



Fine Arts  
NA  
7551  
W61

CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



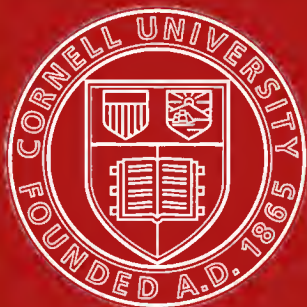
FINE ARTS LIBRARY

Cornell University Library  
NA 7551.W61

The housing problem in war and peace,



3 1924 015 178 670 inc



# Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924015178670>







# The Housing Problem In War and in Peace

BY

CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER

Editor of the Journal of the American Institute of Architects

FREDERICK L. ACKERMAN

Architect, of New York City

RICHARD S. CHILDS

Secretary of the Committee on Industrial Towns, New York City

EDITH ELMER WOOD

Expert in Housing Legislation, Philadelphia

1918

The Journal of the American Institute of Architects

THE OCTAGON

Washington, D. C.

# Foreword

Final 113

Why has the provision of shelter for workmen come to be called "housing"?

Why has housing become a problem?

Why cannot workmen build their own houses?

Why will nobody build houses at the present time?

It is intended that these questions shall be fully answered in the following pages.

When we acknowledged that we were unprepared for war, did we realize that the backbone of modern war-making is decent housing? That the weakest spot in our armor was the lack of decent houses for millions of the workmen upon whom the burden rests?

Now that we have found this out through the costly and dangerous delays in building ships—and in every other industrial activity—do we not see that we have never been prepared for Peace?

Of all the nations of the world, the United States stands alone in its tenacious adherence to the policy that decent houses can be provided by rigid "tenement-house laws." Such an archaic policy is about as well calculated to produce good houses as a regiment of archers

would be useful in France at the present time.

For months, we have blundered and muddled over the housing question raised by war. The full story of what this has cost will be written at some future time. Now, Congress has appropriated \$50,000,000 with which to make a start toward housing the workers in our shipyards. Other millions—many and many millions—will have to be spent for this purpose, and this book is intended to provide the information by means of which the people of the United States may form their own conclusions as to whether or no our attitude on this vital question shall be as enlightened as that of the rest of the world, or fall back on a par with the intelligence of the dark ages. The illustrations are published, not as suggestions for the solution of our problem, but as examples of the scope and thoroughness with which others have already dealt with the question.

All of the material which follows, with the exception of a few illustrations, is reprinted from the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, issues of September, 1917 to February, 1918, inclusive.





# What Is a House?

By CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER

## I

SINCE the war began, the British Government, under such financial and industrial pressure as never before befell a nation, has spent millions upon millions in building houses of all kinds for its workers. It is one of the most remarkable and deeply significant transformations wrought by War. While her vast industrial expansion and its accompanying congestion of workers are the undoubted causes of England's huge expenditure for better homes, the deeper significance may be found in her plans for carrying on this program as a measure of post-war prudence. War has raised the standard of the house in England for all time. It has given a new meaning to the word.

Great was the pressure under which England labored and pressing was the emergency with which she had to cope. The life of her armies, upon which her own life hung in the balance, was in the keeping of her factories and workshops. Yet as the old ones doubled, trebled, quadrupled their size over night, as new ones larger than any the world had ever seen sprang up like magic, there also grew the parallel need for more houses in which the workers could live. And there also grew the perception that if the workers were to give their utmost in skill and energy they must be given the utmost in home life. The renewal and constant maintenance of vitality meant more ships, more guns, more ammunition. And then came the miracle!

With sound economic foresight, England determined to build permanent houses, except in cases where the emergency was so dire as to compel temporary expedients. She found that taking into account the expense of applying the utilities (streets, water, gas, sewage), the difference in cost between temporary and permanent houses was so little as to be negligible in her calculations. Rather than accept a questionable post-war salvage from temporary structures, with the inevitable temptation to continue their use as slums, she resolved to create a permanent national asset. Thus there

have grown up in an incredibly short time whole new towns and villages which will not only remain after the war but which will compel a generally higher standard for workmen's homes—for permanency is only a part of the miracle.

Having come to this decision, it became necessary to ask what kind of houses to build, in other words, "What is a house?" During the last hundred years of industrial expansion the definition of a house has been sinking slowly to a level where it included almost everything which could claim walls and a roof. The percentage of unsanitary, disease-breeding structures inhabited by men, women, and children in all the so-called civilized countries of the world has been a sad blot on their escutcheon. Without exception, all the great nations except the United States—even the newer lands of Australia and New Zealand are ahead of us—have recognized this condition and accepted the duty of attempting its amelioration by financial aid of different kinds, as a legitimate and just governmental function. It may be said without hesitation that the application of science and governmental aid to home-building for workmen in Germany was one of her vital steps in the great scheme of war preparedness. Her model villages have been cited the world over, while her coöperative home-building and land-owning associations, fostered by the government, have been studied with profit in all other countries. England had begun to deal with this question, of late years, so that when she was compelled to undertake an immediate industrial expansion which should outweigh and outshoot Germany's highly organized machine, the accompanying problem of house-building was not an entire novelty. She had dealt with it before. Her garden cities were among the pioneering movements of modern housing reform. All her communities have large powers in dealing with the question, and the model tenements of London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other cities, though far from solving the question of "What is a house?" were long steps forward. Of profound significance is the fact that since war began, London has demolished

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

acres of slums and erected model tenements thereon. In order to bring the rentals of these within reach of workmen, she has charged off the entire cost of the land against her more prosperous areas!

But in the middle of war, with the determination made to spend millions in new houses, England asked herself fairly and squarely, "What is a house?" Perhaps her answer will do more than anything else toward solving the social, economic, and political problems which the end of the war will lay before every nation with a new and sterner emphasis than ever before. The houses she has built would not do for the United States. They are built in full recognition of certain long-established traditions and modes of life. They have no central heat, for example, but are generally heated with fireplaces, while their interior planning is not after our methods. They range in size from two to five rooms, with bath, with rentals varying from \$1.80 to \$3.60 a week. For such sums it probably is impossible to rent their equivalent elsewhere in the world, although it is no doubt true that these low rentals are only made possible by governmental willingness to accept a rate of return on the investment such as would not satisfy private capital. It is also possible that England may have to write off, as a war expense, the difference in cost of these houses, at war-time prices and those normally obtaining. Curiously enough, many people exclaim at the idea of such a possible waste, forgetting that war is nothing but a process of throwing away money, and that it does not matter whether it goes into ships, guns, aeroplanes, or houses, so long as the end is attained. But England finds a return on her investment in houses which cannot be measured in money, and it is highly probable that of all her vast expenditures the houses she has built for her workers will remain as one of the very few revenue-producing factors after it is all over.

Private capital failed to provide England with the houses she needed in order to wage a successful war. Building costs were higher than normal, and private capital feared that if it built in war time, it might be left with houses on its hands which could afterward be duplicated for much less money. It also shared in the general uncertainty as to how reconstruction might affect industries expanded under war

pressure. The war might leave these, temporarily, without usefulness and the houses in such a locality tenantless. But the Government could not allow any such doubts to jeopardize its success in war. At no matter what cost—or what loss—it had to have houses. In this recognition lies the kernel of a hope that the definition of a house is to be permanently revised.

War has shown the full meaning of the house as a factor in national preservation, for war brings nations face to face with national death, and it is then that nations see themselves. Can it be doubted that Peace will ever again allow the house to sink to the low level of the last hundred years? Can it be possible that the plain business value which has been found to lie in the good house will be ignored by Peace? The measure of a nation's prosperity and strength is shown to lie, not in the size of its factories, the elegance of its public buildings, the luxury of its hotels, but in the small thing known as a house. Germany learned this before the war and applied her knowledge on a vast scale, dastardly as was the end she pursued. Other nations have learned through the need of defeating that end, and will not forget. But woe to the nation which forgets to learn!

In the United States today our industrial war-time expansion, upon which so much depends, is hampered and impeded by the lack of houses. It is further restricted by congestion in the hideous structures which pass under that name. Our expansion has been so rapid that this condition grew up almost unnoticed. Under the pretense of shortage of workers, there come increasing requests for permission to work men, women, and children longer hours than the law permits. The answer, in almost every case, lies in the fact that the real shortage is in houses and rooms. In such cases, increased production is possible only by overworking those who can house themselves, and the end of that would be deplorable. Many factories making war necessities are not running full because they cannot house the workers. Wherever men and women are working in these centers, their vitality frequently is impaired by the conditions under which they live.

Private capital is failing here as it failed in England, and for the same reasons. The situation has assumed alarming proportions

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

and the approach of winter will render intolerable many of the present makeshifts used for houses all over the country. The conditions in Cleveland, Akron, Bayonne, Bridgeport, Norfolk, Newport News, in fact wherever one turns, are fraught with elements of unrest and discontent which are finding frequent expression. As a consequence there is delay in that industrial production which is so vital—a delay which costs so huge a sum. For every day the end of the war is put off, we may charge ourselves with something like \$50,000,000! In the presence of this fact, how shall we answer the question, "What is a house?"

The administration at Washington is fully alive to the importance of these conditions and is preparing to cope with them. If it answers the question wisely and with foresight, the United States will learn a great and valuable lesson, for we shall learn that if a decent house is essential to war, it will be equally essential to our economic life after the war. Upon no vital question affecting human welfare and human progress toward that larger democracy for which we are giving our blood and our treasure will the light of war beat with a more enduring flame than upon the one, "What is a house?"

### II

In building her new towns and villages, England did not treat the house as an isolated factor. In the first place, she embodied in its design the traditions of that rural domestic architecture which has so much delighted the thousands of Americans who have roamed the English countryside. She arranged them, whether singly or in groups, to form a harmonious whole and to avoid the deadly monotony of straight streets lined with houses of one pattern, on one differing from any other and known only by a number, each possessing as much outward atmosphere of inviting appearance as a row of freight cars. Nothing has contributed more to the slowness with which we respond to questions of civic import than this deadly monotony. The man of means builds a home in which he may give expression to his tastes and inclinations. Slowly, but surely, this kind of domestic architecture has lifted itself out of the slough of the Victorian era and the slavish copying by architects too lazy or too ignorant to study their problems, and begun to claim a

place as a distinctly national development of value. But this applies only to an infinitesimally small proportion of our house-building operations. In the main, our towns and cities, and even our rural districts, are made hideous by the multitude of tawdry houses and the ugliness of surroundings which that tawdriness inevitably breeds—bill-boards, dumps, shanties, with waste paper and refuse scattered in indiscriminate profusion. Slowly, but surely, we become accustomed to it; we tolerate it; we ignore it. But all unconsciously we never forget it, for we flee it as a plague. We flee it for the country when we can. We flee it for anything which offers a distraction. And when men, women, and children unconsciously begin to flee the neighborhood of their home, what chance has the community to develop civic, social, or even economic progress? Such flight is the unconscious surrender of a political ideal, the precursor of revolutions.

Yet against the ugliness of our miles and miles of desolate, monotonous streets, we can only point to the one-time picturesque quality of thousands of European communities by reminding ourselves that we have made progress in several important directions.

But why were we willing to accept advances in sanitation, comfort, convenience, with so little thought of the preservation of those other qualities of charm and picturesque attractiveness which we so much admire when we visit Europe, or still find untouched here and there in our own country? The answer involves a long study of our industrial and social transformations, wherein ruthless competition, unchecked by any community foresight, has raised land values unequally, destroyed them by the same ruthless method, and made highly speculative that which should of all things be permanent—realty values.

The full answer, taking cognizance of these things yet denying them their right to lower the standards of a nation by steadily reducing, first, the size of the lot, then the size of the house, then the size of the room, enunciates the warning that this ever more and more relentless compression also squeezes out the moral and physical values which are the only source of national progress.

In her wartime house-building, England has recognized this as a fundamental principle.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

Her houses have ample lot-room and a maximum of light and air. Instead of being monotonous they are as varied in their picturesque character as any of the ancient towns of England. These new villages are striking examples of what may be done when the size of lot and house and room—and their design and arrangement—are not arbitrarily and ruthlessly sacrificed to the financial limitations of private capital. And this is no indictment of the little-understood thing we call capital. It is an indictment of the community and of the nation which is so shortsighted as first to permit and then to compel, as a measure of business salvation to the owner, the erection of structures, houses, tenements, that quickly decline in value through deterioration, ultimately diminish the taxable value of the neighborhood in which they stand, and always lower the standards, moral and physical, of those who inhabit them.

This is the civic crime of the ages—the acceptance by the community of a business principle which every good business man would reject in his own business without the slightest hesitation. Against this condition, of what value are architects and building codes? Their efforts must be directed to cheapening the cost of construction, both by reduction in space area per family and by the use of the least expensive materials and methods of construction which will pass the code, either honestly or by connivance. Today we are in the grip of this inexorable condition; tomorrow, how long deferred we know not, we shall begin to emerge from it, or else one lesson of the war will be lost.

The building of houses is today a speculation. Whether a man builds with the hope of a profit through sale, or rise in value, or with the hope that he will not sustain a loss, does not matter. The speculative idea is there; it cannot be escaped. Worse than this, one man bent upon a speculation which promises large profits to him by taking advantage of the helpless community can erect a type or structure which will so damage a neighborhood as to force others to put their property to the same use. This is only a temporary expedient. In the end the community loses. It suffers the loss in taxable values which is the anxious consideration of the financial authorities of all our cities, and it suffers the moral loss of a descending rather than an ascending scale of life. It is idle to condemn

speculative builders and so-called private capital for these practices. The fundamental fault, which must and will be corrected, is the neglect of the community to see that the longer it gives *carte blanche* to the individual to convert land values to his private gain by no matter what means, the larger will be the bill which the community will have to pay in undoing his misdeeds. This is becoming so increasingly evident that the zoning or districting law, which governs the character and occupancy of new structures in a city, is being applied in several of our American cities. New York City welcomed it with open arms, as the only measure of conserving the city's taxable values, and giving any permanency to realty. It undoubtedly offers a large avenue of relief. European countries have applied it successfully, and while it may have a tendency temporarily to diminish the volume of building, in the end it encourages the erection of good buildings as a permanent rather than a speculative investment.

“What is a house?” It is the prime element of national growth. It is the soil whence springs that eagerness in the heart of every man for a home of his own. It is, after all, the physical attribute of life upon the possession or retention of which most of our energy is directed. Because of these things, it is the backbone of the nation. By the quality of its appearance, its convenience, its durability, one may infallibly determine the real degree of a nation's prosperity and civilization.

“What is a house?” It is not a solitary entity by any means. Let us not forget that. Just houses, no matter how well they answer our question, would not suffice. With houses go other things—good streets, for example (although our blind adherence to the old street idea wastes acres of land and involves costs of upkeep which are rapidly challenging attention), gas, water, light, fire protection (which ought to be needed less and less, rather than more and more), garbage removal—all of these things are indispensable in any modern community. But, in addition to these purely physical attributes, there must be provided opportunities for social recreation, for play, for the influences of the school, the drama, music, the dance, the arts in general. That is why England, in building thousands of homes for her workers (as Germany did before her), has

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

had the foresight to build, wherever the existing community was incapable of meeting the need, schools, churches, halls, recreation grounds, laundries, and even public kitchens. There are large open areas for the children—and for grown-ups, too.

"Socialism," says somebody. "Fad," says another. "Paternalism," cries a third. But, mark this well, the least important thing about it is the name by which it is called. Those who live principally for the pleasure of hugging words to their bosom long after all spark of life has left the letters which they spell glibly over and over, may continue the pursuit of this childish pastime. Men who have sense enough to recognize human forces and currents—who know that the world is moved by these and that progress comes through them and not by the names they are called—such men will understand that England is putting her house in order by putting the houses of her people in order. In other words, she is getting ready to pay her debts by organizing her commerce and industry on new lines, far in advance of anything else (as Germany did before her). She is preparing for her reëntrance into world markets on a larger scale than before, for it is from those markets that all the nations must collect the money for paying their interest charges and debts. Such an economic measure will be precedent to the payment of national debts by all nations, ourselves included. And in the working out of that program, the house, as a giver of rest and contentment, source of satisfaction, emblem of true community growth, and forerunner of sound community values, will play a part which England seems to understand, at last.

Shall we learn?

### III

In the great and wonderful epic of America we have been thrilled with the first coming of the pioneer. As he took his way westward into the depths of the wilderness, we have journeyed with him, breathless, in the great adventure. Is there not then a profound significance—a deep reproach—in the fact that where we once tingled with joy over the picture of the rude "home," the family "fireside," the welcoming "hearth-fire," the sheltering "roof-tree," we are now content to dismiss the picture from our minds and utter platitudes about "housing"?

We even include it in our philanthropies and consign to the pathetic field of charity that which we once glorified as the very essence of our American spirit and courage—the quest of a home!

Bearing these things in mind let us glance at the Thirteenth Census, and particularly at the chapter entitled "Ownership of Homes," for here we are confronted with facts which seem to be a denial of one of the elements that once helped to make up our national ideal. For a whole century at least the United States was the goal of the landless and the houseless of all nations. Some weeks since Mr. Roosevelt uttered a warning over the decline in the number of owned farms and the consequent increase in tenant-farmers. No one who has studied this question in the last decade has ignored its deep significance, but the same fact is equally patent when we study the house. Here, ownership by the occupant has declined in a far greater proportion than has farm ownership. The Census of 1910 tells the story in the table on the following page.

The figures for Alaska and Hawaii are of the greatest interest, because they reveal the swifter strides of the same transformative process of ownership in an earlier stage. The difference in the ten-year periods is marked by great descents. In the United States we note a slight increase in home ownership, other than farms, for the period from 1900 to 1910. This is traceable to the middle sections of the country and is probably due to economic causes connected with the first stages of industrial expansion.

As to the causes which have produced this result there can be but one general answer. Under our economic system we have denied the political and social ideal upon which the nation was founded. We have refuted democracy by beguiling ourselves with crude attempts to solve it in political terms, the while we gave ourselves unbridled license to exploit our land and all that it contained with no thought of what might be the ultimate effect upon ourselves as a nation and upon the democracy we professed to seek. The result we shall have to reckon with. Landlordism has steadily increased until we are in a fair way to actually repeat the very cycle from which men of other nations wished to escape by coming hither. It was an inevitable outcome of the individualism which has passed current

# WHAT IS A HOUSE?

AREA AND CENSUS YEAR	ALL HOMES				FARM HOMES				OTHER HOMES									
	Per cent of total		Per cent of owned homes		Per cent of total		Per cent of owned homes		Per cent of total		Per cent of owned homes							
	Owned	Rented	Owned free	Owned en-cumbered	Free	En-cumbered	Owned	Rented	Owned free	Owned en-cumbered	Free	En-cumbered						
<b>UNITED STATES</b>																		
1910.....	45.8	54.2	30.8	15.0	67.2	32.8	62.8	37.2	42.5	20.3	67.7	32.3	38.4	61.6	25.7	12.7	66.9	33.1
1900.....	46.1	53.9	31.7	14.5	68.7	31.3	64.4	35.6	44.5	19.9	69.0	31.0	36.2	63.8	24.7	11.5	68.3	31.7
1890.....	47.8	52.2	34.4	13.4	72.0	28.0	65.9	34.1	47.3	18.6	71.8	28.2	36.9	63.1	26.7	10.2	72.3	27.7
<b>ALASKA</b>																		
1910.....	65.2	34.8	64.2	1.0	98.5	1.5	90.5	9.5	90.5	.....	100.0	.....	65.0	35.0	64.0	1.0	98.5	1.5
1900.....	80.8	19.2	80.5	0.3	99.7	0.3	(1)	(1)	(1)	.....	(1)	.....	80.7	19.3	80.5	0.2	99.7	0.3
<b>HAWAII</b>																		
1910.....	13.1	86.9	11.4	1.7	87.3	12.7	30.1	69.9	27.3	2.9	90.5	9.5	11.9	88.1	10.3	1.6	86.7	13.3
1900.....	19.1	80.9	17.6	1.5	92.3	7.7	69.9	30.1	64.4	5.5	92.2	7.8	17.1	82.9	15.8	1.3	92.3	7.7
<b>PORTO RICO</b>																		
1910.....	56.7	43.3	55.1	1.5	97.3	2.7	88.5	11.5	84.5	4.0	95.5	4.5	45.4	54.6	44.7	0.7	98.5	1.5

(1) Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

for freedom, and constitutes a national acceptance of the doctrine that the whole welfare of the nation is subservient to the right of the individual to pursue his path as he pleases. We have struggled to curb this individualistic wilfulness by legislation, but without appreciable effect. War comes to us with a flaming warning.

In this struggle of mechanism against mechanism, victory will lie with the side which puts forth the greatest industrial energy. It is our discovery of the colossal need of ships and more ships, of guns and more guns, which also discovers to us the fact that our ability to manufacture is limited by the conditions under which workmen and their families live.

If we ask whether it is best, in any country, that the land and the buildings should be owned by a minority which inevitably grows smaller and smaller, we may safely answer that it has never yet yielded national stability. If, however, we assume, as so many do, that it is the unavoidable result of the struggle between men whose abilities are so unequal in carrying on business, industry, and commerce, then we must admit that life consists merely of an endless and hopeless repetition of cycles, each with its débâcle and rebirth. But does the faith that these cannot and ought not to be prevented still claim so large a body of adherents, now that we are in the throes of the most violent convulsion the world has known—when we can see more clearly than ever before through eyes to which science has lent a new visionary power?

It is upon our answer to this question that

the problem of building houses for workmen depends for the right solution, and it is this which also gives such emphasis to the importance of dealing rightly with the present dire emergency of shortage in houses and the consequent congestion to which so many thousands of our workers, with their wives and families, are condemned. War has made this so vital a question that we must now face it whether we will or no, but we cannot in any way find the right solution without asking ourselves these questions; they weave themselves into the figures in the Census with an insistence which almost implores us to find the answer.

Can it be true that the instinct for possessing a house has become a declining factor in our life? Has the acceptance of the rented substitute, in a steadily increasing measure over a long period of years, supplanted that desire to an extent which indicates its permanent passing? Do we admit that the "efficiency" of our life demands subservience, for the great majority, to a landlordism which cannot be escaped? Must we pursue to its cataclysmic end a system which decrees that the workman must relinquish his wish to own a home in order that he may conserve to himself the largest possible measure of economic freedom? The facts offer relentless evidence of the condition to which we have arrived, and the right solution of what we have pathetically termed the "industrial housing" problem depends utterly upon our resolve to study the problem with open minds and with all the facts squarely before us.



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in ARSENAL ROAD Looking South.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*





GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*junction of CONGREVE ROAD and MAUDSLAY ROAD Looking North*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in CONGREVE ROAD Looking North.*

*H. M. Office of Works  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*Group of Houses in DOWNMAN ROAD.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in WELL HALL ROAD Looking North.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*Entrance Group in WELL HALL ROAD, East Side.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in ROSS WAY Looking East.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in ROSS WAY Looking West.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



# What Is a House? IV\*

By FREDERICK L. ACKERMAN

## Introduction

**T**HIS study is the result of a visit to England in October, 1917, the primary purpose of which was to gather information relating to the operations of the British Government in providing adequate houses for a vast army of munitions workers, to her program for building a still greater number of workmen's houses as a measure of post-war reconstruction, and of discovering how these undertakings were to affect the future social and economic structure of Great Britain. It was, and still is, my hope that information thus gleaned would be of value to us in the formulation and execution of a program to meet, not only a shortage in houses quite similar in many respects to that which faced the British Government at the outbreak of the war in 1914, but to help us in grappling with our own inevitable problem of economic reconstruction.

The house problem which confronted England at the outbreak of the war does not differ in any material way from the problem which faced the United States when she entered the war in the spring of 1917. In both cases there existed a shortage of houses and dwellings which had, prior to the war, given rise to no little concern.

