"It's an ill wind that does no good" has again been demonstrated. For there is no doubt that the development of Brooklyn College building plans into an actuality at an earlier date than otherwise possible, is due to some extent at least, to the financial depression.

For several years past, the City has had to exercise strict economy to keep disbursements within the limit of its receipts. It was necessary, for instance, to add new tax burdens and to impose payless furloughs on top of salary cuts for City employees. Of course under such conditions, no funds were available for expanding facilities - even for higher education. In fact, where possible, the City made every effort to reduce all items of current expense.

Thus, when President Boylee pointed out that Brooklyn College paid over $500,000 a year for rent, it attracted attention. He then followed with a statement that over two million dollars had been spent to date for rented quarters without gaining any equity in the structures. Finally, his conclusion prevailed that it would be cheaper to pay interest and amortization charges on buildings ultimately owned free and clear by the City. Mayor LaGuardia, once convinced, took up the fight and personally pressed the application for funds at Washington.

The result was that when Congress finally did appropriate four billion dollars for public works projects to relieve unemployment, Brooklyn College was high on the list with an allocation of $5,500,000 for five buildings. Of this amount $2,475,000 was an outright grant, representing 45% of the cash needed and the remainder was arranged as a loan at 4% interest. This offer was accepted in due form by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and the Board of Higher Education concurred in the agreement.

In the meantime, the City exercised the option granted by the owners of the Wood-Harmon tract and approved the purchase of the site for $1,600,000, which was considerably under the assessed valuation of the property. Opposition by a group which favored the prospect Reservoir site resulted in a temporary stay of proceedings. However, the court vacated the restraining order when Borough President Ingersoll showed that the site made no allowance for future expansion, was not immediately available and was reserved for other use when released by the Water Department.

While all legal steps were being successfully accomplished and obstacles overcome, Architect Randolph Evans was putting the ideas of President Boylee into drawings and specifications. The first contracts ready for advertising were those for the power house and the gymnasium. The advertisement was run for 30 instead of 14 days as required by law so as to attract a larger number of prospective bidders and give them ample time to make their investigations and studies complete.

The result was that 32 sealed bids were received by the Board of Higher Education on September 4th. They were publicly opened by Judge Sinnott at a little ceremony in the "assembly hall" of the Pearl Building. Speeches were made by Mr. Mark Eisner, chairman of the Board, Mrs. Good and several others. The amount of the low bid for each of the proposed contracts is as follows:
General Construction................. $607,973.
Plumbing Work.......................... 109,777.
Steam Heating & Ventilating Work..... 382,111.
Electric Work & Lighting Fixtures.... 76,000.

The bids are now being canvassed by Professor Breithut, who devotes considerable time at the Architect's Office, and a recommendation will soon be prepared for submission to the Board of Higher Education and to the State Engineer for disposition.

Robert J. Fee
CURATOR.