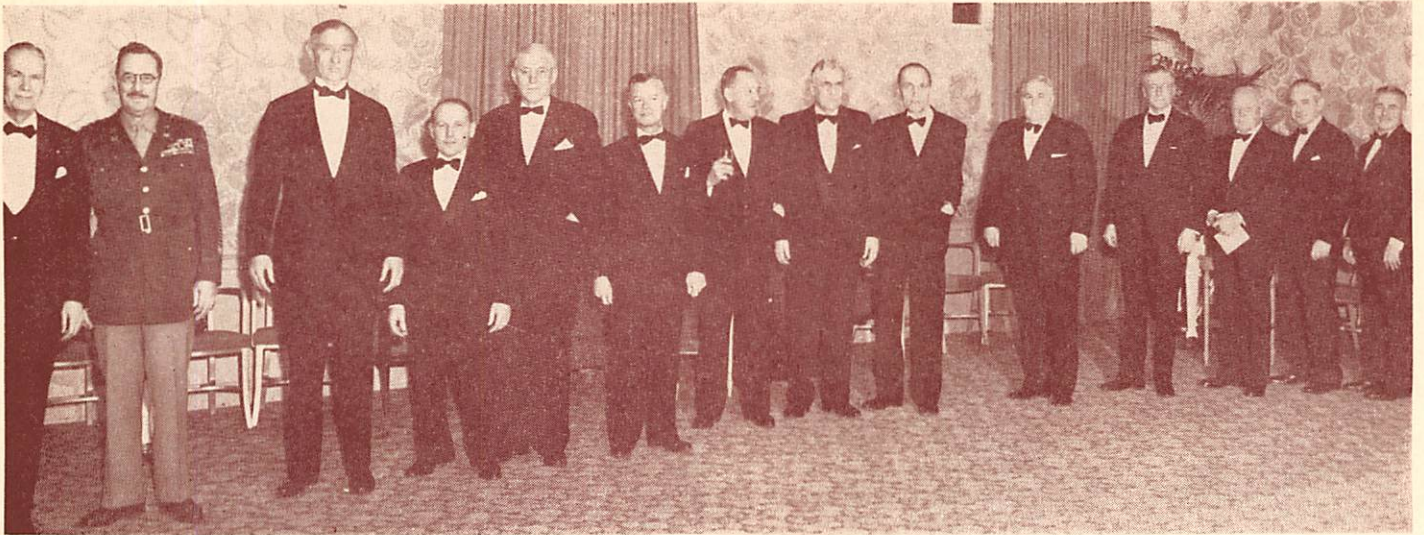
the strength of this country has sprung from the fact that we are a nation of builders.

"While the Award is a personal one, I must view it in its larger sense as a tribute to the entire Corps of Engineers, whose successful achievements in construction are due to the close cooperation we have enjoyed with the private contractor and construction industry as a whole. In the words of that homely rhyme popular during war years:

"It is not the individual, or the Army as a whole,

But the everlasting teamwork of every bloomin' soul."

"In military operations everything depends upon teamwork. That was true in 1775 when the Continental Congress at the request of General Washington appointed the first Chief of Engineers. More than ever, it is true today. World War II emphasized the importance of teamwork in general, and in particular the importance of the Engineer-Contractor team. Construction was the rock bottom foundation on which we pyramided the entire war effort. The Construction Industry—the Engineer-Contractor team — was the first to take the field. Until cantonments and training areas were provided — until airfields and munitions plants were constructed — until storage depots were built and ports of embarkation were readied—we couldn't begin to prepare men and materiel for waging war. And until the urgently needed military installations were provided at home, our construction efforts could not move



CHOW LINE OF HONOR GUESTS forms, in proper sequence in anteroom, ready to enter banquet room and take their places at table on dais. Printed names on cards hung on overhead wire guided each guest to his assigned place in the lineup.

overseas to lay the foundation for successful campaigns in the global theatres of operation.

#### *A Gargantuan Task*

“How that gargantuan task was accomplished—how 3000 military installations and 300 munitions plants were constructed in the zone of the interior in little more than two years—how construction was placed at the rate of \$20,000,000 a day—how the Engineer-Contractor team burgeoned into a vast army of a million civilian workers and 700,000 men in uniform—and how this team went overseas to repeat its impressive record at home and to confound the enemy—is now history.