It is not of material value to consider the relative shortage in England and America at the time when each entered the war; and if it were of value, the actual figures representing a shortage are not available, for no accurate surveys of conditions had been made. We knew quite as well a year ago as England knew in 1914 that this problem under conditions of peace was one requiring drastic and immediate action.

During the first year of the war it was made manifest to England in a most emphatic way that effective measures were imperative in dealing with the ever-increasing seriousness of a fundamental problem of national welfare and stability. Modern warfare had shown, as Peace could not do, the vital part played by health and living conditions in industry, for it quickly

became evident what part industry today plays in the winning of battles at the front. This compelled a complete acknowledgment that the first factor contributing to maximum production and national supremacy (a fact already acknowledged in many quarters but not recognized in positive action) is the living conditions of the worker.

In setting forth in detail the British method of dealing with this problem during the war, I shall go somewhat afield from the narrow confines of technical "housing and town planning," with their by-laws and legislative enactments, and consider the reasons why England had advanced so much more rapidly than had we in this field of activity prior to the war; and how it was that, when the war made the unforeseen demands upon England, she was able so rapidly and effectively to translate the will to do into actual accomplishment.

## English and American Similarities and Differences

As I have already suggested, if we consider merely the numerical aspect of pre-war conditions in England and America, and likewise the similarity as regards the urgency of war's demands, the two problems appear to be practically identical.

But with these two points of similarity the identity ends. For as soon as one enters upon the field of technique and attempts to make a direct application of British methods to the solution of the American problem, one is immediately confronted with a long list of values which must needs be first interpreted and then translated into equivalent American usages and terms.

With our laws, broadly speaking, based upon British tradition, we have assumed that we could continue to borrow quite freely of England's modern technique of "housing and town planning." This does not follow. Due to striking differences in social and economic life, laws in our country which appear similar in form and expression to those of England have in practice totally different values.

\*This is an unusual serial story. The author of the preceding chapters now retires and a new author takes his place.—CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER.

# WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

## THE BRITISH BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago the average American traveler in England would have found comparatively little beyond things of an historic interest to arrest his attention. His itinerary would have taken him through the larger centers, the cathedral towns, a few villages of an unusual historic interest where the flavor of Old-World tradition still remained. These are to be seen today; the larger centers have but slightly changed; the historic places of interest for the most part remain, but they are dwarfed by the widespread evidence of a new development, for, scattered throughout England, and to a certain extent in Scotland, are unique and interesting twentieth century communities quite unlike the old villages, which, while recalling the old tradition of form, are decidedly unlike the twentieth century communities one sees in America. They mark the beginning of a new era.

The reason for this momentous transformation is derived from a background of experience and tendency; the contrast is too great to have been achieved by an architect or a school of architects, or a school of city planners; and those of us in America who have desired passionately a more integrated expression must fully acknowledge this, for these villages of England could not have been produced in America, notwithstanding the fact that it is quite possible for the American architect or town planner to project them upon paper.

The houses in a town, the arrangement of a town, the quality of life made possible in a town, serve as an infallible barometer whereby we may read the state of social, physical, economic, and moral development of a people. It is therefore of vital importance to us to find the underlying reason for our failure to produce examples comparable to these modern English communities. It is not enough to understand the elaborate legislative technique surrounding the British operations, nor will mere graphic descriptions of the schemes suffice. We must understand fully the forces which brought about this new condition in England in order that we may determine what phases of English methods are applicable in America. Above all, in this connection we must consider our capacities, for we shall find tendencies in American life and factors in

our political and social institutions which must needs pass through a process of education similar to that of England before it is possible for us to apply even the most elemental principles involved in the success of British housing and town planning effort. That we have not been able to produce comparable results is a clear indication that our social institutions are not sufficiently developed, that our political mechanism is not properly adjusted, and that we lack unity of purpose. Unless we remedy this lack of integrated purpose we shall fail to keep pace with Europe in the fields of industry and finance, notwithstanding the terrific handicaps which, we assume, will be her heritage from the war.

But, to return to the question of cause—the background. All that I propose is an indication in outline, or rather, in silhouette, which will focus attention upon the fundamental difference between British and American directing factors or forces. Of these there are four points to be considered:

1. Conditions surrounding the ownership of land.
2. Conditions which obtained in Great Britain during the Industrial Revolution of a century ago, and which period may be said to have ended with the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832.
3. The remarkable social and political development in England during the last three-quarters century, which period might be said to have ended at the beginning of the present war, but during the latter part of which a remarkable list of social reforms were, by legislative enactment, put into effect—some of them affecting in a profound way England's progress in housing and town planning.
4. Architectural tradition in Great Britain and the development of a group of town planners, architects, and engineers, keenly sympathetic and most active in the development of processes whereby the general tendencies of the day could be crystallized, so to speak, into material expressions of permanence.

## Land Monopoly and Landlordism

It may appear paradoxical to say that development along the lines of integrated social effort has been hastened more rapidly in England by the fact that progress has there been more difficult. Our apathy has been due to the fact that conditions have not been so bad as to develop a united movement with a definite program of amelioration. We have been content to drift. We have failed to realize that we were contending with the same condition which has surrounded the ownership of land in Great Britain. There a landed aristocracy has been

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

determined to maintain the *status quo*; here the ownership of land has been passing steadily into the hands of fewer and fewer owners.

In England the profits from the great estates have been invested more and more in commercial and industrial enterprises, thus bringing about an intimate relation with a common interest in opposing social and labor legislation. Not only this, but with the ownership of land confined to a few whose main purpose in life had been to maintain their holdings and pass them on to the next in line, it has been exceedingly difficult to secure land for small-estate developments or for purposes of rural or urban housing.

Before any material degree of social reform could be obtained it was necessary to break down this great land monopoly. The effort to accomplish this resulted in many general legislative enactments which have been most advantageous to housing and town planning reforms. But these measures in nowise solved the problem. The problem of cheap land still remains. And, as clearly shown by Mr. Whitaker in Chapter III\* of this series, we now see that we have arrived at a condition which parallels that of Great Britain. By regulations made under the Defense of the Realm Acts, the British Government insures that the home-building operations adjacent to munition plants shall not be burdened by the unearned increment. That is to say, when it becomes necessary to build more homes, the land adjoining an existing development can be taken at its pre-war value, and not at the higher value which has been added to it by the initial home-building operation. Unless this be done, each succeeding operation becomes more costly, with a corresponding increase in rent and a diminution in the size of house and lot, and thus we endlessly repeat the vicious cycle of congestion. Reference to this will be made later, for it is the most important factor of all, looking toward national well-being.

In America we are now experiencing the same profound change that resulted in England from what is termed the "Industrial Revolution." It was during this period in England that we witnessed the very rapid changes which transformed an agricultural society into one of industry. We

see the rapid settlement of a vast working-class\* population outside of the limits of the then existing small towns, the development of industrial centers in which the living conditions of the workers were wretched beyond words to express. We see also the poverty and utter helplessness of this vast population. In contrast to this condition of the poor, witness the rapid accumulation of wealth and capital by a small group of individuals who accepted the wretched condition of the worker and the state of inequality as a condition actually contributing to national prosperity. We see how it was that unfair laws were framed and how unfairly justice was dispensed, and by what unfair means was order obtained. We also witness the very slow awakening of the industrial laborer to the unfairness of the existing conditions, and we witness also the slow and labored birth of a new spirit. It is this new spirit brought into being by the intolerable conditions imposed by our economic system, the utter indifference of the rich to the conditions of the poor, which developed into the directing forces of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

### New Forces at Work

Coexistent with the spirit of revolt on the part of the laborers against these intolerable conditions, there developed a most remarkable and profound change in the entire fabric of society, not confined to England alone, but characteristic of western Europe, Australia, and, to a limited extent, of America. This change was particularly marked in England, and something of its nature must be understood before it is possible to grasp the full significance of the housing and town planning movement, for this latter is not a small, isolated movement, but a part of a world tendency which is sure to accumulate force and power for years to come. This is expressed by the recent tendencies in social politics and the resulting legislative enactments of the British Parliament, but its scope, however, includes an almost limitless field of activity and interest. We can no more escape this movement than we could have escaped our entrance into the war.

To consider the nature of this world movement may seem a needless digression from the topic under consideration, but if it is our hope in

\*Journal of the American Institute of Architects, November, 1917.

\*"The Town Laborer," by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond. London, 1917, Longmans, Green & Co.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

America to move forward after the war, we must recognize this force which is pushing forward with continuous and ever-increasing acceleration. Ours must be a program of reconstruction having as its basis a full recognition of the great change which has taken place during the last century and which has been tremendously accelerated by the present world conflict.

In the essay "Toward Social Democracy,"\* by Sidney Webb, is traced the silent revolution which has taken place in ideas during the last three-quarters of a century and which brought us to the state of flux in which the western world found itself at the outbreak of the war. It is pointed out how little appreciated or understood is the great change which has taken place in England and the purpose of the essay is to throw greater light upon the "persistent stream of tendencies" which have brought about this change and to show more clearly the direction of the course of this world movement from the point of departure.

### The New Application of Government as an Association of Consumers

It is pointed out how, a century ago, before the reform of municipal corporations, men had for centuries grouped themselves on the basis of their occupations as producers; how this old grouping of men as producers stood stolidly in the way of social reform; how the slow beginnings of a different grouping took place when local bodies with broader functions were formed in municipal government, the purpose of which was to provide for the needs, not of a special group but for the needs of all of the local residents; and how it followed that these new groups—local governing bodies—by nature of their interests and duties gradually took on the character of an association of consumers. It is shown how the form of administrative government has expanded during the last century as a result of this new concept of its function; how it is that we have become, in a way, accustomed to this change; how we fail to recognize the extent of the service which the Government actually

renders—which service is organized upon the theory of primarily benefiting the public—the consumer, who is likewise benefited as a producer.

It is significant that these functions of government which we accept as a matter of course, and which form such a large part of the activities of the Government, are almost wholly the creation of the last century. We do not appreciate to what extent this new idea has been developed; but one has only to examine in detail such activities as those related to communication and transport, public health, land improvement and development (urban and rural), conservation, education and recreation, banking, insurance and exchange, the production of light and power, housing, agriculture and forestry, or mining, to realize to what extent this concept of government as an association of consumers has developed. Beyond this aspect of governmental activity one finds a tendency, particularly emphasized in England, and expressed in the powerful coöperative societies. America has but slight knowledge of the extent of this movement nor the power which it wields in Europe. Even in England the significance of this movement is not generally recognized; there the middle and upper classes scarcely grasp the import of these organizations. But they are none the less powerful; for so great a shifting of the control and management of the production of commodities by which men live cannot fail to produce far-reaching social and economic changes.

As a result of this tendency toward the collective organization of consumers, one finds in England, during the last quarter of a century, a series of legislative enactments which are destined within a few years to change utterly the general aspect of British government and in turn alter the entire aspect of British life and British physical environment.

Outstanding among the many measures one notes the Acts relating to workmen's compensation, trade unionism, child welfare, old-age pensions, the unemployed, sweated labor, the housing and land problem, national insurance, and the "Lloyd George Budget." While these are all interrelated and part of a single program of social amelioration, our interest must be confined but to a single phase—the housing and land problem which we will consider under "British Pre-War Measures."

\*"Toward Social Democracy," London, 1916. The Fabian Society. A study of social evolution during the past three-quarters of a century, by Sidney Webb, prepared in 1909 for the Cambridge Modern History, and reprinted in 1916, and also in a series of three supplements to "The New Statesman" by the same author, published in 1915, one finds a concise presentation of these changes. The three supplements referred to bear the titles of "Coöperative Production and Profit Sharing," "The Coöperative Movement," and "State Municipal Enterprise."

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

Attending the gradual change in this concept of government from that in which its two principal functions were the dispensing of justice (a limited concept as we now see it) and the conduct of war, to that new concept in which the central idea of government is an organization of consumers, there went on a gradual and interesting change in the form and structure of government itself. Especially is this true of municipal government in Europe and particularly in England. Here we see a development which offers a striking contrast to our methods—a development which those who are interested in housing and town planning should study most carefully, for a knowledge of British municipal government is necessary to an understanding of housing and town planning in Great Britain. This subject, however, will be left for a more detailed treatment under "British Pre-War Methods."

### The Age-Old Problem of Housing

Thoroughly to grasp our problem, we must realize that the housing of workers is not a problem peculiar to ourselves or a result of war; it is, and for generations has been, a Western World problem growing out of industrial systems, and practically the entire Western World, with the exception of America, has recognized it as either a municipal or a federal problem demanding for solution more than restrictive legislation. We must be brought to recognize that the countries of Europe have had this problem to contend with for a much longer period and that their present methods represent the result of a long and painful period of experimentation. We must also recognize that there is a world tendency toward the amelioration of the conditions surrounding workmen; that the present tendency is born of a practical experience which has shown the tremendous value of physical environment upon industrial production. No longer is welfare work confined within the factory or to the region immediately adjacent; now it extends to the housing of workers, and with the housing of workers the inclusion of the amenities is given a dominating emphasis.

However vaguely we may grasp the problems confronting us in the days of reconstruction to come, we are absolutely certain of these things: that nation which is most fully organized and wherein every element of its social and economic

structure is conserved—that nation in which the vision of a great social and economic democracy is expressed in the broadest program of national organization and conservation—that is the nation which will achieve national prosperity because it puts the welfare of the whole above the welfare of any individual or group. There is no other way to national stability.

Now is the time, as never before, when we must scrutinize our ultra-individualistic tendencies, our relative lack of accomplishment along broad social lines of coöperative undertakings, our trembling fear of governmental control, and, above all, of materialistic aims. For these tendencies, unless overcome, will inhibit us absolutely from keeping pace with those nations whose suffering and loss have been much greater than our own, but who, through the integrated effort resulting from war, have learned to realize something of the meaning of social democracy.

### BRITISH PRE-WAR METHODS. I

For some time past, we, the architects and the town planners, have taken the position that our lack of success must be due to a want of appreciation of esthetic values on the part of the public, to the dominating commercialism of our day and people, to an excessive spirit of individualism; and we have been, as a profession, content with that exceedingly superficial answer.

We have endeavored to awaken a public interest in housing and town planning, first, through the spectacular and later the beautiful; then, as the pendulum swung, by a narrow financial assessment of its worth. We have striven hard to promote better housing, primarily by restrictive legislative enactments and through our small-house competitions.

Notwithstanding these activities and the vast amount of propaganda, we have completely failed to bring about anything which approximates a national solution of this problem. Few have acknowledged the reason for our failure.

When you discuss the problem of the housing of workmen with an architect, a social reformer, an engineer, or a corporation with whom the question has become a serious factor in the output of a factory, the discussion revolves about the type, the size, and the cost of houses—the financial aspect and the problem and method of construction. These are apparently in

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

America the dominating factors to be considered and dealt with.

### England's Advanced Position as to Policy and Public Opinion.

But, on the other hand, when you consider this same problem in its various aspects with Englishmen in parallel fields of activity, you very soon discover that the problem is viewed from the angle of a general policy in which they make constant and repeated reference to Local Authority and Local Government Board. They think of the problem in terms of these authorities and the functions exercised by them.

For it is these two bodies that exercise most important powers and functions in connection with housing and town-planning operations in Great Britain. This constant reference to these two bodies is a little confusing to one who attempts to translate British methods into American terms. We may understand that what is represented by the term "Local Authority" corresponds in a very general way to our own executive and legislative municipal bodies; but we can find nothing in the structure of our government even to approximate in function and authority the British Local Government Board.

While the Local Authority occupies a position which in a way corresponds to that held by the "government" in our municipalities, yet the method of electing members to the Council, the mayor, the aldermen, the counsellors, the appointment of officials, their terms of office, the powers which the authorities derive from their charter, from Parliament, from the Local Government Board, and their methods of administration, differ so widely from conditions surrounding municipal government in America that it would be futile to assume that similar legislation could be applied in America without a material modification of government itself. Broadly speaking, the greater trust in which municipal government has been held in Great Britain since the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832 has not only broadened its powers as an effective instrument working for the common good, but that trust has made government far more effective in meeting the actual needs of a democratic community. To develop such a trust is one of our prime duties in loosening democracy from the political grip which now strangles it.

### The Broad Scope and Powers of the Local Government Board

Interesting as is the work of the Local Authority in Great Britain, the work of the Local Government Board is still more interesting. An understanding of its relation to Parliament and, in turn, to the Local Authorities is necessary, and I therefore make reference to \*"The Government of European Cities" wherein the subject is set forth with particular reference to American readers.

The Local Government Board is, in a sense, a part of the ministry. It derives its power from Parliament, exercises control over the work of Local Authorities, and has a wide range of sub-legislative powers. "It may issue to the Local Authorities a General Regulation which is binding throughout the whole country, or an order which affects a single union only." "It is the central supervising authority in all matters relating to local sanitation and the care of public health." "It may even in some cases compel the Local Authorities to provide water-supply or appoint medical officers or improve the drainage system." It should be clearly kept in mind "that the Local Government Board may issue orders only upon the express authority of Parliamentary statute." Its legislative powers are delegated to it by Parliament solely for the purpose of making sure that the statutes of the realm shall be accurately interpreted and applied in the local jurisdiction.

From the standpoint of housing and town planning, the jurisdiction exercised by the Local Government Board in vetoing or amending ordinances and by-laws made by Local Authorities is very important. This is a vital prerogative, and it has operated to secure a closer approach to uniformity in municipal rules relating to public health and welfare, for the Board has adopted the practice of publishing "model" by-laws which the Local Authorities find it safe and advantageous to follow.

Compare the custom in America, where a municipality drafts all sorts of building laws and ordinances, often without the aid of any expert knowledge, with the British custom of having such local by-laws prepared by the experienced and well-paid experts of the Local Government Board in London. Not only does

\*The Government of European Cities. By William Bennett Munro. New York, 1909. The Macmillan Co.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

this minimize the chance of such laws being successfully attacked in the courts, but it insures that the laws shall express both knowledge and experience.

A danger may be cited in the power of the Board to disallow or amend an act of Local Authority. There is, as a matter of fact, no such danger, for the Local Government Board may not thus interfere, "except in the event that the local ordinance is unlawful, and never because it may appear to be unwise or inexpedient."

"So long as the Borough Council keep within their legal powers, they are free from interference."

"More important than the legislative authority of the Local Government Board are its administrative powers." These powers exercised in matters relating to public health and sanitation and the raising of funds have a vital relation to the question of housing and town planning.

\*"Here its influence is at once apparent; for, as will be seen a little later, the boroughs are required to secure its approval of their borrowing projects, and the board, in granting approval, may impose various conditions as to the manner in which the borrowed funds may be applied. If, for example, a borough council decides to adopt the permissive provisions of the acts relating to the housing of workers, and to undertake the expropriation of lands for the erection of municipal tenements, it must get the sanction of the Local Government Board before it may borrow any money for the undertaking. Before granting this permission the board will, through one or more of its officers, conduct an inquiry into the merits of the project, and, if it gives its consent, will usually require the scheme to be carried out subject, in many important respects, to its further approval.

"It will undertake to see, for example, that the new dwellings erected by the council provide for the housing of as many persons as have been displaced, that the buildings are of proper character, and that the various other ends contemplated by the statutes are duly secured. Many other so-called 'adoptive acts' have given broad powers to the boroughs, to be exercised by them subject to the supervision of the Local Government Board; indeed, the existence of this board as a suitable supervising authority has prompted Parliament to intrust borough councils with much authority which it would probably never have granted them to be used without supervision. If the boroughs ask for powers which seem in general to be desirable but which might easily be abused, the usual parliamentary practice has been to grant the privileges asked for but to make the Local Government Board responsible for seeing that they are not misused. It should be emphatically declared, however, that this body is the balance-wheel, and

not the engine, of local administration. It does not drive the machinery of borough government, for this function rests with the borough council; but it does see that the machinery is driven smoothly and with due regard to the principles underlying the legislative mechanism. The initiative, the elaboration of projects, and the immediate supervision of all undertakings must be supplied locally; it is for the board to keep the wheels in their proper grooves."

Beyond these sublegislative and executive powers the Local Government Board performs a function which is perhaps still more important.

\*"Where the Local Government Board has no right of interference, and where its approval is not asked by local authorities, it may tender its advice for what it is worth; and this it frequently does. On the other hand, any local authority is entitled to seek counsel from the board and its expert staff, a privilege of which the officials of the boroughs freely avail themselves, not infrequently in order to find a means of extricating themselves from serious legal or administrative dilemmas. John Stuart Mill has somewhere remarked with great truth that 'power may be localized, but knowledge, to be most useful, must be centralized.' At the headquarters of the Local Government Board is accumulated a vast fund of the most useful knowledge concerning every phase of municipal administration; a wealth of statistical and other data is there on file, and some of the best legal, financial, and technical skill in England is at hand to interpret it. When the wording of a new statute is not clear to a town clerk, when a borough treasurer gets his accounts tangled or fails to agree with his auditors on any point, when a committee of the borough council is at a loss to know how it should proceed with any project—in a word, when any local authority wishes to get expert and reliable advice without having to pay for it, the first and logical recourse is to Whitehall.

"Whether the question relates to the extension of a water service, or to the purchase of supplies for a local hospital, or to the distribution of duties among officials, or to the wrangles of councillors over some rule of procedure, it is the duty of the Local Government Board to give its counsel or advice whenever it is asked for. Not infrequently, indeed, the matter at issue is so complicated that the board finds it necessary to send one of its experts to make a personal inquiry before it feels justified in giving its opinion."

In the field of supervision over local finance, such as the authorization of loans for a great variety of purposes, in which is included such projects as the development of a town planning scheme or the development of a group of working-class dwellings with their amenities, the Local Government Board possesses a further function beyond those referred to, which is of vital importance to the British program of housing and town planning. In America there

\*Ibid.

\*Ibid.



## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

is no governmental body which exercises in this field a similar function.

One other phase of the work of the Local Government Board remains to be noted:

\*"In the performance of these varied functions it is, of course, only natural that the Local Government Board should find it necessary to employ a large staff of officials. The total number of these now runs well up into the hundreds, including sanitary engineers, medical officers, inspectors of poorhouses, workhouses, auditors, legal experts, and many similar officers embodying a high grade of specialized skill. All these officials are appointed by the crown on recommendation of the president of the board; they hold office during good behavior and efficiency; they are members of the national civil service; and they receive liberal remuneration. Secure in the tenure of their posts, responsible to the central government alone, and hence having no local interests to serve, these officers are able to go about their work in an unbiased frame of mind, and hence have earned a general reputation for impartiality and fearlessness in their recommendations.

"There is, on the other hand, no doubt that the Local Government Board is not popular with the local authorities and that many of these latter would welcome a diminution of the board's supervisory jurisdiction. Were the officials of the board susceptible to partisan influences, the whole system of central supervision would lose its chief prop, which lies primarily in the efficiency and integrity of the officers who exercise the guiding authority. Englishmen would scarcely tolerate the supervision of their local government by any officer who, like the French prefect, attempted to combine the duties of an administrative official with the activities of a party agent."

### BRITISH PRE-WAR METHODS. II

With this rather general statement relating to the drift of social tendencies during the last century and the significance of certain elements in the structure of British municipal government, we may proceed to a study of the specific acts of legislation and the British pre-war technique of housing and town planning. It may be well to repeat that the conditions in Great Britain were such during the nineteenth century that it required no exaggeration of statements, to borrow the title of Mr. Aldridge's book, to make out an excellent "Case for Town Planning."

#### Legislative Phases

Specific legislation in this field may be said to have been initiated in 1846, and the passage of a series of Public Health and Sanitary Acts from that day to 1875 may be said to have been in the nature of first steps leading to the passage of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

\*Ibid.