“But I think it is important to re-emphasize the fact that it was not war that created this team of ours. The Army Engineers and the construction contractors have been working together for many, many years. And in the crisis of a supreme emergency the nation reaped immeasurable benefits from the relationship which we of the Army Engineers and you, of the construction industry, have established during years of peace extending back for more than a century.

“An Engineer himself, General Washington recognized two facts: He knew that building—exploring, investigating and harnessing the resources of a country for the benefit of all—is a job for engineers. He knew, too, that day-by-day practical experience is essential to military engineers. So Washington established the wise—and still unique—policy of assigning to the Corps of Engineers of the United States Army certain peacetime work that is civil rather than military. From this continuing assignment there developed the Engineer-Contractor

### Swenson is Host at Luncheon on Award Day

Preceding The Moles' Award Dinner Feb. 4, Carl L. Swenson, Chairman, Award Committee, was host at a luncheon in the University Club, New York, in honor of Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler and W. A. Durkin. In addition to the two Award winners the guests included the officers and trustees of The Moles and some of the out-of-town guests of the Award recipients.



CHAIRMAN OF AWARD COMMITTEE, CARL L. SWENSON acted as master of ceremonies at Moles Award Dinner, Feb. 4.

team, and today, serving the people in all sections of the country are useful monuments to our mutual achievements. The lessons which together we learned in our work during years of peace have been applied to the defense of our country in war. Conversely, what we learned in war, we have put to work for the country's good in peacetime. It has been, and will continue to be, a beneficent circle.

#### *Engineer-Contractor Teamwork*

“To the Corps of Engineers it appears tremendously important that we maintain such close and productive teamwork. As Army Engineers, our first responsibility must always be to keep ourselves ready to carry out any construction needed whenever and wherever emergencies arise. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to maintain the closest possible professional and working relationship with all builders and engineers everywhere, so that we will be able to call upon the man and the special experience best qualified to construct any type of project. It is to our interest that the reservoir of American construction and engineering talent always be adequate to the demands of any national crisis. In other words we want to keep American builders strong and efficient, for we know that the strength of American builders is a measure of the strength of America.

“While the Engineer-Contractor team of war years has diminished to peacetime proportions, as of today that team is still in truth a giant among giants. Engaged in the work of our team during the year just passed there were:

“In the Corps of Engineers 48,000 civilians and 4,000 military personnel.

“Seven hundred and one construction

firms with about 30,000 contractor employees engaged on our works.

"Two hundred and twenty Architect-Engineer firms and consultants.

"During the first eleven months of 1947 a total of \$450,000,000 in low bids were accepted and contracts awarded for projects assigned to the Corps of Engineers, not only by the Congress in the civil works program, and the Department of the Army in the military program, but also by the Veterans Administration for hospitals; by the Department of State for work in Greece; by the Coast and Geodetic Survey; by the Treasury Department; and Civil Aeronautics Administration and the Department of the Navy.

"Even in a day of astronomical figures, such ones as I have quoted command considerable respect. They are tangible assurance that the American construction industry has a very definite part in the peacetime program of the Corps of Engineers. As the growing volume of construction places a premium on imaginativeness, on drive, on hard work, and on that dollar-value efficiency and economy which results from keen competition, you may be certain that the participation of well-qualified contractors in carrying out the projects to which we are assigned is welcomed and is our policy.

"We, in the Corps of Engineers, have the utmost faith in the ability and integrity of private enterprise to help us do the kind of job that will give the American people a fair return for the money invested.

"The Award conferred by The Moles on the Chief of Engineers, is a happy indication that I and those who serve with me in the Corps of Engineers enjoy the confidence of our teammates in the private construction field who share with

## Moles Member Deaths

Since publication of its latest issue in January, *Holing Through* reports with sorrow the deaths of the following members of The Moles:

John J. Watts, Mason & Hanger Co., Inc.  
(on Dec. 28, 1947)

Nicoll Floyd, Jr., Hubbard & Floyd Inc.  
(on Jan. 18, 1948)

us the responsibility of building a better America.

"In that spirit, I accept the accolade with thanks and with pride."

## Durkin Gets Member Award

After an introduction by Richard E. Dougherty, vice-president, New York Central Railroad, who paid tribute to the versatility of the American contractor, William A. Durkin, president, Walsh Construction Co. and member Award winner said:

"Your selection for The Moles member Award recalls a letter, which I received from two good friends of mine, Les Rogers and Fred Copeland, at the time I was made president of the Walsh Construction Co. It read as follows: 'Dear Bill: The Walsh Construction Company must be damn hard up when they make you president.'

"With due respect to the fine Moles organization, I cannot help thinking of that letter tonight. To be selected for this Award is an honor which should please anyone; an honor which to me is greatly enhanced by having my name added to the roster of previous recipients; and particularly, it is an honor to be selected along with the non-member recipient tonight, General Wheeler. No one could

have been more surprised at this selection, no one could be more pleased and no one could be more grateful.

"Since The Moles membership is comprised solely of men of the construction industry, I can talk a little shop tonight:

"Personally, I never liked any kind of work, but, if one must work, I think construction is the most interesting and fascinating work that a person can do. No two jobs are the same and every job is a challenge. We battle the elements and we must meet continuous changes. Also, the size of the jobs has increased tremendously for where we used to talk of work in thousands of dollars, we now talk in millions.

## Big Jobs Demand Contractor Combines

"The magnitude of jobs today often requires much larger and more flexible organization, as well as bigger plant and equipment investments. Thus, for economic and financial reasons, together with operating personnel requirements, many construction companies have joined to bid and build these large projects.

"We have formed partnerships, new corporations, joint ventures and co-ventures, the majority of which have proved very successful; at least, that has been our experience. There have been so many combinations formed that, today, a contractor has to be mighty careful of what he says and when and where he says it, for your partner today may be your competitor tomorrow.

"As I review the improvements that developed in construction during my time, from the mule teams and hand dump wagons to the modern Caterpillar equipment and 30-yd. Carryalls, I'm envious of those who are just entering a



HEAD OF TABLE ON DAIS in grand ballroom included following Moles officers and honor guests: Left, (starting at top and reading down) J. RICH STEERS, first vice-president; CARL L. SWENSON, chairman, Award Committee; WILLIAM A. DURKIN, member Award winner; RICHARD E. DOUGHERTY (behind lamp shade); and THOMAS J. WALSH. (At right, reading from top, down): RALPH W. ATWATER, treasurer; CHARLES B. SPENCER, president; LIEUT.-GENERAL RAYMOND A. WHEELER, non-member Award winner; GENERAL BREHON SOMERVELL; GENERAL THOMAS F. FARRELL.

20-year or 50-year hitch in our business. The developments he will see and be a part of.

### **Developing Personnel**

"In thinking of the future, the new methods, tools and equipment that will come along, we should think of our organization, our key personnel, both general and field. We spend a lot of time planning procedure on our jobs, selecting our supervisors, the type and quantity of equipment, additional units and spare parts, everything to spell progress and avoid delays. We should do the same thing with our personnel; provide additional units, bring along the young men by giving them added responsibilities; build for the future with our personnel, the same as we do with equipment.

"The men in the construction industry today compare most favorably with those of any industry. You very seldom find a 'phony'; there are very few that you can't get along with if you meet them half way. Of course, we all do a lot of boasting at times as to our capabilities. Particularly when we are trying to sell a client, we tell him how efficient and economical we are. If he has any difficult problem in a particular construction job, we tell him about our specialists (that we don't have). We got this specialist idea from the medical profession. Specialists sound much more important and incidentally bring larger fees, at least in the medical profession. That is not anything new, for our clients also do the same thing to sell their products, so we have no copyright on that.

"In receiving this honor tonight, I am in the position of a second string half-back on a football team with the score tied. With only a few seconds left to play, this back intercepts a pass, and behind excellent blocking goes over for a touchdown and thereby gets a lot of publicity for winning the game. But this back knows he couldn't have gone any place without that blocking and the team work of the entire squad.