The Public Health Act of 1875 empowered Local Authorities to make by-laws relating to such matters as the width of streets, the sewage of the same, construction of new buildings, the space to be provided about buildings, and to certain related sanitary conditions. It is important to observe, in connection with this act and the resulting regulations known as the "model" by-laws of the period, that it resulted in what is now known as "the new slum." It was a step, it is true, in advance from the chaos of the days preceding; but it was at the same time responsible for the endless rows of monotonous brick dwellings having nothing but a paved street in front and an ugly yard behind. There were no amenities resulting from these by-laws, and the fields about British cities became rapidly covered with these stupid habitations, quite similar, though lower in height, to what we see growing up at the present time in and about our American cities.

The sort of structures which are permitted in the outlying districts of New York under the new districting regulation, passed only last year, are quite as bad, if not in many respects worse, than the British "new slum" and against which the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 was directed quite as much as it was against any other single condition which then obtained.

#### Garden Cities

Certain other events which resulted in the passage of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, and which were material factors in stimulating housing and town planning progress, were the development of Bourneville by Mr. George Cadbury, the foundation of Port Sunlight by Sir Wm. Lever, and the inauguration of the garden city movement through the publication of that practical dream of Mr. Ebenezer Howard, "Garden Cities of Tomorrow," which made a strong public appeal and awakened the entire nation to possibilities of which the people had not dreamed.

The Garden City Association was formed; studies of continental housing conditions were made; several associations for carrying on educational work were organized; schemes for garden suburb planning were launched by private and coöperative companies. In 1904 the Trades Union Congress took up the work and, during the latter part of the period referred to, forced

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

too numerous to mention became allied with the movement, which ended in the organization of a Deputation of the National Housing Reform Council to the Government in 1906 and the ultimate passage of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

### The Tenement Must Go

In view of the general tendency in America at the present moment to accept the tenement house as a permanent institution, it may be well to note that as a result of British experience from 1875 to 1909, during which time sanitation reformers accepted the tenement and encouraged philanthropists to erect buildings of this type, public opinion swung around completely to a strong opposition against this and to an equally strong advocacy of the small dwelling. Everywhere the tenement is now condemned, except as a mere temporary expedient where special problems exist as, for example, in certain areas of London and Liverpool. *Even in such localities the tenement is considered a temporary element, and the program of progress in England looks forward toward its complete eradication.*

### The Beginnings of England's Program

Twenty-one years ago the deputation referred to presented to the British Government a comprehensive program of housing and town planning reform which, I submit, might serve the same purpose in impressing our Government. As regards its scope, constructive suggestion, and presentation of the vital needs of the day, it should be applied by us with but slight modifications, for I believe firmly that unless we adopt some similar comprehensive program, we shall very soon find ourselves face to face with a problem which will require even more drastic action.

After calling attention to the failure of the acts relating to the better housing of workers, which acts, it must be admitted, were broader in their scope and far more effective than are those of a similar nature now in existence in a few localities in the States, and after pointing out that the existing slums in the British cities would not be removed during the coming century at the then-existing rate of progress, the \*Deputation asserted that the causes for such failure were to be found in:

\*The Case for Town Planning. A Practical Manual for the Use of Councilors, Officers, and Others Engaged in the Preparation of Town

(a) The scarcity of the supply of suitable dwellings to which the dwellers in overcrowded and insanitary houses can remove.

(b) The imperfect character of existing powers relating to the clearance of unhealthy areas, and the repair or destruction of insanitary houses.

(c) The lack of efficient municipal powers to secure the proper development of new housing areas and the building of suitable houses.

(d) The failure of Local Authorities to fulfil their present health and housing responsibilities.

(e) The insufficient machinery for securing effective inspection, control, and stimulus by the Central Authority.

[It is significant that the traditional attitude toward land in England had not then undergone the change which now has taken place so rapidly, and thus the prime governing factor in house-shortage and congestion was almost wholly ignored.—F. L. A.]

But do not these statements recall similar existing conditions in the United States?

Among the specific suggestions looking toward reform should be noted the following statement:

\*The reforms we advocate are as follows—

#### I. Local Authorities Should Be Stimulated to Carry Out Their Duties Under the Health and Housing Acts:

(a) By conferring a power of initiative and stimulation on any four persons in the district, not only with regard to nuisances and unhealthy dwellings, but also in respect of any necessary modifications of by-laws (as well as the provision of new dwellings, as in the Irish Labourers' Acts).

(d) The Central Government should appoint health and housing inspectors to visit the various districts, to advise Local Authorities as to the best methods of dealing with housing improvements, to report on cases of neglect, to temporarily supersede, if necessary, councils continuing to neglect their duties, and to carry out the necessary work at their expense.

(e) Special public enquiries should be held by the Local Government Board in certain selected districts with the highest death-rates.

#### II. There Should Be Amendments of the Public Health Acts to Secure That:

(a) Compulsory house-to-house inspection in every part of every district should be made by every Local Authority, instead of the intermittent or partial inspection now generally made;

(b) There should be a statutory duty on all Local Authorities to appoint properly qualified medical officers and sanitary inspectors to give their whole time to their duties, and such officers should not be removable except with the consent of the Local Government Board.

#### III. Closing and Demolition of Unhealthy Dwellings:

Local Authorities should be empowered to make a closing order which should take effect unless an appeal Planning Schemes. By Henry R. Aldridge. London, 1915. The National Housing and Town Planning Council.

\*Ibid.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

be made within fourteen days to the local magistrates, and if the house be not made fit for human habitation within four months of the date of making the order, demolition should automatically follow without further proceedings.

### IV. *Clearance of Slum Areas:*

The Deputation consider that the owner of property which is dangerous to human health should be treated in the same way as the owner of diseased meat.

### V. *The Creation of Model Suburbs:*

Local Authorities should be fully enabled to purchase and hold large estates in land on their outskirts and to deal with such land on similar lines to those adopted at Bourneville, and, to secure this end, Local Authorities (subject, in the case of parish and district councils, to the consent of the higher authorities) should be allowed to acquire such cheap and suitable land in large quantities to use, or hold, or lease, without necessarily specifying any immediate purpose or detailed scheme.

### VII. *Compulsory Purchase of Land:*

The procedure for compulsory purchase of land should be shortened, cheapened, and simplified. It is further suggested—

(a) That the basis of any compulsory purchase of land required by public bodies should be the capital value of the land as declared by the proper valuation authority, or by special commissioners, as in the case of the income tax (subject to an additional exceptional allowance of a pre-determined and limited extra percentage for severance and other special circumstances).

### VIII. *Town and Village Development Commission:*

(a) A central commission, or a special department of the Local Government Board with extensive powers as to land, housing and transit, should be established to consider the main conditions of growth of the various districts in the country and, where the county or borough area is not suitable, to map out what may be called "Scientific Areas," for each of which there should be subsequently established a statutory committee consisting, as to a majority, of representatives of the Local Authorities, and, as to the remainder, of experts nominated by the Central Commissioners.

### IX. *Rural Housing, Small Holdings, and Other Village Developments:*

Local Authorities and these bodies in suitable districts should be empowered and assisted

(a) To promote the proper development of villages by encouraging the provision of adequate and cheap means of transit, small holdings, and coöperative agricultural societies; and

(b) To take definite action to secure that proper schemes of colonization of certain rural districts shall be carried out.

### X. *Town-Extension Planning:*

Local Authorities, or groups of Local Authorities, should be empowered to make plans for town extension dealing

with the development of the land on the outskirts and prepared in good time so as to meet future needs, especially as to main roads, open spaces, and sites for public buildings or workmen's dwellings.

### XI. *Cheaper Money:*

(a) The Public Works Loans Commissioners should lend money for housing purposes up to eighty years to public bodies, and, on the recommendation of the Local Government Board, to the extent of not more than 80 per cent, to recognized societies of public utility building on municipal land, at the lowest market rate at which the Treasury can raise money at the time.

(b) The restrictions which prevent the funds of savings banks, charities, and ecclesiastical bodies from being invested in housing schemes should be removed so long as this can be done without detriment to the funds.

### XII. *Revision of By-laws:*

(a) By-laws should be strengthened in the direction of securing more open spaces and larger gardens when new housing estates are developed. There should be a clause prohibiting, except under special conditions, the building of more than a certain number of houses or rooms per acre, according to the nature of the district.

(b) By-laws as to new roads should make provision for a new and less expensive type of street, when used solely for access to groups of cottages, by requiring only part of the roadway to be made up.

(c) By-laws as to the structure of walls and buildings should be revised in the direction of avoiding unnecessary expense, while encouraging the use of new materials and better methods of construction.

While the method of executing these proposals does not exactly apply to American conditions, there are none among them which do not offer most constructive suggestions. As a result of this effort upon the part of the Deputation, the growing public interest in the question, and the able leadership of Mr. John Burns, Parliament passed the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

This Act is too detailed and too local in its provisions to be inserted, but it is absolutely essential to set forth a summary of its more important provisions.

### \*A Brief Summary of the Town Planning Powers and Duties of Local Authorities Under the Act of 1909.

#### The Scope of a Town Planning Scheme

Local Authorities may, with the permission of the Local Government Board, place in hand the preparation of Town Planning Schemes governing all new building developments in their areas or adjacent to their areas, thus securing that the faults of bad planning in the past shall not be repeated in the future. This power to prepare Town Planning Schemes

\*Ibid.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

does not, however, apply to the remodeling of the existing town, the replanning of badly planned areas, the driving of new roads through old parts of a town—all these are beyond the scope of the new town planning powers.

### The Effect of a Town Planning Scheme When Prepared

When a town planning scheme has been prepared in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Local Government Board, it will govern the development of the areas to which it applies, and all the owners and others interested in the land included in the area to which the scheme applies, must act in accordance with the provisions of the scheme. This will not mean that, as a result of the making of the plan, roads will at once be constructed and the developments marked on the plan carried into effect. The making of a town plan—and this applies to town planning, both in continental countries and in Great Britain—is in effect the definite fixing of the lines which the development shall take when, either in the opinion of the private owner or of the Local Authority, the time has arrived for the development to be made.

### The Objects of a Town Planning Scheme

The objects to be attained by the preparation of a town planning scheme are defined as "proper sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience," and provisions relating to these objects may be inserted in a town planning scheme.

### The Securing of Proper Sanitary Conditions and Amenity

In regard to proper sanitary provisions and amenity, Local Authorities, in preparing town planning schemes, may include provisions in respect of the following:

1. The limitation of the number of dwellings per acre through the area included in the scheme;
2. The reservation of certain areas for residential purposes;
3. The defining of shopping centers and the limitation of the erection of warehouses and factories to certain areas;
4. The fixing of conditions governing the height and character of the buildings to be erected in various parts of the area included in the scheme;
5. The fixing of a definite proportion between the site actually covered by a building and the area of garden or other form of curtilage to the building;
6. The granting of power to the Local Authority to purchase land for open spaces at prices to be defined in the scheme itself (or in agreements added thereto) or to accept gifts of land from owners, such land to be dedicated to the use of the public;
7. The fixing of building-lines and the requiring those building houses to set back their cottages (at such distances as may be prescribed in the scheme) to secure the provision of proper air-space and sunlight for each home;
8. The use of private open spaces and the preservation of these and of objects of national interest or natural beauty;
9. The framing of regulations requiring owners of private gardens, allotments, or private open spaces, to keep them in proper order;

10. The prohibition of advertisements which may interfere with the amenity of the district;

11. The forbidding of the erection of houses on unsuitable sites—e.g., swampy land;

12. The fixing of minimum sizes of habitable rooms;

13. The variation of conditions of building construction.

By a clause specially added in the committee stage, the giving of compensation to owners in those cases where Local Authorities, with the approval of the Local Government Board, place limits in regard to the number of buildings per acre, the height and character of the buildings, is guarded against.

This power is of especial value and has been described as worth the whole of the rest of the powers of the Act taken together. In effect, the possession of this power enables Local Authorities to secure that, as new areas are developed, the provision of gardens and open spaces shall be such as to secure the health and amenity of the district without placing a financial burden on the community to secure this desirable end.

### The Power of Local Authorities to Develop Estates and Make Roads Under Town Planning Schemes

In regard to convenience, Local Authorities may, under town planning schemes, frame wide and varied provisions to secure that, on the one hand, the growing traffic needs of their districts shall be adequately met, and that, on the other hand, where relaxations of conditions as to road-width can be made with safety, the cost of road-making shall thus be lessened.

The preparation of town planning schemes gives, in effect, to Local Authorities invaluable opportunities of studying the traffic needs of their districts and of substituting, for the present 36 feet and 40 feet standards of road-width, other standards comprising, at the one end of the scale, the arterial road of from 60 to 120 feet in width, and, at the other end of the scale, the short residential road with only 20 feet of constructed road, but with a distance of from 60 to 80 feet between the houses on opposite sides of the roads.

In other words, under a town planning scheme, a Local Authority may provide for the construction of not one, but several, types of road, including:

- (a) Main arterial roads from 60 to 120 feet or more in width;
- (b) Secondary streets from 40 to 50 feet in width;
- (c) Short streets, not taking through traffic, with widths of 20, 24, and 30 feet.
- (d) Quadrangles served by access roads of only 7 feet in width.

Local Authorities may themselves undertake the development of estates by purchasing land, making roads, and leasing the sites or building cottages themselves. This power is, however, subject to certain limitations. These limitations are dealt with in Part II.

From this short analysis it will be seen that, taken together, these powers may be regarded as giving to those Local Authorities who realize the need for exercising control over the processes of town and village growth powers of a most valuable kind.

## Letchworth

Such, in brief, are the major provisions of this Act.

Before leaving the subject, it should be noted—and this is a point of utmost importance—that in the Act it is stated that the Local Government Board *may* prescribe a set of general provisions (local rules or by-laws) or separate sets of general provisions adopted for areas of a special character. Up to the present time the Local Government Board has not deemed it wise to issue a set or sets of general provisions, *an exceedingly wise policy*. Apparently this method of procedure leaves to the process of evolution the determination of the details which should be incorporated in a "scheme." The work which has thus far been accomplished by the several Local Authorities and that which will follow will greatly serve to crystallize, through trial and experimentation, the basis of the general provisions which the Local Government Board will put forth.

## BRITISH PRE-WAR METHODS. III

So much has been written about Port Sunlight, Bourneville, and Letchworth that one hesitates to repeat. Yet it seems vital to an understanding of the situation in Great Britain to consider certain aspects of these two examples of housing and town planning as typical of other developments in presenting a complete picture of the British pre-war technique. It was the garden city movement which played a vital part in the evolution of housing and town planning legislation just considered, and it is this movement which is certain to play an even greater part in the social and economic development of England after the war.

## Coöperative Enterprise

By way of explanation to the American reader, it should be made clear that there is a wide and vital distinction in England between what is known as the "garden city" and the "garden suburb." The one refers to a community wherein are found homes for all classes, and for industry, with agricultural land sufficient to maintain the inhabitants in nearly all the essentials, and the amenities; while the garden suburb, as the name implies, refers merely to a collection of homes, small shops, and community buildings. Letchworth is a garden city; Hampstead is a garden suburb.

The social and financial organization of these communities can be most clearly stated by quoting directly from a summary by Mr. Edward S. Culpin in his book on the "Garden City Movement up to Date." Of Letchworth he says:

"The estate, of now 4,566 acres, is the property of First Garden City Ltd., a company with a dividend limited to 5 per cent cumulative, whose memoranda and articles embody the root principles of the movement. The town is situated thirty-four miles from London on the Great Northern Railway, just beyond the old market town of Hitchin. It is served also by the Midland Railway from Hitchin, and being bounded by the Great North Road traffic facilities are excellent.

"First Garden City Ltd., being the owners of what was practically virgin land, have had themselves to provide the necessary equipment of the town, which, in the case of the garden suburbs, is derived from neighbouring towns. Thus the company own the gas, water, and electric light undertakings; they have made the roads; they provide and maintain the sewers and the sewage disposal works; and they have organized such facilities as an omnibus service, swimming bath, etc., to encourage the growth and amenities of the town.

"Besides the Bye-laws of the Hitchin Rural District Council, under whose jurisdiction Letchworth is, the company has its own building regulations and its surveyor exercises some supervision over designs and specifications to ensure proper conditions being observed. The maximum of houses allowed to the acre is twelve, but as the size of the house increases so does the area of the plot, so that all over the building area (which is 1,200 acres only, the remainder being agricultural and park land) there will probably be an average of not more than half that number. An ultimate population of 30,000 people is provided for on the town area, or 35,000 including the agricultural belt. Thus, over the whole of the seven square miles of Garden City, there will be an average of only nine people to the acre, compared with the two or three hundred still allowed by the Bye-laws of many towns.

"The agricultural belt of 3,000 acres marks a fundamental difference between Letchworth and every other experiment on garden city lines, and, indeed, distinguishes it from every other town in the world. Many places have belts or girdles of green, but none has a definite provision such as this; and as in the town the way is pointed for a new tradition of development, so it is hoped that the agricultural belt will help in the solution of some of the rural problems. A good deal of attention has been given to small holdings, especially in the direction of milk production, and recently an exhaustive inquiry has been made with a view to assisting in this development.

"An important side of the Letchworth experiment, and indeed the crucial test, is the development of its factory area. If Mr. Howard's theory had not been sound,

\*Garden City Movement up to Date. By Edward S. Culpin. London, 1914. Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

manufacturers would not have gone to Letchworth and the place would never have developed. There are now some thirty industries established in the town, and several of these have been very considerably extended. The trades represented include engineering, printing, embroidery, bookbinding, photographic utensils, joinery works, pottery, weaving, commercial motor engineers, motor car makers, metal works, organ builders, seed and implement factories, scientific instrument makers, colour printers, corset makers, etc. There are five building companies working on the estate. An interesting feature is the coöperative house 'Homesgarth.'

"The town is complete with every facility for commerce, trade and social life. Its residential facilities are excellent, and as a place of residence alone it is being much sought after. The industrial population have here advantages which have been possessed by no other town in the country. Its housing is good, the gardens are ample, and there are many opportunities for recreation and social life. Church life and education are well provided for. There are several public halls, and the arrangements for water, lighting and sanitation are as near perfect as they can be. Its scope is infinitely greater and presents the solution of more serious problems than any suburb of a town can possibly do.

"Letchworth has been described as England's healthiest town. Both with regard to the general death-rate and infantile mortality the figures are far below any other place in the country."

### Hampstead

And of Hampstead garden suburb he says:

"The growth of the Estate has been phenomenal. Since the first sod was cut on May 2nd, 1907, 1,550 houses have been built and occupied, with an estimated population of 5,000 people.

"The value of the houses and public buildings on the Estate is estimated at £800,000, representing, with the land and roads, a capital value of over £1,000,000, while the ground rent secured amounts to no less than £11,330 out of a total estimated rental of £15,000. Dividends at the rate of 5 per cent per annum on the ordinary shares have been paid during the past four years.

"The end of the first portion of the Estate (240 acres) being in sight, the Directors have acquired another 112 acres of land from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, while the Copartnership Tenants Limited, who have been responsible for the development of a large portion of the original area, have taken up 80 acres of the added portion and have also taken 300 acres direct from the same authorities, making a total of one square mile of land, the whole of which will be planned by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Ltd.

One must include as a most important factor or element in the development of both the garden city and the garden suburb, the Public Utility Society where the central idea is the substitution for the personal ownership of the individual home without any responsibility for

the condition of the surrounding estate, of the principle of ownership of shares in a company, these shares carrying the right of tenancy of the house and the acceptance of definite collective responsibility for estate management.

Finally, these results are made possible by the fact that loans may be obtained from the Government for a long period of years at a rate approximating that which the Government has to pay.

### THE WAR PROGRAM: LAND

The foregoing, in very broad outlines, is the background against which we must examine the methods of industrial housing conducted by the British Government during the war. As an essential part of this background, one might naturally include conditions surrounding the acquisition of land; but, inasmuch as land for industrial housing purposes was acquired during the war under the authority of the Defense of the Realm Act, it seems best to consider the land question under the heading of the "War Program."

Prior to the war, there were two ways through which land could be acquired by the State, namely, the Prerogative and the Defense Acts and the Military Lands Acts. These two Acts, however, are not often used because the machinery is cumbersome, and, in the case of the second, the methods of assessing compensation is extremely favorable to the owners of the land. These need not concern us for the moment, for it was under the Defense of the Realm Act and the regulations made thereunder that land has been almost exclusively taken during the war. Under this Act, His Majesty has power, by order in Council, to make regulations "for securing public safety and the defense of the realm." These regulations, when made, have the same effect as if they were a part of the statute, provided, of course, that they are within the powers conferred by the statute. A detailed statement of purposes for which land could be thus taken is set forth in the Defense of the Realm Consolidation Act of 1914. It is important to study the Acts themselves and the regulations at present in force. These are published quarterly in the "Defense of the Realm Manual of Emergency Legislation." Regulations 2 to 5 enable the Government, where necessary for the purpose of the defense of the realm, to take land or

\*Ibid.



## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

buildings for military or naval purposes, or for the purposes of agriculture and the provision of food. It is important to note that no compensation is mentioned in any of the Defense of the Realm Acts or the regulations.

### Compensation to Owners

At the beginning of the war, under the above regulations, land was taken for the purposes of the war. Hotels were taken for the use of public departments; poor, law, and charitable institutions and local Government institutions were taken for hospitals and housing of workers. The question of compensation was left in the air or settled by agreement in which the Government agreed to pay the bare loss. To provide for the conditions where an agreement as to compensation could not be reached, and in cases not otherwise provided for by the law, the Defense of the Realm (Losses) Commission was appointed on Dec. 31, 1915. The reports of this Commission are important to consider in detail, for they set up the principles upon which compensation should be paid. In brief, the principle is that the person deprived of land merely gets compensation for the bare loss which he has suffered; if the land was not being used he gets nothing except for damage directly done.

While this may or may not be a satisfactory solution of the problem as regards temporary occupancy, it was felt about the middle of 1916 that something more should be done for landowners. Realizing that the war would probably last for some time to come, it was deemed wise to provide a new system of compensation. Consequently, on Dec. 22, 1916, the Defense of the Realm Acquisition of Land Act was passed. This provided for a system of compensation considerably more generous than had been given by the Losses Commission, but considerably less generous than that provided by the Land Loss Act.

It should be clearly kept in mind that this Act does not deal with compensation for the occupation of land during the period of the war. This is still paid either by agreement or under the Defense of the Realm (Losses) Commission. The act deals mainly with:\*

1. Temporary occupancy after the conclusion of the war.

\*Briefed from a memorandum prepared for the Journal by Mr. J. C. Miles of the Ministry of Munitions, London.

2. Permanent occupation.  
3. The power of the Crown to sell at a later date.

4. Principles of compensation.  
In this the technique of the Land Clauses Act is retained but the principles of compensation are modified by the schedule. Article 6 of the schedule is of the greatest importance, for by virtue of this article the value of the land is its value at the commencement of the war. *This is a point of the utmost importance. The Government therefore avoids paying for an increment which it creates by its own effort.*

5. Provision of a tribunal to determine compensation. (The Act also deals with a number of other difficult questions.)

We may briefly summarize the situation as regards the occupation of land for war purposes as follows:

Through the powers set up in the Defense of the Realm Act, the state took possession of land without considering the question of compensation. Where the occupation is temporary, for the period of the war or a shorter time, compensation is payable, either by agreement or is assessed by the Defense of the Realm (Losses) Commission. For land occupied temporarily or permanently for a period after the war, compensation is determined by the Defense of the Realm (Acquisition of Land) Act. It is obvious that the method of settlement is complex because of the different systems of compensation for occupancy during the war and for occupancy thereafter, and that the first is not statutory, whereas the second is done under statutory powers. While it would be convenient to bring the whole scheme under legislative enactment, one cannot but realize, after examining the documents relating to the establishment of the basis of settlement, that the procedure of immediate action adopted by the Government in its Defense of the Realm program was the one absolutely certain way of meeting the situation.

### Details of the English Operations

So much for the general executive and financial aspect of wartime housing. Let us consider for a moment the physical side. One thing strikes the observer forcibly in practically all of the larger operations conducted by the Government. These communities are complete. They are laid out along the latest ideas of housing and



town planning. They contain, beyond the cottages (permanent and temporary) for industrial workers, dining-halls, recreation buildings, clubs, institutes, schools, playgrounds, churches, hospitals, stores, markets, and they are provided with excellent roads with curbs, sidewalks, fences, hedges, and, in many cases, trees have already been planted. The permanent elements—and these are not confined to cottages, but include many of the amenities noted above—in arrangement, design, materials, and the amount of space surrounding each cottage unit, compare most favorably with any of the similar operations developed prior to the war; in fact, in some of them it seems to me that I observed a definite step in advance. As I passed through a number of these, it was exceedingly difficult for me to grasp the idea that the first sod was turned very little over two years ago. There were no ragged edges. The characteristic British thoroughness was everywhere expressed.

During the early stages of the war, England first embarked upon a policy of erecting temporary hotels and cottages, but when the magnitude of the struggle was fully grasped, and it was realized that the shortage of materials used in temporary structures carried their cost to very nearly that of permanent structures, the general policy was changed, and from that time on the central idea has been to build of permanent materials wherever it was humanly possible so to do.

Of the permanent cottages, nothing in particular need be stated beyond this: They are quite as good in every respect as the best examples constructed prior to the war. They are somewhat simpler in design and, in consequence, I think, rather more appropriate.

#### The Amenities and Their Vital Value in Production

One other point should be emphasized: We must not limit our concept of housing operations to the question of cottage erection and the provision merely of sidewalks and roads. In the original plans for these various industrial towns, England included a great variety of buildings and features which come under the general head of "amenities." Owing to the urgency of war's demands, the scarcity of labor and materials, in some cases the immediate erection of these was omitted from the construction pro-

gram. It is significant that very shortly after the plants were put into operation every possible source of energy was then directed toward the immediate erection of these missing elements. These were added for a very definite reason: It was hoped that by their addition to the housing elements the very serious daily labor "turn-over" would be reduced. Such proved to be the case, and, in the later schemes, it is interesting to observe that the construction and provision of the amenities goes forward at the same rate of speed as does the erection of the cottages and the plant.

It may not be evident from the drawings and from the few photographs available at this date how adequately do these new Government constructed industrial towns express an integrated purpose. They give evidence to a broad imaginative concept which is in *scale with the needs of the day*. They prove the value of focusing expert knowledge upon a single problem, for it is, upon final analysis, not a hundred different problems; it is rather a single problem with perhaps a score of variations. Why should we waste effort in the organization of a hundred enterprises which in turn must each have its many subdivisions of organization? Our problem is to conserve our energies.

In the light of my recent experience, viewing for the moment the British and the American problem at a little distance, I cannot but feel that our proposals for carrying forward the work of housing the rapidly expanding army of munitions workers is little more than a feeble gesture. If we are to succeed to a degree in any way comparable with Britain's success in the fabrication of munitions or in scale with our own ideals, we *must* at a single step span the entire field of the British background of experience, both pre-war and war, and set up immediately as a part of the federal organization for carrying on the war a central body with sufficient power to adequately meet the maximum demands of industry, regardless of what those demands may be. *We must be made to realize the proper sense of scale*, and the bearing of England's achievement on her future social and industrial structures.

#### RECONSTRUCTION

We assume that in England, where apparently every effort is directed toward the accomplish-

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

ment of the vivid national purpose—War, that there must be a breathless waiting for the outcome of the struggle and a deep anxiety regarding the days when her vast armies shall have returned from the field of action. Paradoxical as it may seem, such is not the case; there is no waiting. Everywhere there is a searching of the heart, a probing after fundamental values, and an active endeavor to formulate the outlines of a policy of reconstruction which will, in some small measure, compensate for the losses sustained, and which will render the national life after the struggle not unworthy of the deeds of heroism at the front.

Three years of struggle with a single object as the goal of national endeavor have wrought tremendous changes, and the countless strands of individual aims have been gathered up and woven into one vast fabric of national purpose.

But we all know that this war must end, and the problem, therefore, is what shall then be the national purpose which will serve to hold the fabric together?

How can that purpose be expressed in terms intimately related to the many complex forces contributing to the national life? By what technique can these forces be coordinated and directed without the sacrifice of individual initiative? Such are a few of the questions uppermost in the mind of thoughtful England today. Similar in import is the industrial "unrest." Through the travail of war, there has been born a hope conceived in the dark days of the Industrial Revolution of a century ago.

If viewed in the light of pre-war convention and dogma, the proposals for reconstruction seem revolutionary; but they are not so viewed. Thought which was revolutionary in its nature has now become merely radical. And there are no limits or boundaries. Speculation, it is true, centers around the problems related to labor, industry, and education, but the proposals search out and affect every phase of national life. The value of directed integrated effort has, in a measure, been realized, and the realization has opened up vistas looking toward a nearer approach to a general scheme of national syndication of group purposes.

Such, in brief, was the background of tendency and thought against which I viewed the industrial technique through which England supplies her vast armies at the front. My purpose was

to survey rapidly the industrial housing situation and to study the methods whereby England had essayed to solve this gigantic problem which had so suddenly confronted her. I visited nearly a score of the larger munitions plants scattered throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, and the magnitude of the problem was more than vividly revealed. I went primarily to study the physical aspects, but it was impossible to confine myself to such a limited phase of the operation; for the far-reaching effects and the significance of the broad policies adopted as war measures had created an entirely new set of social and economic values as regards labor and housing, and had thrust the questions boldly into the realm of future national politics.

### The Obligations of the State

Prior to the war, by several Acts of Parliament, the State had assumed the obligation of adequately housing her working population. This obligation was not to be fulfilled by the exercise of police power, as is our policy in the States (where the State has actually assumed no obligation), but by acts of initiative and the rendering of direct financial assistance. Obviously, the effectiveness of these Acts was limited by the social and economic values used to determine the standard as regards adequacy. Notwithstanding the relatively low values used, these Acts have proved effective. The State had already, prior to the war, initiated many enterprises, and the financial aid—the long-term loans at low rates of interest given subject to State control—had very greatly stimulated house-building on broad town planning lines.

While direct action by the State and the financial aid, rendered to properly constituted bodies was a long step in advance, these did not solve the problem. The old relation between wages and the cost of living had not been altered; in fact, the purchasing power of a day's work was falling. The mere lowering of the rate of interest and the removal of many of the hampering conditions surrounding house-building was not enough. Up to the outbreak of the war, the shortage was accumulating. Conditions in some quarters—in the great industrial centers—had become acute.

Such was the situation in the summer of 1914, when the tremendous and instant expansion of industries created a housing problem which

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

had to be met without a moment's delay. For perfectly obvious economic reasons, private enterprise failed to respond; there was but one possible resource—State action.

And the State acted, and acted immediately, not with the breadth of vision that it should, but the power was created, and housing enterprises, both of a temporary and a permanent nature, were started. Towns, and even cities, were projected and laid out over night. The unusual financial aspects of the problem and the shortage of labor and materials were accepted. The central idea was to provide adequate and sufficient housing—permanent in so far as possible—arranged on broad town planning lines, anticipating future growth, and to provide this in the shortest possible space of time.

Then it was that a new and a permanent value as regards the importance of housing was established. The State recognized, as never before, the vital importance of industry; and both Industry and the State recognized—not in theory, but by sweeping acts of acknowledgment—that upon the adequate housing of the worker as regards the home, its environment, and the amenities, may depend the very existence of the Nation.

### The New Value of Wages

The deeper significance of this nation-wide development is not limited by the fact that the State is housing its munition workers at a rental below what would in normal times be deemed a minimum return upon an investment of this sort. It is rather that a new method has been established for measuring the value of things created by Capital and Labor. Heretofore, in determining the value of a product we have included the cost of adequate plant and equipment, the actual cost of labor, overhead and profit. But labor value is likewise complex and includes, in lieu of plant and equipment, a house and its surroundings—for these are necessary. The value of labor has been fixed by its market value in competition, or by a union scale. The housing of the human machine has been left to "the devil take the hindmost" policy.

In the new war method of valuation, the cost of plant includes not merely the buildings wherein machines are operated and workers perform their tasks, but it also includes the buildings wherein the workers live and

meet in social intercourse and for purposes of recreation.

It will be argued that this is a national crisis, that upon the fabrication of munitions depends the well-being, the very existence of the State; that the return to the ways of peace will immediately remove the urgency of the need, and that we shall then return to the pre-war basis of valuation. I have viewed this question from many angles, and I doubt if such will be the case. Labor has measured its strength in this crisis and will not be easily led back to the conditions prior to the war.

There may be a halting progress, but the steps taken will not be retraced. England will go forward, and the new standards and values created through the war will carry over into the days of peace.

The State has measured the relative importance of the factors looking toward its well-being. It has created broad powers and authorities and direct methods of conserving what it deems to be the most important. The technique is bold and crude: it is the technique of war, but this will be adjusted to the days to come, for its aim is peace, and a better peace than those who labor have ever known.

It is this aspect of the industrial housing problem which now becomes the central theme of the discussion.

### Our Perilous Necessity

Unless we act now, the problem which England has faced and met today we shall later face under sterner conditions. It may be postponed, shortsightedly; it cannot be turned aside. In broad outlines, the two problems—England's of today and ours of the future—are identical. The differences relate to legislative enactments and technical methods; the social and economic factors are the same.

We may fancy for the time being that the war is nearly over, but there is little ground for such a hope. We must prepare as England prepared; *but we can do more, for we can, through the knowledge gleaned by her experience, phrase our program of immediate preparation in terms of great reconstructive value.*

In England, during the twelve years immediately preceding the war, there was an average yearly increase of over seventy thousand dwellings having an annual rental under £20.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

This yearly increase ceased immediately after war was declared. When we consider that this normal increase represents an accumulating shortage for the entire war period, whatever it may be—and that, in addition, an abnormally large number of dwellings have become unfit for habitation during the same period, and that there was, prior to the war a very acute condition of congestion in many quarters—it is perfectly obvious that a most difficult problem confronts the days of reconstruction.

A very similar condition of housing shortage has existed for some time in the States. We have practically ignored the problem; we have treated it locally, but not effectively. The conditions and the causes remain, and the problem will become more acute just so long as we take the narrow point of view as regards the application of the remedy. To a very large majority of us it has been an indication of prosperity, a field for speculative profits, and we have utterly ignored the smoldering fires of industrial unrest which such a condition provokes.

An article appeared not so long ago in one of our popular American magazines. The title was "Standing Room Only," and it vividly portrayed the conditions existing in a certain prosperous (?) industrial city. Our callousness to the vital nature of this question was illustrated by the fact that not a few of the influential inhabitants of that city did not know whether to take it as a taunt or as a compliment that their town should be so frightfully congested.

It is but flying in the face of serious trouble to thoughtlessly ignore this vital social and economic question, or to attempt to solve it by makeshift methods. Neither of these conditions obtains in England today; she is earnestly endeavoring to solve the problem.

### The Part Played by the House in the New British Labor Program

Under the caption "A New Labour Programme" in the *London Times* (November 3) there is set forth by the Executive Committee of the British Workers' League the draft recommendations of a Program of National and Industrial Reconstruction as a recommendation to the General Council of the League which was to be convened immediately to consider its adoption. It reads like a program based on one of H. G. Wells' forecasts—a chapter from

his *Anticipations*, as it were—and it is worthy of the most serious study. It contains the following suggestions relative to the program of providing adequate homes as a part of the plan of reconstruction.

#### *Housing:*

(a) The Government to take immediate steps to ascertain the extent of the deficiency in housing accommodation, both rural and urban, and where such deficiency is not being met, to render adequate financial assistance, either in the form of loans on easy terms or of grants covering a proportion of the amount required, in order to provide the necessary accommodation.

(b) The Central Authority to act under compulsory powers where the Local Authority fails to take the requisite measures.

In the Report of Proceedings of the Trades Unions Parliamentary Congress, just issued, there occurs this resolution, followed by a very sane discussion of the question:

That this Congress, in view of the great shortage of working-class houses, and the consequent menace to the health of the people, calls upon the Government to deal at once with this important question:

(1) By making it compulsory for local authorities to prepare and carry out adequate housing schemes to meet the need of their area.

(2) Embracing such Government grants, free of interest, as will enable local authorities to erect suitable houses for the people.

Further, in view of the extreme urgency of the question, this Congress instructs the Parliamentary Committee to press for action to be taken by the Government without waiting for the cessation of hostilities.

In a pamphlet but recently issued by the Joint Committee on Labour Problems after the War, which Committee was composed of three representatives each from the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, the Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions and the War Emergency Workers' National Committee, I quote from the full statement merely the specific recommendations:

(a) The Government must promptly inform all the local authorities that the requisite 1,000,000 new dwellings have got to be built, and that each place will have its assigned quota;

(b) The local authority should everywhere be required to decide, within one month, whether or not it will undertake to build the quota thus fixed, upon the terms offered by the Government;

(c) The land must be at once secured (or a legal option obtained) under the summary process of the Defence of the Realm Act or some equally speedy procedure;

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

(d) The plans must equally be prepared and approved in advance; and the local authorities should be required to have them ready within three months of the decision to provide so many dwellings;

(e) The Government must for four years secure "priority" for these 1,000,000 working-class dwellings as regards all building materials;

(f) The 1,000,000 new dwellings should be everywhere begun the day after peace is declared; but should be proceeded with, month by month, strictly in correspondence with the supply of building trades workmen, so as to leave practically none of them at any time unemployed;

(g) Where the local authority obstinately refuses to build the quota assigned to it, the Local Government Board should itself undertake the building, placing the work under the supervision of a local committee appointed by itself, on which the Trades Council, the Local Trade Union branches, and the local women's industrial organizations should be represented.

In April of 1916 a National Congress was convened to consider Home Problems after the war. This Congress was composed of representatives of the Local Authorities (city councils, town councils, urban and district councils), throughout Great Britain, representatives of trades unions, architectural societies, coöperative societies, teachers' associations, property owners' associations, and individuals generally interested in national issues. The complete report is a valuable contribution toward the solution of the after-the-war problem. The following paragraphs are from the Report of Deputations to His Majesty's Government received by the President of the Local Government Board, September 20, 1916. This report represents a most thoughtful study:

That this Congress urgently directs the attention of the Government to the critical need for the provision of additional housing for the working classes, and in respect of the national interest and responsibility in the matter urges upon the Government to set aside no less than £20,000,000 to make such advances to Local Authorities and other Agencies as will enable them to provide houses at reasonable rentals having regard to all necessary and equitable circumstances and conditions.

That in the opinion of this Congress legislation is necessary to simplify and cheapen the transfer of land so as to encourage the building of houses for the working classes.

### The Future General Housing Policy

(1) This Congress urges all parties in the State to take combined action to secure that every family shall be housed under proper conditions, and in order to secure this end, which is of vital and national importance, urges that legislation should be introduced:

(a) To set up machinery in all industries to require

employers to pay wages sufficient to ensure decent housing accommodation for the workers in these industries; and

(b) To secure that, where such raising of wages can only be achieved by stages, the Local Authority shall recognize and fulfil the duty of providing decent housing accommodation for those unable meanwhile to pay an economic rent, and that the whole country shall bear the difference in the cost between the rent of the decent dwelling and the rent which the tenants can afford to pay.

(2) That in view of the results produced by the systems of providing houses for the working classes hitherto prevailing, this Congress requests the Government to take such steps on either local or national lines as will facilitate and stimulate the activities of Local Authorities and other agencies in the erection of houses that are necessary.

(3) That, in the opinion of this Congress, housing schemes promoted by public authorities, save in the case of schemes intended for housing those unable meanwhile to pay an economic rent, should be economically self-supporting.

### Shall We Help or Hinder the Birth of the New Hope and Spirit?

These are but a few of the many proposals and suggestions which express quite accurately the general trend of British opinion as it views the tremendous and inevitable problem of reconstruction. While these suggestions are in the main general in their statements or demands, there is also to be found a group of definite, well-organized proposals aimed at affecting the desired changes. These are in the form of recommended amendments to the existing Housing and Town Planning Acts. They cover the entire field of and affect the work of the Local Government Board, Local Authorities, copartnership companies, industrial corporations, and private or speculative enterprises. Such details must of a necessity be omitted; but in the broad legislative policy which we must formulate and enact these expressions of British evolution in Housing and Town Planning policy must be reckoned with. They will affect the social and economic future of the whole world.

The technical suggestions are all directed toward increasing the scale of the present legislative enactments. Greater financial inducements in the way of larger advances and time of loan, will undoubtedly be offered to Local Authorities and to Public Utility Societies, which embark upon adequate housing and town planning schemes. The imperial obligation to house the workers in an adequate environment will be fulfilled through the extension of powers and authorities, and I should not be surprised to learn

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

at some not distant date that the adequate planning of urban and rural areas in England had been made obligatory by an act of Parliament. The same public sentiment, the same stream of tendencies which produced these acts, is gaining in strength. It would be highly irrational for one to assume that the process of evolution will suddenly cease, and that a nation with an awakening sense of social justice to all will suddenly and without cause stagnate and cease to advance.

The central theme of the picture of England today is not war, nor soldiers, sturdy and full of life, nor soldiers wounded in battle, nor guns, nor munitions of war, nor the crosses over the graves of those who have died, nor grief and sorrow, nor

a world filled with unrest and discontent—no; for the central theme is a new hope. And this new hope is not that hope of the aged or the last hope at which men grasp—it is instead the hope of youth, the hope of robust life, the hope that goes with a knowledge of strength and power, that inspires and in turn calls for action.

Nor is it confined to the victories of war; it permeates the lives of all. Those who are timid and afraid call it Labor Unrest, the Ferment of Revolutions, and they seek to make more painful the birth of this new spirit. They shall fail, and in proportion as they oppose shall chaos prevail, for this new spirit is the spirit of amelioration and justice, of law and order and the Rational Life.

## THE AMERICAN BACKGROUND

**W**HILE our history discloses no exact parallel to the economic conditions surrounding production and the physical conditions surrounding the home life of the town laborer in England during the days of the Industrial Revolution, we have witnessed, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, conditions and tendencies in industry which bear a striking resemblance to those observed in England a century ago. But there is disclosed no corresponding parallel to the movement expressed by the terms "collective ownership and administration," "collective regulation," "collective taxation," and "collective provision" which mark the development of the British coöperative societies among the workers and in British social politics (resulting in certain specific legislative enactments and a corresponding rapid expansion of the function of government in the fields of production and consumption); these have been rapidly developing in England during the last three-quarters of a century.

We have pursued a middle course. Conditions of labor within and without the factory have not been quite as bad, and, as a result, our program and measures looking toward amelioration have been but little more than a series of feeble compromises.

We have conceived government to be an institution, the purpose of which was to dispense a limited kind of justice and to control our vicious acts through the exercise of police

power. Property has been, upon the whole, the sacred thing, and the safeguarding of the rights of individuals to have and to hold has been the central purpose expressed in our legislative enactments. That this should be the case is natural. We have been pioneering, and life has appeared to consist in accomplishment phrased in terms of limited individual purpose. Our expansion has been marked by frightful waste; conservation has appeared as a function of government only after individuals felt the pinch of want.

In the office of the National Housing and Town Planning Association in London is a library which contains the greater part of the housing and town planning literature published in America. One day I took occasion to study this library in the hope of thus arriving at a comparative estimate of its scope and a clearer idea of our aim and purpose. I was at a sufficient distance to observe our general tendencies and possibly to note our rate of progress.

As a result of this re-survey, I was furnished with a most interesting experience; as I read the tables of contents, the forewords and occasional paragraphs and summaries, there developed a better understanding. It was made evident to me that our past should be considered merely as a period of incubation. Our appeal for better houses and a broad policy of town planning had been phrased to arrest the attention of the greatest number; we had chosen the financial aspect (the economic is altogether too broadly expressive). The more or less obvious value of better

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

sanitary conditions had furnished the basis of our appeal.

Our purpose, expressed by our emphasis upon the financial benefits to be derived from better conditions of sanitation, has limited our programs for planning towns and houses in a most extraordinary way and has brought about certain tentative solutions of these problems which will do quite as much to thwart progress as anything we could possibly devise.

In our effort to provide better conditions, we have limited our federal, state, and municipal legislative enactments to restrictive measures. We have assumed that by enacting legislation against a bad condition we would thereby create the opposite. Restrictive legislation and the exercise of police power express the methods through which we have assumed that a better physical and social environment could be evolved. This does not follow. What we need are positive legislative enactments looking toward the creation of the conditions which we desire. I would not be interpreted as utterly condemning our efforts of the past. I realize that progress is a matter of evolution, but I point out that our concept of government as expressed in the existing legislative enactments\* is too limited to be of any real value.

In "City Planning Progress 1917," published by the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, one finds a very complete summary of our progress in city planning. A hasty survey of this document leaves one most encouraged, but an analytical study produces the opposite point of view. One observes everywhere a worthy purpose as expressed by the formulated plans; but when one considers the technique of carrying these subjects into execution, one must admit that the machinery now set up is totally inadequate. A commission without authority is an excellent vehicle for education and for the distribution of propaganda. In exceptional cases, such a commission may be highly qualified as regards technical experience; but, there being no element in the municipal, state or federal government whose function it is to carry on work of this sort, progress is hesitating. Ofttimes the work of such a commission is merely pigeonholed.

\*For a concise statement of the "Constitutional Limits of City Planning Powers," see pamphlet by this title, by Edw. M. Bassett, City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment Committee on the City Plan 1917.

As has been pointed out, within our cities effort toward the provision of better homes has been limited in the main to restrictive laws. Judging by these, it may be said that aside from the placing of a limit upon the degree of congestion and insanitary conditions which will be tolerated within a municipality, the government is not interested in the question of decent homes for workmen.

In America there are, in general, but three methods whereby homes for workers are provided: Speculative building, philanthropic enterprise and initiation by industrial corporations.

Speculative building has failed in America, as it failed in Europe, because of the most elemental of economic reasons: Speculative capital flows into such enterprises as offer the prospect of the largest reasonably safe return. So long as a low standard as regards adequacy and a high standard as regards congestion is tolerated, and so long as the cost of building is low, capital sufficient to maintain these lower standards finds its way into speculative home-building enterprises. As a result of better education, constantly increasing demands for a better environment, there naturally follows a gradual diminution of return, which in turn reduces the flow of capital used for this purpose. Since the demand for more adequate accommodations and for more homes inevitably occurs at a time of prosperity and industrial expansion, it should be obvious that it is absolutely futile to rely even in a small degree upon speculative building. It is utterly hopeless to assume that through this method the standard of living conditions may be raised. Uncontrolled speculation in this field is so closely akin to exploitation that to propose it as a method of providing homes at a minimum of rent is to propose that the workingman be exploited. Consider, for a moment, the pathetic and tragic stupidity which compels our communities to give land-owners the values which the community creates, and which, as though to twist the knife in the wound to our national life, then taxes the man who improves his land!

Philanthropic or semi-philanthropic enterprise, depending upon the generosity of individuals and their willingness to accept a low rate of interest, while admirable if considered from a limited point of view, need not be seriously considered as a solution of the problem.



## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

While such enterprises may do excellent experimental work and in so doing set a good example and perform a valuable service, yet the total number of homes thus created is too small and will ever be too small to be considered as a possible solution of this problem. It has been argued that the higher standard set by philanthropic enterprise tends to raise the standard of speculative building. To a very limited extent this may be true; but it may be argued that philanthropic enterprise directs the flow of speculative capital to other more remunerative fields and in so doing actually diminishes the supply of homes. In the proportion that enterprises of this sort are apparently successful do we postpone the formulation of a broad home-building policy.