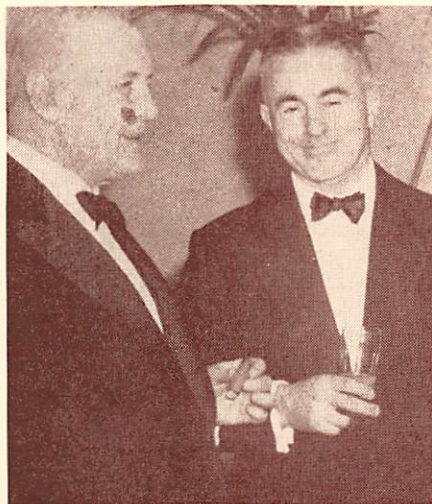
"For some time I have been playing on the Walsh Company's team, occasionally intercepting a pass, scoring and getting some credit. But with a coach like Tom Walsh and a line made up of Henry Gill, Fred Smith, Jack Macdonald and many others (it would take too long to name all the other members of our team), anyone could carry the ball and score reasonably often.

"What little I have accomplished in the construction field is not due to my efforts alone, but to the thinking, planning and hard work of the entire Walsh organization; to the members of the many fine construction companies, with some of whom we have been directly associated, and whose friendship I cherish

## **Governor Thomas E. Dewey Lauds Moles' Award Winners**

From Governor Thomas E. Dewey of the State of New York, Award Committee Chairman Carl L. Swenson received the following telegram congratulating The Moles Award winners:

"It is a great pleasure to send warm greetings to the members of The Moles and their guests on the occasion of the annual dinner Feb. 4, with my congratulations to Mr. William Durkin and to Lieutenant General Raymond Wheeler



PAST-PRESIDENTS PALAVER. ARTHUR A. JOHNSON (left) talks things over with JACK MACDONALD. Both have been presidents of The Moles and winners of Moles member Awards for construction achievement.

and whose judgment I respect; to the many friends in the engineering, equipment, material, supply and bonding businesses: and to the many corporations and governmental agencies that have given us the opportunity of working for them.

"I know my limitations better than anyone else, and, in accepting this most cherished Award, I do so not for myself alone, but as a representative of the Walsh Construction Co., of which I am fortunate enough to be a member."

### **Governor Dewey Wires**

The ceremony concluded with a brief address by Admiral J. J. Manning, Navy Department and the reading of a telegram from Governor Thomas E. Dewey, of New York, congratulating General Wheeler and Mr. Durkin on their winning of The Moles Awards. (Governor Dewey's telegram is reprinted elsewhere in this issue).

upon The Moles Awards which they will then receive. An enviable distinction surrounds the men who built the creative, enduring monuments of our civilization, the great bridges and tunnels which make our transportation the envy of the world, the dams which convert huge deserts into wide domains of rich fertility.

"The scope of the creative activity of The Moles is well exemplified in the achievements of the two men you have chosen to acclaim this year. Reading the list of the great works built by Mr. Durkin, the layman would think they were enough to fill the lifetimes of several men, including as they do the great Queens-Midtown vehicular tunnel under the East River, the first section of the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River, four diversion tunnels at Fort Peck, Montana, tunnels for New York City's Delaware Aqueduct, and also the Southern California-Colorado River Aqueduct.

"His wartime projects comprised the building of Camp Edwards at Cape Cod for the United States Army, the great Army base at Trinidad, dry docks at Brooklyn, the cargo and escort base at Providence, R.I. As though this were not enough for one man, Mr. Durkin is now completing the great Electronic Park for the General Electric Co. at Syracuse, the Atomic Power Laboratory for the General Electric Co. at Schenectady, and will soon start the big water tunnel for the City of Boston.

### **Lieut-Gen. Wheeler**

"By the same token, no man could be found more richly deserving of an award from your association than the great engineer who is now Chief of the Army Engineers, Lieutenant General Raymond Wheeler. His career is written down in the numerous citations that he has won from his own country and from practically all of our Allies in the last war. During those years, whether on the military Supply Commission to Iran or in command of Headquarters Service Supply in the China-Burma-India theater, or as Commander of that theater, General Wheeler became famous for his great capacity for getting the stuff to the right place at the right time. It was that same genius for organization which caused him to be respected throughout the Service as the man mainly responsible for conveying from our factories the supplies to Russia and to the British with the speed which made the ultimate victory possible. We are proud to know that in the hands of this great engineer now lies the direction of a great program of civil works, flood control, rivers and harbors, and hospitals.

"I am sure your dinner will be a most successful and distinguished event."