If one were to select such a home-building policy as typical of present American tendency, he would probably choose that employed by the larger industrial corporations. This method has been fostered by social reformers and it appears to the industrial corporation to be the only solution of the problem when they are confronted with the condition of either limiting their output or building homes for their employes. As in the case of philanthropic enterprise, this method has a material value and it may raise the standard, though the latter is a debatable question, one in which I would take the negative. In any event, all depends upon the attitude of the corporation embarking upon such an enterprise.

This policy should be accepted merely as a temporary expedient, a past experiment, and it should be deprecated as being in nowise a solution of the problem. At best, it can deal with but a small sector of the problem taken as a whole. It can be applied only where the initiating corporation is sufficiently strong to use a portion of its capital and its earnings for the purpose of home-building for its employes. It makes no provision for a much larger proportion of workers who are employed by corporations having insufficient capital or who are unwilling to embark upon such a policy. In view of the economic conditions surrounding employment, such a policy must inevitably give the larger corporations an advantage over the smaller. This, however, may be far from permanent, and depends entirely upon other factors in the relation between employer and workmen.

The question of individual ownership of a home by a worker through voluntary purchase from such a corporation should be ruled out of consideration in connection with this discussion. Under such conditions, the purchase is never voluntary nor is the laborer free. The policy is not based upon sound social or economic principles; and the mere fact that it may sometimes be employed successfully should not lead us to the conclusion that it is not a vicious practice when the problem is considered from the national point of view.

It is eminently desirable, and the war has thrown a greater emphasis than ever before upon this point, that all those who constitute a nation shall live in the highest possible state of physical and social well-being. To assume that speculative builders, philanthropic societies or industrial corporations are responsible for the maintenance of the physical and the social well-being of those who work is merely an act of throwing the responsibility to certain groups who appear to us to have a special interest in this problem. This is simply a way of saying: "Let George do it."

Industrial corporations have, in many cases, accepted this responsibility because in so doing, and by no other existing method, was it possible to continue their policy of expansion. To such it was not a question of building homes for the workers of America; it was a question of output and dividends. By our general acceptance of this method we have acknowledged the fact that homes cannot be provided without some stimulating force. It is something to have acknowledged this, to have recognized that some financial and initiating aid must be called upon if our industrial population is to be provided with adequate homes; but it is no solution of the problem to point our finger at prosperous industrial corporations and say: "You're it."

We may emphasize, and we should emphasize in individual, industrial and national terms the social, moral and economic value of creating around industry the most desirable conditions of work, rest and recreation, but we should also at the same time define in simple terms the line or boundary which defines the responsibilities of the corporation and the responsibilities of the state. One might present long arguments in favor of this clear definition of responsibility, but the fundamental reason is simple in the

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

extreme: Industrial enterprise is organized, so long as it is private enterprise, for the single purpose of production and profit. This holds for industries whether they be large or small. The home and the entire environment in which men live is organized with a single purpose in view, namely, that of providing men with the maximum results of labor. That industry might be organized with this same purpose in view is a perfectly rational suggestion and it may be that at some future day the organization of the "Key industries" will assume this form. Under the present unorganized economic condition of society it is futile to attempt to solve this national problem by asking private enterprises in production to organize the collective provision of homes and an adequate environment for workers.

### The Immediate Problem in the United States

By inference, the broad outlines of the policy which we should adopt and put into immediate execution has already been suggested in the outline of the British policy under the heading "British War Housing."

The following is a composite of opinion, British and American: As already noted, we can profit materially by the adoption of certain British methods and we can, at the same time, anticipate many of the problems of reconstruction by incorporating in our method of immediate procedure such policies as will embrace the problem of the future as well.

Workmen's home-building operations which are now under construction should be completed under the terms and conditions by which they were initiated, provided sufficient progress is made; otherwise, the government should take them over and proceed with the operation through the organization suggested below. Such operations should not in any way affect our general program of procedure.

By all odds, the most important consideration in home-building during war or during peace is the land problem. We should secure land for industrial housing purposes by precisely the same methods as were used by the British government. This includes the safeguarding of adjacent areas by a provision which will enable the government at a later date, during the war, to secure property for the expansion of an

operation at pre-war costs. Incorporated and as an essential feature of our scheme, should be a provision whereby the unearned increment in the land thus taken by the government should be preserved so that the income from it will be used for the sole benefit of the community. The conservation of the unearned increment in land for the benefit of the community is in itself the prime factor in the economic solution of the housing problem.

The government should organize a separate department or a non-profit government corporation for providing the communities adjacent to munition plants wherever it develops that additional accommodations are required. This organization should acquire land under powers as suggested above, plan new villages, install roads, sewer, water, and light, erect houses and other buildings of amenity required by these communities, and it should operate the properties until such time as they may be transferred to others. This organization should cooperate with the various departments of the government which operate or control plants providing munitions of war. Control of this organization by the latter departments should be limited to a determination as to the extent and the general nature of the building operation. It is important that the management of the civil community should be in charge of a community manager, working under the direction of the Central Administration which would in turn frame a general policy of management in cooperation with the department operating the plant.

The entire property, land and buildings, should be retained and operated by the government during the war and for a certain period thereafter. Future values and conditions can only be determined accurately at a future date. Therefore, when conditions and values have been adjusted, local non-profit land companies with limited dividends should be formed to operate the properties—that is, rent houses, operate the utilities or rent land to private builders or companies—and use the surplus income from rentals to pay interest and amortization of the government's loan. The important features of this scheme, which is similar to the British copartnership operations in many respects, are that no land will be sold; title will remain in the original company and be handled

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

as a community investment; rentals will be readjusted from time to time like tax valuations; and, since there can be no profit as a result of an increase of land values due to the development of a community, the increase in rentals would provide for the interest, the amortization of the government's loan, and an income to be enjoyed by the entire community which would approximate twice the revenue which this community would obtain under ordinary conditions and through the ordinary methods of taxation. This method conserves the unearned increment of land values created by the government's house-building operations. The new communities gradually purchase the underlying lands and the original houses at cost, thus reimbursing the government.

It may be argued that these new communities may collapse after the war, in which case the government loan will, of course, be lost, but by extending the period of government ownership and control beyond the war and by the organization of local land companies in each community to anticipate that danger, other industries may be secured. The chances that such an investment would be a loss are indeed remote. It is highly probable that a well-planned community, organized upon this basis, with provision of adequate homes and communal buildings, would draw industries to it without effort. This suggestion is not one of theory; it would merely be putting into effect, with but slight modifications, the practices in general use in the garden cities and the garden suburbs of England. The advantage of the scheme lies in the fact that we do not have to determine the complex details of ownership and future management at this date; and the success of this method depends solely upon the degree of thoroughness with which these communities are carried out. If they are well planned, well constructed and well organized, there is not the slightest doubt regarding the future value of the investment.

We know some of the changes which have taken place in Europe where one recognizes already a definite direction in the developing policies of reconstruction. What new forces will modify the direction of these movements no one can foretell, but of one thing we are certain: Europe will emerge from conflict as a world of

totally new values, a world expressive of a broader interpretation of democracy. There will be a new relationship established between the two social divisions which remain, but these will not be separated by the same old barriers of prejudice and hypocrisy, and men and institutions will be appraised more nearly upon the basis of their worth. There will be less power in the hands of a few and there will be fewer pawns. There will be a greater appreciation of the value of an integrated national purpose. Many of the factors absolutely essential to large-scale production, but now utterly ignored, will each receive its proper share of attention\*. Programs of national reconstruction and evolution will revolve about broader concepts of education, industry and commerce and the integration of the three.

For it would be strange indeed, after this experience in what approximates a national syndication of production and collective provision which now holds sway, if men should return and thoughtlessly take their former places in life under the same wasteful and uncertain conditions which prevailed before the war. Those now in the workmen's ranks will not return to those conditions, nor will those who direct the activities of production be willing to return to the old pre-war period of individualistic cut-throat competition and small-scale production. There will be a reorganization of business and of government as a result of the lessons learned in war. This reorganization will acknowledge that unity of purpose must exist between production and consumption, work and recreation, and that the simplest and most direct method of achieving this unity is through the extension of the functions of the government. There will also be observed a distinct effort toward the integration of individual and national purpose, and this integration will obtain in the proportion that we are able to bring the entire scope of our problems within our grasp of vision. We have been studying our problems at too close a range, in other words on too small a scale. In so doing we have been able to grasp but a tiny sector at one time. We must bring into our field of vision the whole problem.

\*NOTE.—It would be of value if every American business man could read the "Elements of Reconstruction" (H. G. Wells), a series of articles contributed in July and August to the *London Times*, with an introduction by Milner, Nesbit & Co., Ltd., London



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View of GILBORNE WAY Looking West.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*A Group in WHINYATES ROAD Looking North.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in DICKSON ROAD Looking East.*

*H. M. Office of Works.  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*Crescent near Station in WELL HALL ROAD.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*





GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
WHINYATES ROAD from ROSS WAY Looking South.

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in WELL HALL ROAD Looking South.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
LOVELACE GREEN *Looking North.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*Pair of Cottages in LOVELACE GREEN.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London. S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*Block of Houses in PHINEAS PETT ROAD.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
CONGREVE ROAD (*Boughton Road Crossing*) Looking South.

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME.  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
SANDBY GREEN *Looking North.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W*





GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
*View in ROSS WAY Looking East.*

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*

# What Is a House? V\*

By RICHARD S. CHILDS

## The House Problem Is a Land Problem

**I**N ESSENCE, the reason why our workmen and their families do not live in attractive surroundings is because attractive surroundings would raise the rent which in turn would raise the land values. And a raise in rent would chase away the workmen and their families.

When New York opens a new subway and offers to a district where the working people live a quick, convenient ride down town, the operation of this law promptly chases the aforesaid working people fifty blocks farther away. I know a church at 76th Street whose whole congregation moved to the 120th Street region when the subway opened, to avoid the rising rents.

If New York should solve its market and food-supply problem, the landlord, showing a prospective tenant through an apartment would say, "We are only three blocks from the municipal market here; you can save \$10 a month on food. So this apartment at \$70 a month is really just as cheap as it used to be at \$60." Or the vacant-lot owner would say, "Yes, but all the land in this section has gone up because of the advantages of that new municipal market over there."

In a factory town, if the factory encounters adverse fortune and employs its operatives only intermittently, rents and land values are depressed. But if the factory is full of orders and offers overtime work at time-and-a-half, the real estate men brighten up and get their asking prices.

Increase the workers' pay, with the idea that they can have pretty and spacious houses instead of dismal and narrow ones, and you have increased their buying power—a fact of which the land-owners take note. "They're putting in a lot of machine processes over at the plant," says Mr. Landowner as he dickers over a sale, "and several hundred high-paid mechanics will be brought here to live. They'll be wanting homes." And he stiffens his price appropriately. If a group of millionaires had sudden reason to

colonize there, his prices would grow vastly more. When Henry Ford jumped the wages in his vast plants, Detroit real estate jumped too, to match the new buying power.

## The Fable of the Bungalow

There is a fable told of a man who, choosing between two rural bungalow plots at \$500 each, decided to take both and tendered the owner \$1,000. But the price of the two, he was informed, was \$1,100. For the bungalow he was to erect on one lot would enhance the value of the other lot to \$600. If there had been a thousand such lots on sale at \$500 each, the price of them all (with a certainty that a thousand bungalows were to be erected) would not be \$500,000 but something nearer to \$1,000,000. The early comers would pay \$500. The late comers, entering a neighborhood whose development had become assured, would pay \$600, \$800, \$1,000, and more for lots that were not a whit different or better. And the tax assessor would value them all, quite properly, at the standard set by the latest sales. So, little by little, the people who could pay \$500 a lot, but no more, would find themselves unable to enter the colony.

So we see the real-estate developer buying the big old suburban farm, cutting it into lots, laying sewers, roads, sidewalks and wires, and offering frantic inducements to the first comers, for the sake of profits on later sales after his forlorn, bare tract becomes a nice neighborhood. He wins or loses, as his fate may be, but his bitterest burden is the flimsy parasite development that presently rises just beyond his boundary line and undercuts those later prices by which he hoped to recoup those earlier sacrifices whereby he got the people coming. This unearned increment which he earns for his idle neighbor is perhaps the straw that breaks his back.

Imagine, if you can, an enthusiastic city planner building a model suburb piecemeal! He would buy a few lots, erect a group of pretty houses, sell them and buy land again just beyond, build there, sell, and buy more land beyond that! Would he? Not if the land-owners saw him coming! They would build up a dam

\*Introducing still another author, with several new ones to follow.  
—THE EDITOR.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

of inflated prices on their lots against his approach, as if he were a leper. His pretty houses, so far from encouraging the erection of more model houses in the neighborhood, would actually tend to make them impossible by compelling other builders to spend for unearned increments of land value more and more of the money they intended to put into plumbing and verandas.

### Assessable and Non-Assessable Benefits

When the city builds a sewer, it can assess the cost against the property benefited; the City Club of New York demonstrated, a few years ago, that even so large an enterprise as the subways could have been easily financed in that way by the lands whose value they enhanced; but a good and wholesome housing development that benefits a neighborhood is not assessable, even in part, upon the neighboring land. If it could be, what a fine stimulus we would have for the kind of housing that improves a neighborhood by its very presence! How it would alter the financing of the enterprise if the landowner across the street or around the corner could be charged with a fair share of the cost of thus bringing new people to that section, in due proportion to the resultant enhancement of his land values.

Concede, then, that no real solution of the problem of getting the vast majority of our population into attractive homes is possible unless we first solve the problem of the unearned increment which now banks up in front of economic progress, including housing progress, like snow before a snow-plow!

### Wages and Land Values

Of course, there is a wage-problem, too. Numerous workers are paid so little that they cannot possibly meet the rent that should fairly be charged for a barely decent home, even on low-priced land, and employers sometimes go in for philanthropic housing at charity rates to compensate for their own niggardliness. But that is a separate problem—not strictly a housing problem at all.

Wages should be sufficient to obtain for the workers at least enough of the products of other labor to feed, clothe, and house their families in decency and health. In the worker's budget the variable element which has no relation to a

definite cost of production is the tribute he must pay to land.

When the Lackawanna Steel Co. put its big plant on a stretch of vacant land near Buffalo and offered work there for several thousand men, the town land was worth \$1,279,000. The city of Lackawanna, 14,000 population, grew up there, and the land values skyrocketed from \$91 per person to \$644 (the plant land being eliminated in each case). That inflated value for standing-room was, in fact, enough to keep about half the Lackawanna Steel Company employees from making their homes there at all, while many of those who do live there, huddle in dingy saloon lodgings and leave large areas idle in the hands of the land speculators. The annual value of a man's full share of Lackawanna land for himself and family of five at 6 per cent is, at the original value,  $5 \times \$91 \times .06$ , or \$27.30; at the enhanced value, \$193. Money spent on land rent cannot be spent on house rent. The annual cost of a wholesome house is, let us say, \$125 a year. If his modest lot cost only an additional \$10 or \$20 annually, the worker could more nearly afford those superior accommodations which the housing and city-planning experts yearn to give him.

The net unearned increment which Lackawanna has given as a princely gift to miscellaneous lucky private land-owners and speculators is \$6,788,000, a figure large enough in itself to explain why Lackawanna is mostly ragged and squalid instead of dainty and wholesome.\*

The Lackawanna Steel Co., after creating the increment, finally bought additional land at the enhanced values and erected a group of good houses for some of its employees, but was unable to charge to its low-paid workers rents high enough to make the operation anything but a philanthropic proposition.

The U. S. Steel Corporation has taken the logical next step by purchasing town land in various places at the same time as the land for the new plants, thus in some degree anticipating and capturing the increment for the benefit of its workers. In some degree, I say, for the coming of a mysterious purchaser who buys land by the square mile cannot be altogether concealed, and the Corporation which, of course, has no power of condemnation, gets mercilessly

\*These figures are taken from an elaborate unpublished report by H. S. Swan, of New York, prepared for the Committee on New Industrial Towns, of which the writer is Secretary.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

mulcted by the land-owners who get wind of the operation in time to raise their prices.

Having thus acquired the town-site, the Steel Corporation plans the streets and sells off the lots without attempting to reap a profit. But as population arrives, the unearned increment arrives too and confers profits promiscuously upon the successive land-owners. In Gary, Indiana, which this Corporation created, in 1906, on vacant sand-dunes, this generous policy resulted in distributing \$22,358,900 net to various private owners and speculators during the next ten years, a heavy burden upon the steel-workers in their efforts to buy housing accommodations or anything else.\*

### Philanthropy and Paternalism

At other places, under similar circumstances, many companies have bought and kept the town-sites, erected good cottages, and rented them to the workers. Sometimes this has been largely and beautifully done; sometimes cheaply and shabbily. The old New England factory villages, the mining towns and modern creations like Morgan Park, Minnesota (U. S. Steel Corporation), are types. Sometimes the manufacturer collects a profit on his housing operation. More often he runs it at cost, and sometimes frankly and purposely at a deficit, considering it in effect a supplement to his wage-scale. This latter system thwarts the unearned increment nicely. The increment exists, but the owner forbears to take advantage of the power to charge more rent than his actual costs dictate. But the system is paternal and often suggestive of feudalism or of "Lady Bountiful," which irritates self-respecting labor. The corporation's policies and practices as a landlord become entangled with its policies as an employer. In case of a strike, shall it insist on dispossessing strikers who are unable to pay the rent and give the newspapers an opportunity to publish pictures of Mr. Striker and his wife and seven children with their pitiful pile of chairs and bedding on the sidewalk? Or shall it help finance the strike by generously remitting its claims for rent in the cases of those who assert themselves unable to pay? Wise employers dislike to be the landlords of their workers.

\*From a report to the Committee on New Industrial Towns, by Dr. R. M. Haig, of Columbia University, republished in part in the *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1917. Reprints obtainable from the Committee.

### The Workman as Home-Owner

The attempt of manufacturers to sell houses and lots to employees on easy terms or otherwise is, from labor's standpoint, not generous but positively sinister. Except in towns where there is great diversity of employment, the effect is to tie the worker to the mill-owner like a feudal peasant to his lord. It interferes with the mobility of labor. As the Welfare Director of a large company enthusiastically explained to me, "Get them to invest their savings in their homes and own them. Then they won't leave and they won't strike. It ties them down so that they have a stake in our prosperity."

Another informant commented on the labor troubles that brought about the permanent dismantling of a certain old plant in a New England village. "Those fool workers!" he said. "There a lot of them had invested the savings of years in their homes and then had to sell out for a song and move elsewhere. That's what they got for quarreling with their bread and butter!"

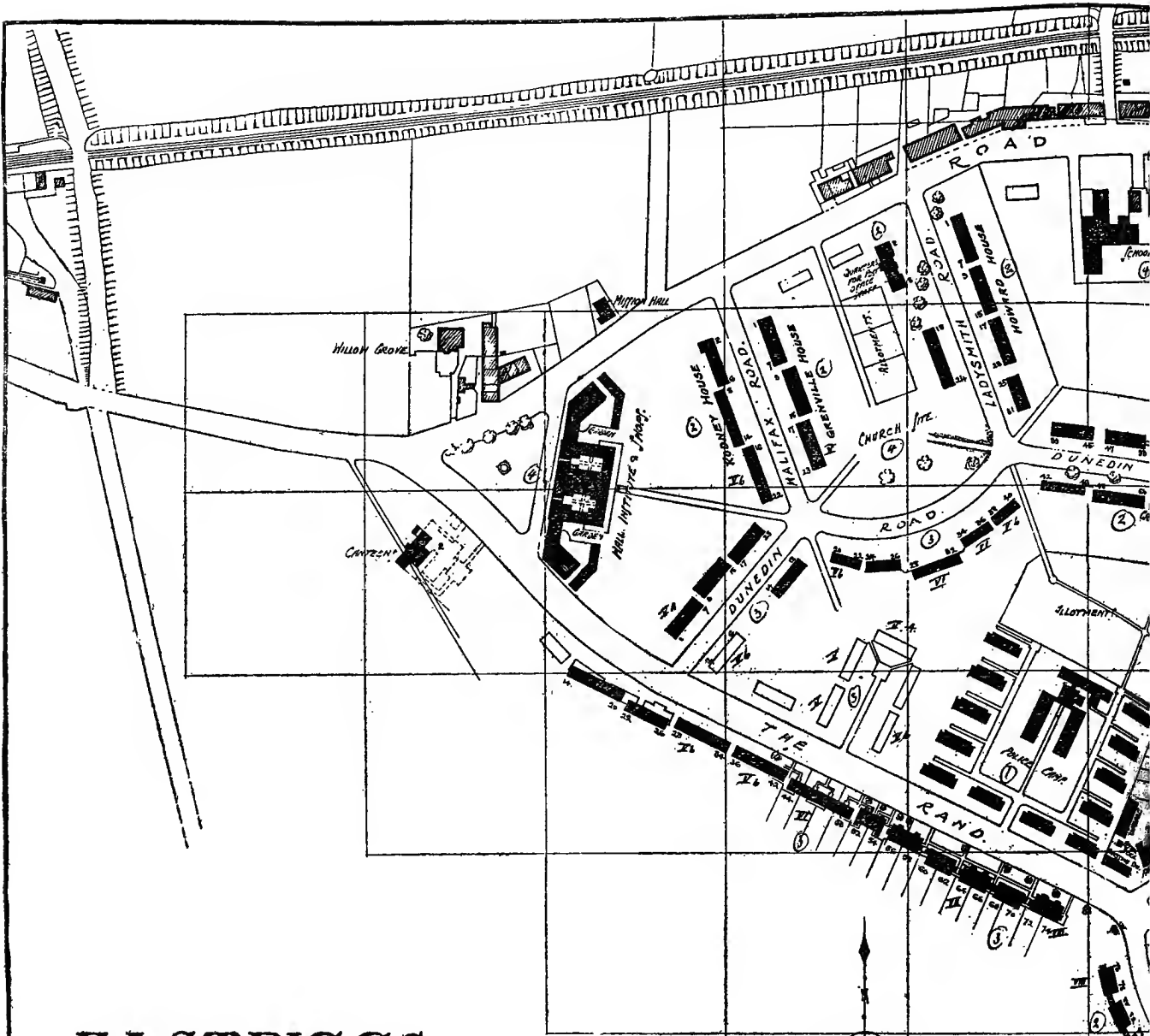
### Community Land Ownership

Are we agreed, then, that the housing question is partly a land question? That an influx of population to a new area enhances land values and thereby burdens the incomers to the full extent of their paying power? That an improvement in housing likewise enhances land values and promptly balks the progress of better housing by a swelling barrier of unearned increments? That increments must be anticipated and in some way eliminated as a barrier before we can hope to see our army of workers happily housed on any extended scale? That effective housing operations must be on a large enough scale to reserve to the enterprise the bulk of the increments they create instead of handing easy money to the neighbors? That this requires a single ownership and control of the whole tract, rather than diversified ownership with each owner trying to capitalize the benefits of his neighbor's progressiveness? That such single ownership may not wisely be in the hands of a manufacturer who employs the tenants?

In whose hands, then?

In the hands of the future community, as a whole!

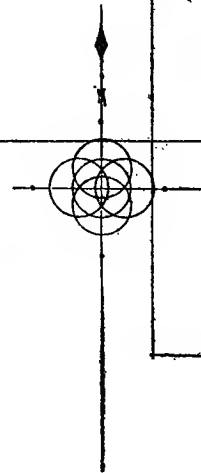
The medium may be a non-profit land com-



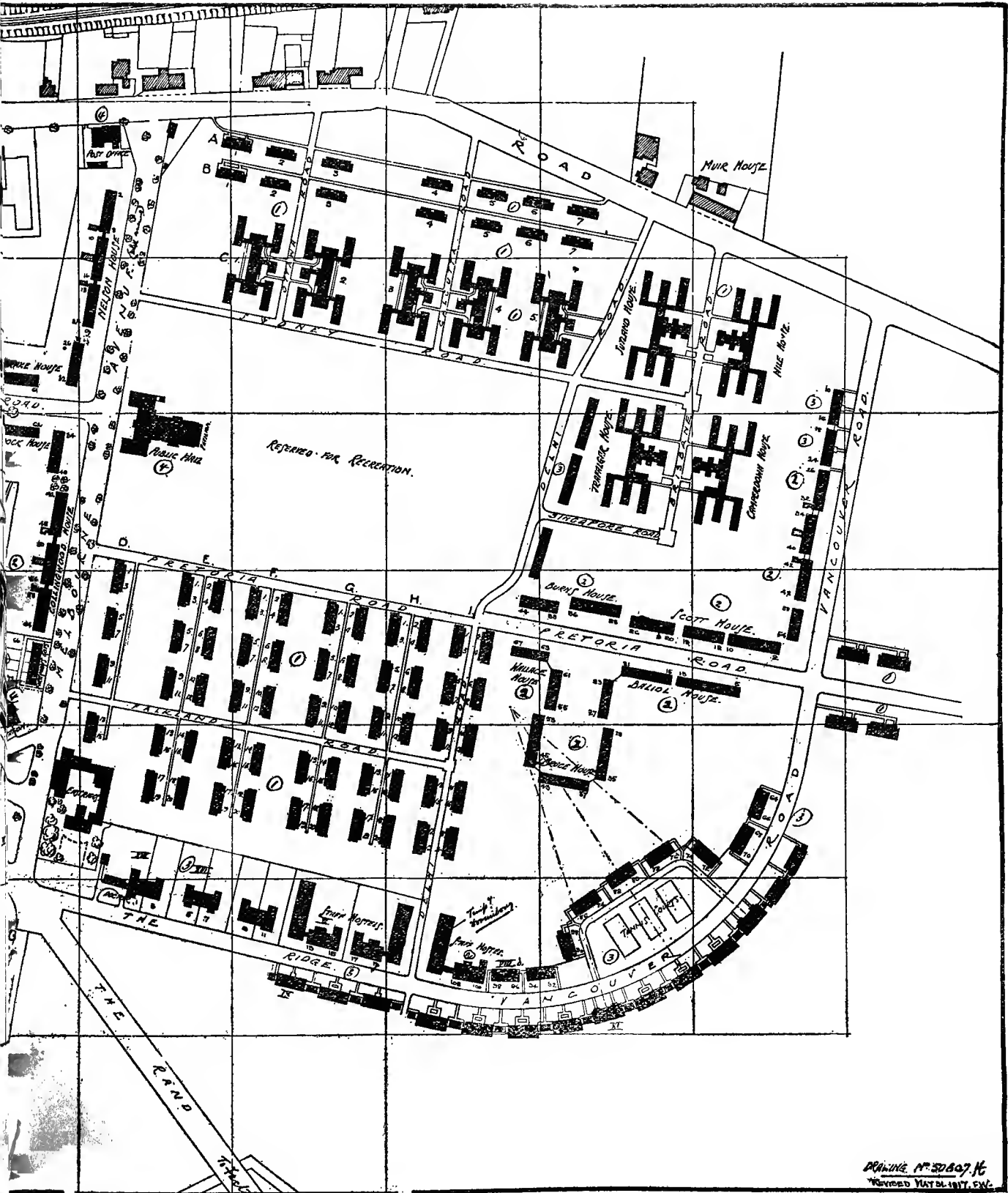
# EASTRIGGS



SCALE 100 FEET TO AN INCH



MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS.  
 D.E.S. HOUSING BRANCH.  
 DRAWING NO. 50607.  
 MADE BY F.C.B. FEB. 1917.  
 REPLACING DRAWING NO. 50190.  
 R. Umms



PLAN No. 50807-16  
REVISED PLAN OF 1917, ETC.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

pany, the conduct of which the future tenants may control—a private government, so to speak; or the government. Either might earn a surplus but would have nothing to do with it save to distribute it in some kind of services among the tenants.

### Letchworth and Land Values

In England it is this principle that underlies the garden city. The story of Letchworth has been told already, but let us have it again in these particular terms as a problem in land. The First Garden City Ltd., seeking no profits beyond a cumulative 5 per cent on actual investment, but intent simply upon an interesting public service, bought some 7 square miles of vacant land at agricultural prices, planned a beautiful city for 30,000 people in the center of it, with a belt of farms around it, and put in the necessary paving and utilities to make it habitable. The belt of farm land was a valuable feature; it prevented neighboring land-owners from reaping fruits of the Company's sowing. Any purveyor who wanted the trade of Letchworth must set up his shop and home in Letchworth and not just over the border, for the border was far away. Anyone who obtained a job in Letchworth must live and trade there, too. So when the Company induced manufacturers to come to Letchworth with their operatives, Letchworth property got all the benefit. The lots were not sold but leased for 99 or 999 years on terms governed by a foreknowledge of just how populous Letchworth was to be allowed to be and just what it was destined to be like in each street and square. Some of the unearned increment did escape, due to the length of the leases. The early lease-holds doubtless have some salable value today, and later leases, made after part of the population had arrived, were on an ascending scale of rentals. But the bulk of the increment has been so successfully reserved to the Company, and thus to the community, that at the first general appraisal of the Company's value in 1907, four years after the founding of the town, there was already a net increment of £169,058 above the total cost to that date of £247,806. Since then, of course, the increments have been vast, and Letchworth shows annual profits. For the present, the Company, with its self-imposed limit of 5 per cent annual return on its investments, is itself directing the expen-

diture of the revenues and performs the functions of practically a municipal government. The property will some day be turned over to the people of Letchworth, and Letchworth will be owner of all its underlying land and of miles of adjacent farms, with revenues beyond the dreams of ordinary governmental avarice.

Between a typical group of private owners and the First Garden City Ltd. there is a gulf. For the annual value of the lands at Letchworth is not expended upon the private comforts and necessities of a certain few land-owners, but upon the property for the benefit of the rent-payers. The landlords of Letchworth were eager to attract population, but they wanted it to come and build, not congested new slums, but attractive homes that would enhance neighboring values. And terms were accordingly offered that left a margin in the worker's budget sufficient to pay for a decent house.

So it came about that the people who left city slums to come to the green charms and sunshine of Letchworth, found that their wages would secure for them attractive cottages on land that was still reasonable despite its desirability. The miracle had been achieved of establishing a spot where good money could be earned and city conveniences obtained without encountering a land-cost so inflated as to exclude the possibility of spending money enough on housing to secure wholesome accommodations.

In the case of those new and charming towns which the English Government has built to house munition workers, the unearned increment has been likewise carefully squelched. The land is taken at pre-war valuation, and the right is reserved of taking more land adjacent thereto, if needed, at the same speculator-defying terms. The Government, of course, disdains to grasp any of the increment and has fixed its rentals at figures dictated by actual costs of land and buildings rather than by the necessities and paying power of the well-paid munition workers. So the munition workers are left able to pay for adequate housing.

From time to time, in America, some great corporation goes forth and establishes a big new plant on vacant land and creates a new town. Thus, the U. S. Steel Corporation created Gary, with 40,000 population, Morgan Park, Minn., Fairfield, Ala., and various ore towns, while a square mile of land at Ojibway, opposite Detroit,



## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

has been expertly planned for 22,000 people and waits its time. So did the Corn Products Refining Co. create Argo, Ill., the Lackawanna Steel Co., Lackawanna, N. Y., and there are numerous other cases. Graham R. Taylor has told about them in his "Satellite Cities."

The next time that is done, the company should buy land enough for the plant and the town, too, create a non-profit land company, sell it the town-site, and accept in return its first-mortgage bonds. The land company should plan the city, pave it, provide water and other utilities, stake out the building-lots, determine which shall be business streets and residential streets, and establish a minimum cost of buildings in the various districts to protect the land values. It should lease, not sell, the land, fixing the rentals at a figure sufficiently low to keep the workers from going outside the tract to find homes. Unless the size of the future population can be definitely foreseen, rentals of business frontages should be adjusted every five years, to correspond with growth of the population, or perhaps, of the factory payrolls. Residential rentals could be made for fairly long terms—say fifteen years—since such land values, even in a rapidly growing town, do not necessarily alter much. The employer, if it be destined to remain a one-industry town, would have to become a partner in housing operations in some round-about way, such as financing a building and loan association or helping with the financing of a housing corporation, in case private capital proves timid about building on leased land.

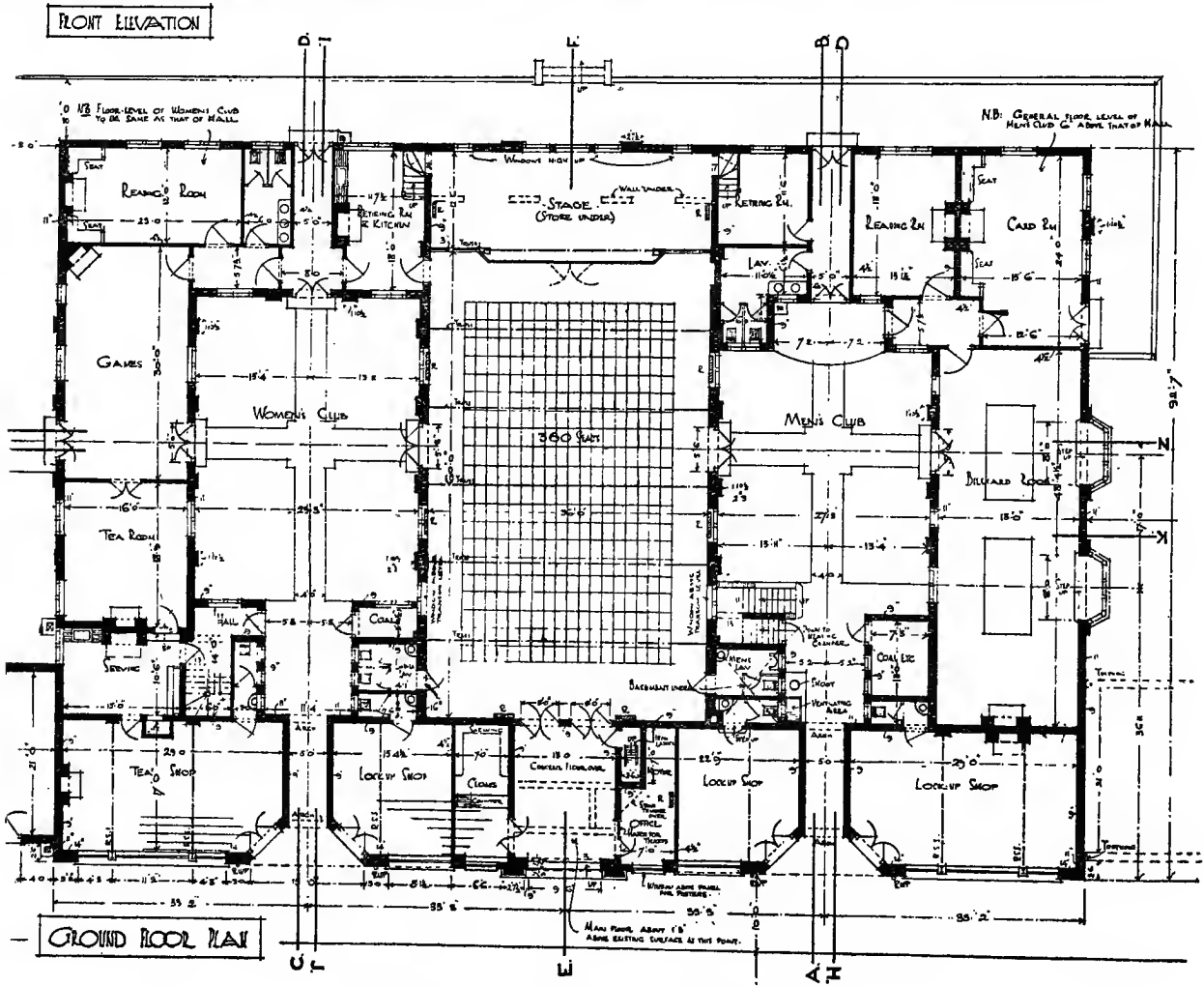
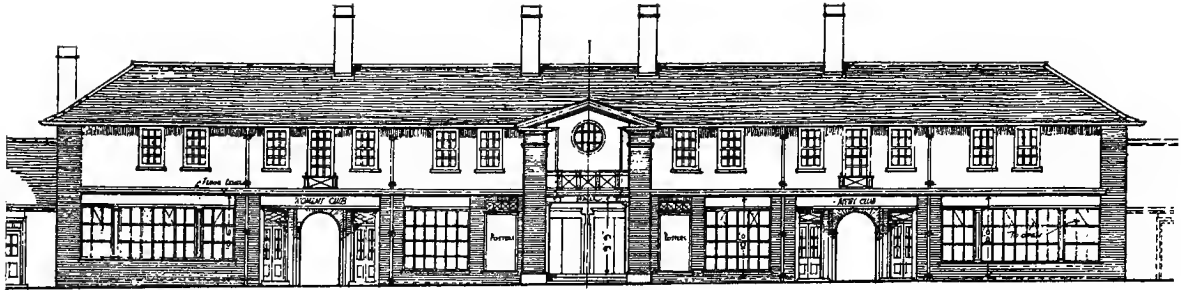
The income from land rentals at the modest rate of 4 per cent on the enhanced land values would be enough to amortize the investment and

leave twice as much money for community purposes as the town would normally obtain from taxation. At least, that is the way it figures out in both Gary and Lackawanna.

The land company could afford to charge less than the traffic would bear, as the English companies do, and thus leave the worker money enough for good housing. Or, as I should prefer, it could charge close to what private landlords would exact and use these great revenues for services that would reduce the cost of living and have the same easing effect upon the personal budgets of the workers.

The same principles apply to the pressing problem of housing our American munition and shipyard workers. Let our Government create a Housing corporation with an appropriation. Let it condemn the lands it needs, build the villages and cities that are required, and rent the houses during the war. Then, when the war industries have been readjusted to permanent peace conditions, let the Government write off the excess and emergency cost of its housing adventure as a cost of war, and recoup the balance by selling the property, not to individuals, but to local non-profit land companies to be operated for community revenue. Thus will be created communities that are the owners of their underlying lands, possessors of all present and future increments therein, and enjoying revenues a hundred per cent above those of ordinary towns of equal size. In such towns, good housing could easily be achieved and maintained.

I would like to be the manufacturer, competing in the markets of the world, who drew his labor from such a town!



### INSTITUTE AND SHOPS—EASTRIGGS

This is an extremely interesting structure. Its operation may be clearly understood by noting that entrance to the two clubs (men's and women's) is through the passage into the court. Buildings of this sort have been a tremendous feature in stabilizing industrial conditions about munitions plants.



GRETNA.—Cottages used as Hostels for Women



GRETNA.—The Dental Clinic



GRETNA.—The Institute



GRETNA.—Cottages



GRETNA.—Cottages



GRETNA.—Cottages



GRETNA.—The Recreation Building



GRETNA.—Cottages



GRETNA.—The Cinema Theatre





GRETNA.—Cottages used as Hostels



GRETNA.—Cottages



GRETNA.—Cottages





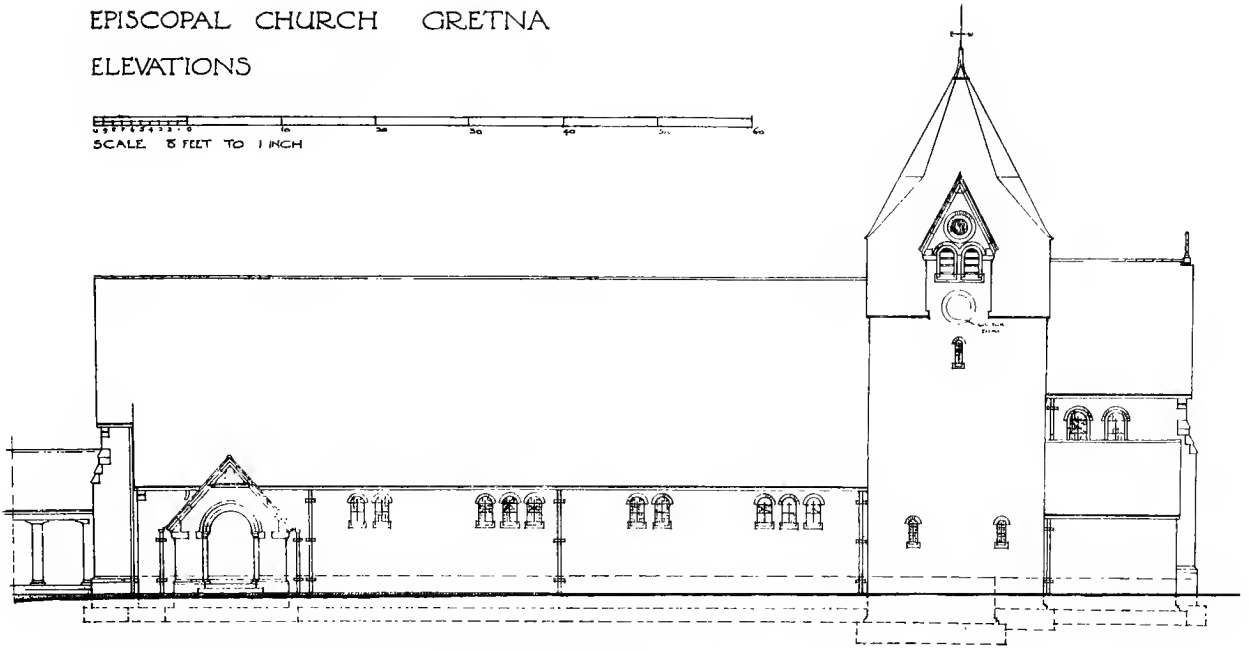
GRETNA.—Staff Cottages



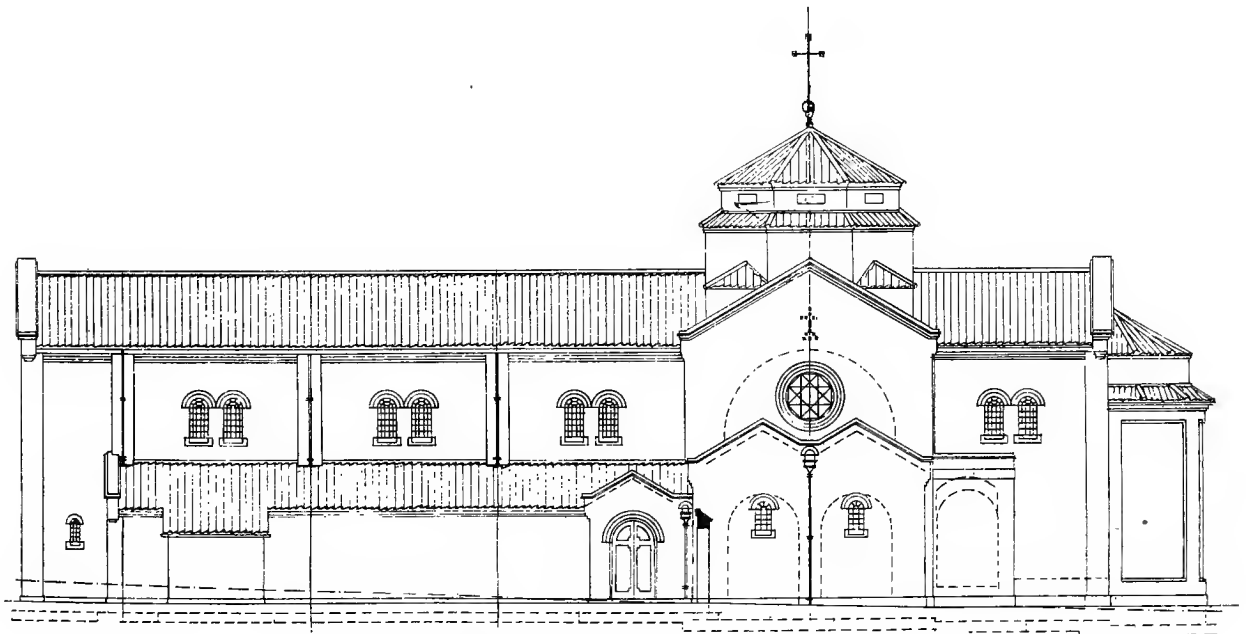
GRETNA.—Cottages

EPISCOPAL CHURCH GRETNA  
ELEVATIONS

SCALE 8 FEET TO 1 INCH

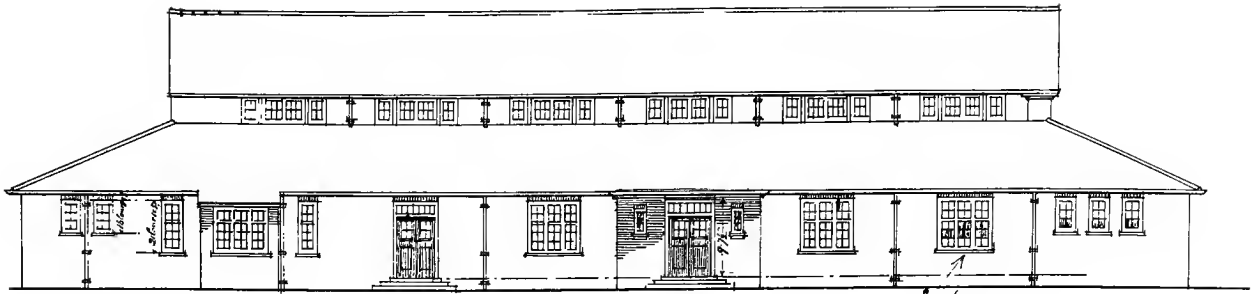


SOUTH ELEVATION

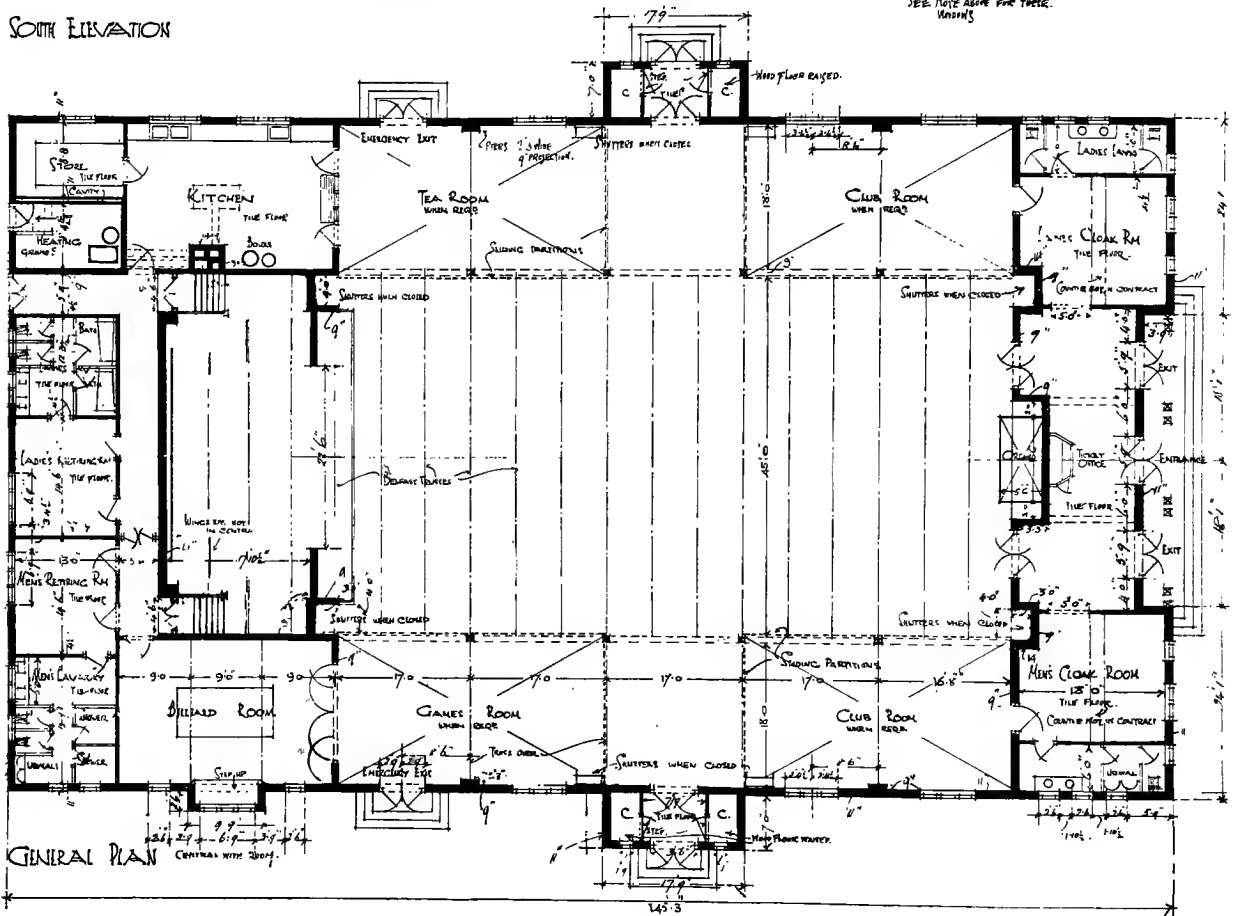


ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

GRETTA—TWO OF THE THREE NEW CHURCHES



SOUTH ELEVATION



HALL AT GRETNA

There was a great deal of charm about this building, which was erected in six and a half weeks in order to introduce a social factor which was found during the first few weeks of operation to be absolutely necessary to the efficient operation of the factory.

# What Is a House? VI

## CONSTRUCTIVE HOUSING LEGISLATION AND ITS LESSON FOR THE UNITED STATES

By EDITH ELMER WOOD\*

### I. Introduction

**C**ONSTRUCTIVE HOUSING LEGISLATION is that type of housing legislation through which the community itself undertakes to provide suitable homes at cost for such of its citizens as need them. The community may act either directly or indirectly. Municipal housing is direct. The loan of public money to a housing association is indirect. Both are constructive.

Restrictive housing legislation is that form which seeks to prevent the erection of bad houses through the establishment and enforcement of minimum standards of light, air, sanitation, and safety. It may also prevent filth and dilapidation by establishing and enforcing minimum standards of maintenance.

The best restrictive legislation is only negative. It will prevent the bad. It will not produce the good. Especially, it will not produce it at a given rental. Its only answer to a house-famine is the relaxation of its own standards. This was strikingly illustrated in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire of 1906. Instead of taking advantage of the wonderful opportunity presented to rebuild the congested districts on model lines, the need of immediate shelter was so great and private capital so timid that all bars were let down and even the inadequate restrictions of the old building code were suspended. The result was that tenements sprang up, covering 100 per cent of the lots, and a dark-room problem was created which it will take a generation to solve.

A high standard of restrictive legislation will not be enacted, or, if enacted, will not be enforced, when its enforcement would leave a considerable number of people homeless. On the other hand, restrictive housing legislation must not be neglected. The manufacture of new slums must not be allowed to continue, nor would the building of new and good houses in itself cause the abandonment of the objection-

able old ones. It would only cause their rents to drop, and there would always be a residuum of persons, who, through misfortune, improvidence, or excessive thrift, would choose them for their cheapness so long as their occupation was permitted. Effective progress, then, demands a simultaneous and correlated development of both constructive and restrictive housing legislation.

Restrictive housing legislation has attained as high a level of development in some parts of the United States as is, perhaps, possible in the absence of its working partner. The New York Tenement House Law is the first of the modern type, and remains one of the best.\* It is certainly one of the best enforced.

Let us take from New York's experience one single example of the limitations of restrictive legislation. The New York Tenement House Commission of 1900, whose recommendations resulted in the enactment of the present law, expressed its regret that it was not possible to insist on air-shafts being put in old houses with dark rooms, because the expense would lead owners to turn their houses to other uses. "Reforms of such a kind," the report goes on, "would harm most the very persons it sought to aid." So the law requires of dark rooms only that windows shall be cut into adjoining rooms. According to the report of the Commission, there were, in 1900, some 350,000 such dark rooms in greater New York. Today, in the language of the Tenement House Department and the press, there are none. But this means only that the cutting of windows into adjoining rooms has been completed.

The old apartments built before the Tenement House Law of 1879, which required air-shafts, were three and four rooms deep. One room had windows on street or back yard; the others were a series of closets of increasing darkness. The doorway from one to another was the only opening. Of course, the windows cut in the

\*See the note in the Appendix in which Mr. Robert D. Kohn points out the serious failures of the New York law.

\*We here introduce the third new author, as forecast in the note to the authorship of Chapter V.—THE EDITOR.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

partitions between the rooms add somewhat to the possibility of ventilating them. But the rooms are still unfit for human habitation by any proper standard. Half a million people are living in those rooms today. What sort of citizens will the generation make that was born and bred in them?

After fifteen years of operation of the New York Tenement House Law, about three million people, including practically the whole of the unskilled wage-earning class, are still living in old-law tenements. On December 31, 1916, there were 77,604 old-law tenements in New York containing 597,955 apartments. There were at that time 27,149 new-law tenements with 378,442 apartments. Nor may we look forward hopefully to the gradual elimination of the old tenements and the substitution of the newer and better type; for, as was stated by a representative of the New York Tenement House Department at the National Housing Conference in November, 1916, the building of cheap tenements in New York has ceased.

Unless wages of unskilled workers can be practically doubled without rents being raised, which is clearly impossible under present conditions, the outlook for this great class of the population in New York City, under existing legislation, is dark now and will become increasingly so, as the cheap old-law buildings disappear.

What is true in New York is true of other American cities. Their housing problems do not differ from those of New York in kind, but only in bulk.

Mr. John Nolen ("Industrial Housing," Proceedings of the Fifth National Housing Conference, 1916, p. 5) is responsible for the following striking juxtaposition of facts: The simplest acceptable standard of American home, whether single cottage in village or suburb, or whole-some apartment in a large city, costs on an average from \$1,800 to \$2,000 per family, including land and improvements. This means, on a basis of moderate commercial profit (5 or 6 per cent—and capital will not be invested for less), a rent of \$15 a month at the least. It is generally accepted that not more than 20 per cent of the family income should go for rent; yet more than half of all the workingmen in the United States receive less than \$15 a week.

What are we going to do about it? Lower the

standard? Increase wages without increasing rents? Or eliminate the commercial profit? We are up against a stone wall whichever way we turn.

Here is where the experience of the older nations is useful to us. They came to the same stone wall a quarter of a century ago, and they found a way through. It did not lead into paradise. Indeed it only set them on a road. But it took them past the stone wall, and the road points in the right direction.

### II. The Experience of Foreign Countries

Constructive housing legislation has developed along four main lines, of which three may be said to involve Government aid of a positive sort and one of a negative.

1. Direct community action. The state, or more usually the city, buys land and builds houses for working people, either in the city itself or in garden suburbs. It may rent them and remain a landlord. Or it may sell them to the tenants on a system of long-term, easy payments.

2. The state may lend money at a low rate of interest to non-commercial building associations, whether of a philanthropic character, or coöperative or co-partnership societies formed by the workmen themselves.

3. The third type has so far produced fewer houses than either of the others, yet would probably appeal more quickly to most Americans. It is the loan of money on favorable conditions to the individual workingman who wishes to build a home. It may be done through the intermediary of a loan company, as in Belgium, or directly, as under the surprisingly simple and efficient system of New Zealand and Australia. Yet, appealing as the type is, and useful as it is within certain limits, it must be admitted that it does not reach—cannot reach—the class that is in most urgent need of help—the unskilled wage-earners of large cities.

4. Finally, there is the negative, yet often important, aid rendered by tax exemptions on houses of approved standard and rental. The function of this type is auxiliary.

Some countries have developed one or two, and some have all four types of government aid. It has depended somewhat on a diversity of local needs, but more on national habits of thought. The accident of locality has contributed largely, for, other things being at all equal, the example of a near neighbor is most likely to be followed.

Three nations stand out as pioneers in constructive housing legislation—England, Belgium, and Germany. These distinctively industrial nations, whose cities grew with unexampled rapidity during the nineteenth century, were naturally the first to feel the pressure of housing problems. They will be considered briefly in the order indicated.

#### A. THE PIONEERS.

##### (1) *England.\**

\*Scotland is under the same housing laws as England and Wales, but as statistics are given separately, and her experience is similar to that of England, though on a smaller scale, it is omitted from this summary. Ireland is under another dispensation, which involves subsidies from the Imperial exchequer and aid from the local rates. The Irish experience has more in common with outdoor poor relief than with constructive housing legislation.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

### (a) Description of Legislation.

Lord Shaftsbury first formulated the principles on which modern constructive housing laws are based in his Laboring Classes Lodging Houses Act of 1851, which permitted local authorities to borrow money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners to erect dwellings for working-people. This provision was so far in advance of public opinion that it remained a dead letter for forty years. Another clause, permitting loans to non-commercial building associations, was tried out first. Under it and subsequent acts a series of relatively small sums, amounting altogether to about £1,000,000, were loaned to philanthropic and semi-philanthropic societies.

During this period, England was experimenting with two series of restrictive housing laws, the Cross and Torrens Acts, which gave, as did the Public Health Acts, considerable power to health officers in connection with housing, and permitted the slum-clearance schemes which have been so often criticized on the ground of expense.

Modern British experience dates from the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890, the scope of which was much enlarged by the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. The act of 1890, coming as the result of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes of 1885, was a consolidation of all previous housing acts (which may account for its occasional lack of clearness) and also contained new provisions of great importance. It is in seven parts, of which the first three are the most significant. Part I deals with large, insanitary, or slum areas, and clearance schemes, and with the general obligation of rehousing the dispossessed tenants. Part II deals with single insanitary houses or small groups of them and with obstructive houses, which shut light and air out from others. Part III deals with housing undertakings by the local authorities, with the financing of these projects and the conditions of public loans, whether to local authorities, to societies, or to individuals.

The first two parts, then, except in so far as they involve the rehousing of dispossessed tenants, are restrictive legislation and need not detain us. Their aim is to enlarge the powers of the sanitary officials. Part III and the rehousing sections of Parts I and II are constructive. They permit local authorities, urban and rural, on having convinced the Local Government Board that the need exists, to acquire land and erect workingmen's dwellings, whether tenements or cottages, within their own jurisdiction or in adjoining suburbs, with gardens if desired, of not more than one acre to a house. Under the act of 1909 this part becomes obligatory if the Local Government Board so orders, and any group of taxpayers or tenants may petition the Local Government Board to make an investigation of the needs of their locality.

As to financing these operations, the local authorities may borrow from the Public Works Loan Commissioners on the security of their rates. The 1909 law makes the conditions very favorable, the maximum time being eighty years for land and sixty for buildings, the maximum amount two-thirds of the total value, and the lowest rate of interest  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. (This has gone up since the war, reaching 5 per cent in March, 1916, but it is not expected that this increase will be permanent.) The London County Council, which enjoys considerable home rule, is permitted

to finance its housing schemes by the issue of consolidated stock.

The Public Works Loan Board is also authorized to loan money for the construction of workingmen's dwellings to societies, corporations, and private individuals. This does not mean the individual workingman, however, but the philanthropist or employer who is building on a large scale. The need of the individual workingman is met, in so far as it is met at all, by the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act of 1899, which permits local authorities to advance sums not exceeding £300, representing not more than four-fifths the market value of a house whose total value must not exceed £400. No very extensive use has been made of this act, as up to March 31, 1916, only £408,129 had been loaned under it. But the use is evidently growing, for about half of this sum has been loaned in the last three years.

The fourth type of Government aid, tax exemption, is also found in Great Britain, but, like the loan to individual workingmen, it plays a minor rôle. As between the two principal forms, the activities of the private associations were much the more important in early years, but although they have increased steadily, they have recently dropped to second place through the more rapid growth of the work of local authorities.

An interesting controversy has raged between the advocates of the two systems. The municipal housing side is led by Alderman Thompson, of Richmond, author of the "Housing Handbook" and "Housing up to Date," and the opposition by Councillor Nettlefold, of Birmingham, author of "A Housing Policy" and "Practical Housing." Councillor Nettlefold's greatest service lies in having pointed out the possibility, by patient, persistent work on the part of local authorities, of eradicating slums without burdening the taxpayer, by the application of Part II of the housing act to one insanitary house after another, which obliges the owner to repair or remove them at his own expense.

Moreover, in their efforts to prove the superiority of private initiative over municipal, Councillor Nettlefold and his associates have put a great deal of energy into making a success of co-partnership housing companies.

The net result of the controversy has been distinctly helpful. Municipal activity has tended to keep up standards and that of private associations to keep down cost. Each is put on its mettle to prove its own claim to superiority. Far from stifling private initiative, the effect of Government intervention appears to be stimulating. At all events, the greatest private activity has occurred in those localities where public officials have done most.

Under the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, those entitled to receive loans, besides local authorities and private individuals, are employing corporations and public utility societies. These must not be confused with what we call public utilities in the United States. They are what we know as public welfare or limited-dividend associations. They include the philanthropic limited-dividend housing associations and the friendly societies, or mutual benefit organizations of workingmen, which have many objects besides housing, also a great number of coöperative building clubs, and, more recently, the co-partnership building associations.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

The Act of 1909, known as the John Burns Act, has four parts. Part I reenacts the statute of 1890 with amendments. Part II deals with town planning. It permits local authorities and owners of estates, with the approval of the Local Government Board, to prepare plans for undeveloped areas. Its aim is to prevent congestion of population and inflation of land values in the future. Part III is restrictive. It establishes a system of nationwide housing inspection under sanitary authorities reporting to the Local Government Board. Part IV is the usual catchall for miscellany, without which no British statute appears to be complete.

### (b) Results of Legislation.

No authoritative publication of general results has been made. Certain figures, such as the amounts loaned by the Public Works Loan Board, the number of persons housed by the London County Council, or the number of houses built by local authorities after the passage of the Act of 1909, are known with perfect accuracy. Certain broad statements are found in the works of Thompson which are probably reliable, although he does not always give his authorities. But they do not carry us beyond 1907. For other data needed to complete the picture, we are reduced to estimates based on more or less inadequate information. The result cannot pretend to scientific accuracy, but may be justified by the importance of arriving at a general impression.

#### PUBLIC MONEY INVESTED IN HOUSING IN ENGLAND

(From the Forty-fifth Annual Report of the Public Works Loan Board 1915-16.)

Total loaned to Local Authorities in England and Wales . . .	£3,972,390
Total loaned to societies and individuals in England . . .	3,260,078
Total loaned under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act in England . . . . .	408,129
Total to March 31, 1916 . . . . .	£7,640,597

This does not take into account what the London County Council has spent (which, exclusive of slum-clearance costs, must be between two and three million of pounds), nor what has been spent by Liverpool and other cities under local acts.

#### HOUSES BUILT AND PERSONS HOUSED IN ENGLAND THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVE HOUSING LEGISLATION

Agency	Number of Persons
London County Council (to May 31, 1915, Annual Reports)	
3,402 cottages . . . . .	}
6,420 apartments . . . . .	
1,874 cubicles . . . . .	
{ 9,822 lettings } . . . . .	}
{ 28,252 rooms } . . . . .	
Local Authorities 1910-16 (Forty-fifth Annual Report Local Government Board)	
13,259 houses . . . . . (estimated)	66,300
Local Authorities, 1891-1910	
Number of houses not given, but total loans are about two-thirds of total loans 1910-16. As cost of building was less, the number of people housed was probably about (estimated) . . . . .	50,000
City of Liverpool to 1913, mostly under local acts, 2,731 dwellings (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 158, p. 314) (estimated) . . . . .	10,000
All other cities under local acts (estimated) . . . . .	10,000
10 Philanthropic Societies of London to 1907 (W. Thompson "Housing up to Date," p. 143) . . . . .	125,000
413 Coöperative Societies to 1907, 46,707 houses (W. Thompson, "Housing up to Date," p. 143) (estimated) . . . . .	200,000
Co-partnership Societies to 1907, 400 houses (W. Thompson, "Housing up to Date," p. 143) . . . . .	2,000
Under Small Dwellings Acquisition Act (estimated) . . . . .	75,500
Total number of persons housed . . . . .	528,742

The philanthropic societies have not been active since 1907, but the coöperative and co-partnership societies have been extremely so. On the other hand, some of the philanthropic and coöperative societies may have received no public loans. Balancing these two unknown quantities against each other, with the statement that the credit item is likely to be larger than the debit, we are pretty safe in saying that over half a million people in England today owe their comfortable homes to constructive housing legislation.

Results, in decreased death-rates and increased physical development, are very striking. For the year ending March, 1912, the death-rate in the London County Councils' dwellings was 8.5 per 1,000, while for the whole of London, in 1911, it was 15 per 1,000 (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 158, p. 307). Speaking of a slightly earlier period, Thompson says ("Housing up to Date," p. 46): "The death-rate in the model dwellings on cleared slum areas is under 13 per 1,000, or one-third of what it was in the old slums before clearance, viz., 40 per 1,000." At the time of which Thompson was writing the general death-rate in London was 15.6 (p. 75). In Liverpool a still clearer demonstration was made when, by special effort, 94 per cent of the former tenants were rehoused on a cleared area. "In 1902 . . . when these areas were condemned, the death-rate within them ranged from 40 to 60 per 1,000, and the incidence of phthisis resulted in an annual death-rate of, approximately, 4 per 1,000 . . . the medical officer of health points out that under the new conditions the general death-rate has fallen by more than one-half, and the average annual death-rate from phthisis in the corporation tenements during the four years 1909 to 1912 fell to 1.9 per 1,000." (Forty-second Annual Report, Local Government Board, Part II, pp. xxii, xxiii.)

It happens that the classic examples of the effect of housing on physical development are furnished by two famous industrial garden suburbs which have received no Government aid—Port Sunlight and Bournville. It would hardly be claimed, though, that the beneficent results recorded were due to the method of financing them, or that similar results would not be found where the Public Works Loan Commissioners supplied the funds. Dr. Arkle made a series of measurements of schoolboys at Port Sunlight, an industrial garden suburb of Liverpool, and on Liverpool schoolboys of the same economic and social class at the same ages. At seven the Port Sunlight boys averaged 2.7 inches taller and 7.5 pounds heavier; at fourteen they were 6 inches taller and 33.8 pounds heavier. (The table is quoted in full in "Personal Observations of Some Housing Developments in Europe," Richard R. Watrous, *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, July, 1914.) Similarly, Bournville is a garden suburb of Birmingham, and Thompson tells us ("Housing up to Date," p. 3) that the boys at the Bournville school were on an average 4 inches taller than those of Birmingham, and their chest measurement was 3 inches greater.

### (2) Belgium.

The Belgians have the honor of having produced the earliest effective national constructive housing law—that of 1889—and, up to the present time, one of the best. It



## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

has also been one of the most influential, having been widely observed and copied in continental Europe.

The vitally distinguishing feature of the law is its liberation of the deposits of the General Savings Bank and Pension Fund (*caisse générale d'épargne et de retraite*) for use as loans to build workingmen's dwellings. This provision was copied directly in the French act of 1894 and may have suggested the German plan of using state insurance funds.

Another important provision of the Belgian law was the appointment of unpaid housing committees (*comités de patronage*) in every *arrondissement* of the nation, reporting to a central body, the *conseil supérieure d'hygiène publique*. They have educational, advisory, and even some administrative functions. They stimulate public interest in housing, assist limited-dividend building associations and individual workingmen who wish to own houses, and they watch over the enforcement of restrictive laws for the sanitary supervision of houses and the eradication of slums. The committees have been copied in French and Italian legislation and evidently suggested the county housing committees provided for in Part III of the British act of 1909.

Municipal housing is permitted under the Belgian law, but has not been developed to any extent. Building societies and individual workingmen have been the active agents, the individual workingmen through the intermediary of non-commercial loan associations. The Savings Bank was at first permitted to loan only 5 per cent of its funds, but when this limit was reached in 1901, it was raised to 7½ per cent. The interest charged at first was only 2½ per cent, but was eventually increased to 3½ per cent.

The individual workingman may borrow not to exceed 5,000 francs on a house and land, the combined value of which does not exceed 5,500 francs. He may borrow for periods of from five to twenty-five years. His payments may be monthly or yearly.

One of the most interesting features of the Belgian law is the insurance plan devised by M. Léon Mahillon, managing director of the General Savings Bank. A workingman borrowing to build a home takes out a policy on his life for the unpaid portion of his loan. Should he die before the payments are completed, the balance of the debt is canceled by the policy, and his widow receives the house unincumbered. The Savings Bank underwrites the insurance itself. This feature of the law has been very widely copied.

Up to 1913 the General Savings Bank had advanced 159,012,589 francs to the various types of societies, and about 57,300 dwellings had been built in consequence. This must have meant the housing of about 300,000 people. On Jan. 1, 1913, there were 176 associations having loan contracts with the bank, of which 167 were joint stock and 9 coöperative. All of the coöperative and 125 of the joint stock organizations were loan companies, only 42 being building societies.

Apparently this governmental assistance has not had the effect of discouraging private initiative, for 39 *sociétés d'habitations à bon marché*, which have received no loans from the General Savings Bank, are listed, which have invested over 65,000,000 francs in workingmen's dwellings.

About three-quarters of this sum represents industrial housing enterprises by employers.

(Ministère de l'Intérieur "Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique et du Congo Belge, 44me Année, 1913, Brussels, 1914, pp. 245-250.)

### (3) Germany.

Unlike the various forms of social insurance which were embodied in imperial legislation, and so may be said to radiate from the center outward, housing reform in Germany has grown up locally, and its progress has been from the circumference inward. Individual cities tried experiments in municipal housing. The next step was for individual states to pass laws facilitating the supply of funds to cities and to private societies for housing purposes. These laws differ among themselves in their provisions and their character, much as happens in the United States in our varying state legislation. The last to act was the Imperial Government, and there is not yet, although it has been much advocated and debated, a real national housing law in Germany.

As is often the case, the trail leads back to a personality, and the *Oberbürgermeister* of Ulm, Dr. von Wagner, may well be called the father of municipal housing in Germany. He began building in 1888 for municipal employees and later extended the benefits of his activities to all workingmen. His first ventures were tenements, but he soon became convinced of the advantages of the individual cottage and garden type, and these he encouraged the tenants to purchase. A mark a day over a period of about twenty-five years covered the purchase price and interest of a \$1,500, brick, story-and-a-half cottage and garden, very attractive to the eye. German foresight is shown in the stipulation in the deed giving the city the right to repurchase, if certain conditions of maintenance or use are not complied with, at any time within one hundred years, and as this clause is renewed whenever the house changes hands by purchase or inheritance, it is, in effect, a perpetual restriction.

Mayor von Wagner developed, simultaneously with housing, the policy of extensive land purchases by the city, which many German cities have followed. He encountered much opposition at first, but it gradually died out when it had been proved by experience that his housing policy cost the taxpayers nothing, and that the land-purchasing policy brought in substantial profits.

It is impossible to give a clear account of housing in Germany *briefly*, for it is the history of a great number of local enterprises operated under a mass of very diverse local legislation.

The most important single source of funds is furnished by the old-age and invalidity insurance institutes. Authority is found in the law of 1889, much amplified by that of 1899, which permits one-fourth of their funds to be invested in real estate. Loans from this source up to the end of 1914 totaled 532,541,142 marks. ("Amtliche Nachrichten des Reichsversicherungsamts," Vol. 31, No. 5, May 15, 1915.)

The next most important sources of capital are the imperial and state housing funds. The Imperial Government, between 1901 and 1908, appropriated \$7,854,000 for its fund to loan to societies, and in 1904 had spent over

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

\$8,000,000 in the direct housing of its own employees. (U. S. Bureau Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 158.)

The Prussian Diet has operated on a more extensive scale. Its housing fund, raised by the issue of bonds, was started in 1895, and in 1911 had reached the sum of 144,000,000 marks. With this the state was to build for its own employees and loan to societies. In either case rents were to cover the cost of maintenance, administration, interest, and sinking fund. (Bulletin No. 158.) This is the usual German plan, though the administration charges are sometimes carried by the community, and there are sometimes tax exemptions. But there is always a balance-sheet—and it always balances. This practice cannot be too highly commended.

No other state has worked on so large a scale as Prussia, but all have done *something*. The Bavarian Diet, for instance, from 1900–1911 appropriated 25,500,000 marks, of which about half was spent on direct housing for state employees and half was loaned to building associations. (Bulletin No. 158.)

The Grand Duchy of Hesse has proceeded along somewhat different lines. It was the first German state to establish systematic housing inspection (1893). The housing act of 1902, centralized and standardized this service by putting it under a state official, who also has advisory and constructive duties. Another act of the same year established the State Credit Bank (*Landeskreditkasse*), which is permitted to loan to communes for housing purposes up to 90 per cent of the value of land and buildings. The communes may either build themselves or reloan to associations. By an act of 1908 the Bank was permitted to loan directly to associations up to two-thirds of the value. The money is provided by an issue of 3½ per cent Hessian Government bonds, and the rate of interest charged depends on the actual sale price of the bonds, being just enough to cover the expenses.

In 1912 there were 1,271 public welfare building associations in Germany (*gemeinnützige Baugenossenschaften*), of which the 716 reporting had built 15,784 houses at a cost of \$103,000,000. A French official publication of August, 1913 (*bulletin du ministère du travail*), estimates that as early as 1909 about 25,000 houses, containing about 100,000 apartments, had been built by German housing associations. Assuming the accuracy of this estimate, it would mean the housing of about half a million people. And probably the states and cities have done as much directly.

It would be a difficult matter to find out how much Government money, or Government guarded money has been liberated for use in housing in Germany, but \$200,000,000 would certainly be within the truth.

Clearly there is no other country which has gone into housing on so large a scale or in so systematic a way.

### B. OTHER EUROPEAN AND LATIN-AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

#### (1) France.

Housing laws date from 1894, 1906, and 1912. The savings bank and national old-age pension fund have loaned about 55,000,000 francs for housing. The state has made available about 100,000,000 francs for this purpose. The *conseil supérieure d'habitations à bon marché* is under the department of labor. Reporting to it are the

local *comités de patronage*. Nearly all the work has been done through housing associations. Municipal housing has been undertaken only for the benefit of large families (those with four or more children), which it is, of course, the policy of the French Government to encourage. The war is likely to result in the French Government undertaking housing and town-planning work on an unprecedented scale.

#### (2) Italy, 1903, 1907, 1908.

The cities of Bologna and Venice experimented in municipal housing at a very early date (the sixties and eighties), though not with remarkable success. It seems to be the policy of the Italian Government to foster private initiative in every way. The local committees are to encourage existing housing societies or found them if none exist. These societies receive long-time loans (fifty years) from the State Bank of Deposits. The communes are to build only as a last resort. In 1911, 533 associations and 25 municipalities were building *case popolari*. These are almost invariably tenements, and the apartments are very small—two or three rooms. The value of houses and land aggregates about \$28,000,000. Tenants of municipal apartments are limited to those whose annual income does not exceed 1,500 lire.

#### (3) Austria, 1910, 1911.

The German example has been followed. There is a state housing fund. The funds of the insurance institutes are utilized. It is worthy of note that loans may run as high as 90 per cent of the value of house and land. The state, though late in beginning, has been active in housing its own employees, and there are already 634 public welfare building associations.

#### (4) Hungary, 1910, 1911.

The most noteworthy activity of Hungary has been along the line of rural housing. Two hundred communes have received aid from the Central Government in building 6,000 cottages for agricultural laborers.

The city of Budapest has been very energetic. The city built tenements for 22,000 people, in 1908, on land which it already owned. In 1913 it provided cottages for 18,000 in the workmen's suburb of Kispest.

Housing associations have never taken root in Hungary. There seems to be a lack of the necessary private initiative.

#### (5) Spain, 1911.

The Spanish law provides local housing committees under the jurisdiction of the department of labor. It encourages sanitary housing by tax exemption, guarantee of interest, and in some cases free grants of land. It is not discoverable that much has been done.

#### (6) Holland, 1901.

The Dutch law is a comprehensive one with both restrictive and constructive provisions. It sets up minimum standards of building and maintenance, on the one hand, and permits Government loans for housing purposes, on the other, up to 100 per cent of the value of the house and lot. That less than \$2,000,000 had been loaned under this law, up to April, 1910, is probably due to the comparatively high rate of interest charged.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

### (7) *Norway, 1903.*

This law is unusual in that it provides only for individual loans. There is a state loan bank. The commune guarantees the borrower. To 1913 about \$8,500,000 had been loaned to buy 13,140 small farms and build 9,460 houses.

### (8) *Sweden, 1904.*

There is a state housing fund which loans to individuals through associations. There is also municipal housing, especially in Stockholm.

### (9) *Denmark, 1887.*

This law, which actually antedated that of Belgium, permitted Government loans to societies and communes, but remained a dead letter until it was amended in 1897. Since then a good deal has been done by small, but successful, workingmen's associations.

### (10) *Rumania, 1910.*

Large tax exemptions in favor of workingmen's houses are the chief feature of this act.

### (11) *Switzerland.*

Switzerland has no national housing law, but several cantons, notably Geneva, have shown some activity under local legislation.

### (12) *Luxemburg, 1906.*

The funds of the savings bank are loaned to communes, associations, and employers for housing purposes.

### (13) *Chile, 1906.*

The law provides for a system of local housing committees with power to carry out slum-clearance schemes, encourage housing associations, or build themselves. The *Caja de Credito Hipotecario* is authorized to lend up to 75 per cent of the value of land and buildings, and the state guarantees 6 per cent net returns for twenty years. The Santiago committee showed considerable energy, and in 1911 had two workingmen's suburbs under construction. (*Oficina de Trabajo, Habitaciones Obreras en Chile y Estranjero, 1911.*)

### (14) *Argentina.*

In 1913 the city of Buenos Ayres contracted for 10,000 workingmen's cottages, to be built at the rate of 2,000 a year. The Government was to exempt the building materials for them from import duties. (*First Annual Report, Massachusetts Homestead Commission, published 1914, p. 310.*)

### (15) *Brazil, 1909.*

Companies building houses for workingmen were to enjoy tax exemption for fifteen years, exemption from duty on building materials, and in some cases were to receive reclaimed or other Government land free of charge. They were to be under strict Government supervision. (*First Annual Report, Massachusetts Homestead Commission, p. 311.*)

### (16) *Cuba, 1910.*

An appropriation of \$1,300,000 was made, for the purpose of building 2,000 laborers' cottages, to be sold on

small monthly installments. Up to 1914, about 1,000 had been built in Habana, Pinar del Rio, and Santa Clara provinces, and 250 were being built in Santiago province. (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 158; this is the source of most of these summaries, except as otherwise stated.)

## C. THE SELF-GOVERNING BRITISH COLONIES.

The example of New Zealand, Australia, and Canada has especial value for us, because their conditions, material and moral, present a much closer parallel to our own than do those of any European country. Canada has the additional interest attached to a next-door neighbor.

Like the United States, and even more so, they are new countries, sparsely settled, except in spots. Their cities are new; their houses are new; their slums are new. More than is true of us, unfortunately, their interest in housing is still largely preventive. They are young, optimistic, energetic, and intensely democratic. Australia and New Zealand in many ways represent the most advanced type of social democracy as yet evolved. They are the paradise of union labor. They have—and the fact is not without significance—the lowest death-rate in the world.

Inevitably, their housing legislation has been strongly influenced by that of the mother country, but inevitably, too, they have worked it out in a very different way. In countries where wages and standards of living are high and the working population virile and ambitious, we should expect the third type of constructive housing legislation to be favored—Government aid to the individual workingman. This is precisely and strikingly what has happened in New Zealand and Australia. The development of Canada has been less logical, perhaps, owing to accidents of association.

### (1) *New Zealand.*

The typical housing law of New Zealand is the *Advances to Workers' Act* of 1906 and 1913. The superintendent of the State Advances Office is authorized to lend to anyone employed in manual or clerical work with an income of not more than £200 per annum and not the owner of any other land than what he proposes to build on. The sum advanced is not to exceed £450, or the value of the dwelling to be built. The loan is to be repaid in a period of thirty-six years or less. Application may be made at any post office. The postmaster supplies the blank and gives any desired information as to how to fill it out. He also shows the applicant the plans and estimates of eighteen carefully selected types of house. Note the extreme simplicity of the procedure and elimination of red tape. There is no intermediary. It is as easy as filling out a money-order blank. An agent from the nearest valuation office makes a visit and report, and for this service the applicant pays a fee of 7s. 6d. If his application for a loan is granted, all his payments are made through his post office. Five per cent interest is nominally charged, but it is reduced to 4½ for prompt payment.

The total advances to workers under this act up to March 31, 1915, were £2,856,750—a large sum in proportion to the population of New Zealand.

For the benefit of the man who owns no land, New Zealand has the *Workers' Dwellings Act* (1905, 1910, 1914).

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

A deposit of £10 is all the capital required. The house is built on Government land, and either rented or sold to the tenant. But only 548 houses have been built under this act. The cost limit for the house and five acres of land is £750. The income limit of the beneficiary, under the latest amendment, is £175.

### (2) *Australia.*

The five Australian provinces have housing loan laws similar, in a general way, to those of New Zealand, but of later date and developed under five somewhat varying forms. Some of the provinces are very slow in getting out their annual reports. From these circumstances results the impossibility of giving definite, late, general figures. It is probable that the aggregate loans of the five provinces amount by now to a figure about equal to the loans in New Zealand.

### (3) *Canada.*

In 1913, Ontario and Quebec passed housing laws permitting the Government to guarantee 85 per cent of the stock of approved non-commercial building associations. Under the Ontario act the Toronto Housing Company was organized and has put up a million dollars' worth of workmen's cottages and cottage flats.

Meanwhile the Canadian Commission of Conservation decided that the conservation of human life was part of their duties and that the conservation of human life was intimately bound up with housing and town planning. Just before the outbreak of the war, in 1914, they brought over Thomas Adams, town planning expert of the English Local Government Board, to be their adviser in these subjects. The war has necessarily hampered progress, but the Commission is proceeding along broad constructive lines. A town planning act has been drafted and introduced in the various legislatures. A Civic Improvement League for Canada, with local branches, has been started as an educational leaven, to prepare the way, perhaps, for a more formal organization on the lines of the *comités de patronage*. The time is not felt to be ripe for pushing housing legislation, but the preliminary steps are being taken. The situation is not altogether unlike that of Massachusetts with its Homestead Commission and Town Planning Boards.

## III. The Applicability of Foreign Experience to the United States\*

The following statements are believed to be fully justified by undisputed facts:

- 1 The housing problems of foreign countries and of the United States are similar. Such differences as exist are of degree, not of kind.
- 2 A distinct improvement in the housing of working-people has occurred during the past twenty-five years in England, Belgium, and Germany, and more recently in other countries where constructive housing legislation is in force.
- 3 Much of this improvement could not have been brought about under an exclusive system of restrictive housing legislation and private initiative.

\*This article was not written to apply to a war condition, and the arguments set forth are intended to apply in normal times. Much of this material is, however, directly pertinent to the present lamentable situation.—THE EDITOR.

## A. OBJECTIONS TO CONSTRUCTIVE HOUSING LEGISLATION FOR THE UNITED STATES.

We have now arrived at the vital question to which our preliminary study has been leading: Shall we have constructive housing legislation in the United States? The conclusions just summarized raise a presumption in its favor, but many serious objections have been made. These fall into five groups—constitutional, economic, social, philosophical, and pessimistic.

(1) The constitutional objection has several aspects:

(a) It is claimed that we cannot have a national housing law like the Belgian law or the British Housing of the Working-Classes Act.

So far as these laws are concerned with restrictive or mandatory features, this is, of course, true. The Federal Government can impose no housing obligations on state or local authorities. There is nothing, however, to prevent a federal housing loan act, even as we already have the Federal Farm Loan Act.

(b) It is claimed that to undertake housing operations for the benefit of workmen would be class legislation.

It is possible that an act might be so worded as to lay itself open to this objection, in which case the wording should be changed. There is no reason *per se* why providing houses at cost for persons whose income is under \$800 a year should be considered class legislation in an objectionable sense any more than providing schools for children or hospitals for sick people is so considered.

(c) It is claimed that constructive housing activity on the part of the state would be an unwarranted extension of the police power.

That, of course, is a matter for the courts to settle. Constructive housing legislation would be in precisely the same position as minimum wage laws, restrictions of hours of work, prohibition of night-work for women and children, and a long list of modern social legislation. Like the rest, it will be sustained just so long and so far as its advocates can convince the courts of the connection between it and the public health.

(2) The economic objection is based on the alleged burden laid upon the long-suffering taxpayer. This is a misconception, pure and simple. A properly conducted constructive housing scheme is exactly self-supporting. The credit of the community is used to obtain an abundance of capital at a low rate of interest.

The Irish system of subsidy from the rates and from the imperial exchequer is not constructive housing, but outdoor poor relief. It is wholly exceptional. The much-cited slum-clearance schemes are not housing measures at all, but health measures. And such affiliations as they have are much closer to restrictive than to constructive housing measures.

Sound municipal housing enterprises aim to come out exactly even, with neither profit nor loss. The English local authorities come very near to doing this and the German authorities do it. So with loans. Commercial profit in money-lending is eliminated, but every cent of principal and interest is returned.

(3) The social objection, the pauperization of the beneficiary, is the obverse of the economic and, being based on the same misconception, falls to the ground with it. The

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

workingman is not getting something for nothing. He is getting it at cost. He is no more pauperized by such a service than are the people of Cleveland when they pay 3 cents instead of 5 on their municipal street-car lines. The writer has paid 47 cents a month water-rates in Washington, D. C., for a publicly owned and maintained service, and \$6 a month in Berkeley, Calif., to a private water company, but is conscious of no corresponding fluctuations in self-respect.

(4) The philosophic objection is based on really fundamental theories. Neither the individualist nor the anarchist can be expected to approve of constructive housing legislation. Both object to any extension of the activities of government. Any such proposed extension is sure to be labeled socialistic or paternalistic. In this respect, constructive housing legislation finds itself in very good company. The whole modern program of social legislation is attacked on the same grounds.

(5) The pessimistic objection is that based on the alleged inefficiency and corruption of American public service. In so far as there is still a solid basis for such a criticism (and we all know that our municipal governments especially have been wonderfully improved in the last fifteen years), it should be a reason for strenuous efforts to improve our public service. It is not a reason for limiting the sphere of governmental activity unless we are prepared to admit the final failure of American democracy.

### B. BEST TYPE OF CONSTRUCTIVE HOUSING LEGISLATION.

If we are to have constructive housing legislation, what type shall we choose? The best results seem to have been obtained where all types are in operation. We should certainly encourage the three positive forms of Government aid and probably the negative, but we should keep clear of subsidies. We should proceed eclectically, choosing the best where we find it, with due regard to our local needs, habits of thought, and body of existing law.

### C. OUTLINE OF A HOUSING POLICY FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Any plan looking to the solution of the housing problem in the United States must include both restrictive and constructive housing legislation.

The form and standards of restrictive housing legislation have been very carefully worked out by Mr. Veiller in his Model Housing Law, which ought to be adopted by every state in the Union. The state is the proper unit. National restrictive housing is impossible, and local legislation should be resorted to, only pending the passage of a state law, or to impose higher standards.

The state is also the most natural unit for constructive housing legislation. But the nation and the city must by no means be ignored.

(1) The National Government may exercise an extremely important function. It may supply or facilitate loans. And through the power to make conditions for the assignment of these loans, it may exert a strong influence on local standards. These assignments should be in the hands of a national housing and town-planning commission under the Department of Labor.

Funds might be made available in various ways:

(a) A federal housing fund could be created, from which loans would be made.

(b) The federal land banks created by the Federal Farm Loan Act might add housing loans to their activities.

(c) Housing loans, under certain conditions, might be made an authorized form of investment for trust funds and national bank deposits.

(d) The investment of the deposits of the postal savings banks in housing loans might be authorized. The low rate of interest paid on these deposits would permit loans to be made at a low rate, and the obvious appropriateness of letting the people's savings be used for the people's advantage is very appealing.

Clearly these loans would be permissive under the last three plans. Only under the first could the housing commission play anything more than an advisory rôle.

(2) The state should have a system of local housing and town-planning boards under a state board, which should administer both constructive and restrictive housing laws. The state might guarantee the stock of approved housing companies, as Ontario does. It might have a housing fund raised by a bond issue. Where there is a state insurance fund, it should be available for housing loans. The state should loan to municipalities, to associations, and to individual workingmen. In the last case it should approximate as nearly as possible the simplicity of the New Zealand procedure.

The writer does not believe it would be generally advisable for the state to carry on direct housing enterprises of its own, though it might, for educational purposes, make an initial demonstration, as the Massachusetts Homestead Commission is now doing.\*

(3) Some cities in the United States probably have enough financial home rule to bond themselves for housing purposes without special legislation. Whether the courts would sustain such action cannot be told till it is tried. A state constructive housing law should contain an enabling clause to cover this, but the approval of the state housing board should be required.

The local housing and town-planning committees should play an important part—investigate local conditions, arouse the interest of the community, aid in the enforcement of the restrictive housing law, encourage the formation of non-commercial building associations, help them get funds and select the best plans, perform a like function for individual workingmen, and when other means fail, stimulate the city fathers to undertake municipal building.

Does all this seem visionary and foreign to American traditions?

Was our homestead policy un-American? Under the homestead act of 1862 more than 85,000,000 acres of farmland have been made over by the United States Government to settlers. It was bigger and more far-reaching than any housing scheme while it lasted. But this source of relief to congestion is now at an end. This open door of opportunity has been closed. Is it not time we looked about us for a substitute and studied what other nations have found practical and helpful?

Perhaps the best contribution the United States has made to contemporary civilization is our public school

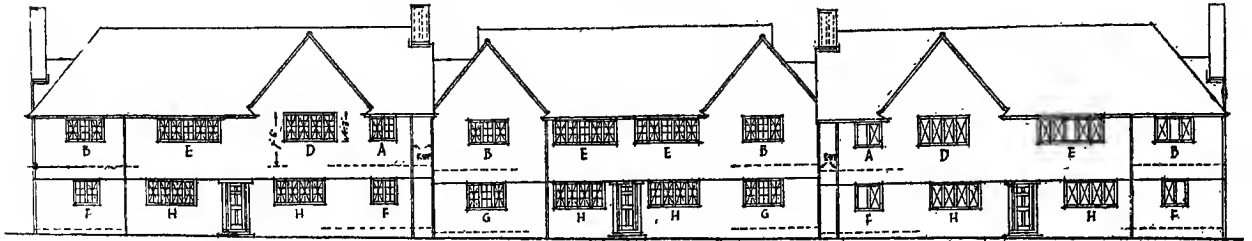
\*An appropriation of \$50,000 was made for this purpose by the legislature, in 1917; land has been secured in the outskirts of Lowell, and building is in progress.

# WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

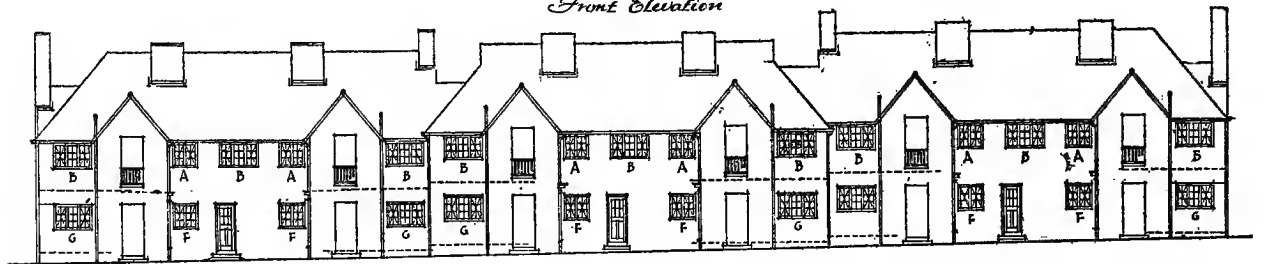
system. It costs something over half a billion dollars a year and is well worth it.

Yet, if we come down to basic realities, if it is a question between the mental, moral, and physical development of the people, which ought to take precedence? Are not

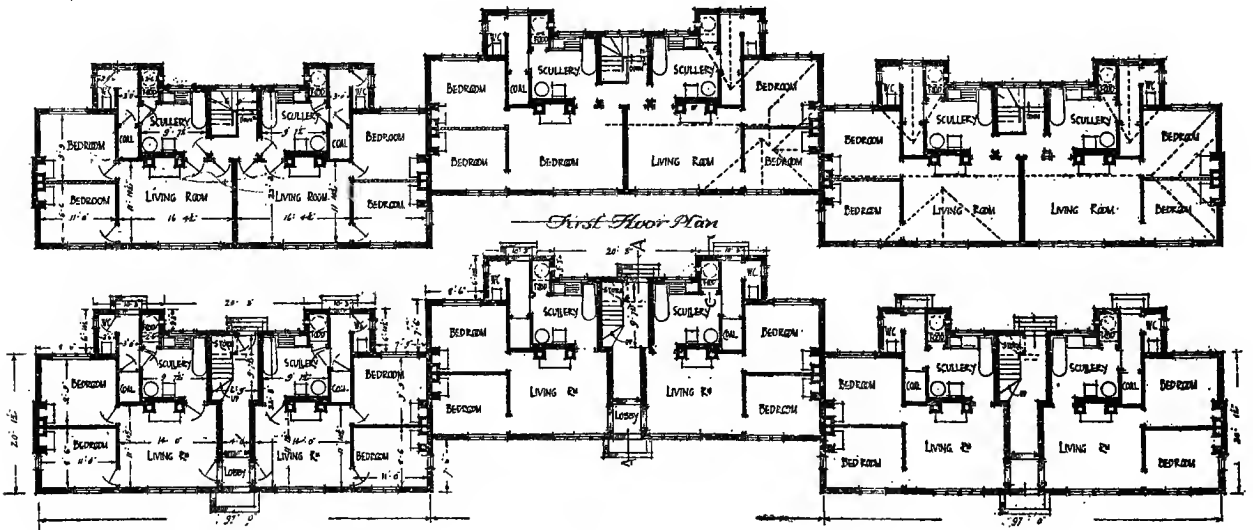
health and morals more fundamental than formal education can ever be? And if a community has not the energy and resourcefulness to do both, should it not make sure that its children are properly housed before it troubles about their book-learning?



*Front Elevation*



*Back Elevation*

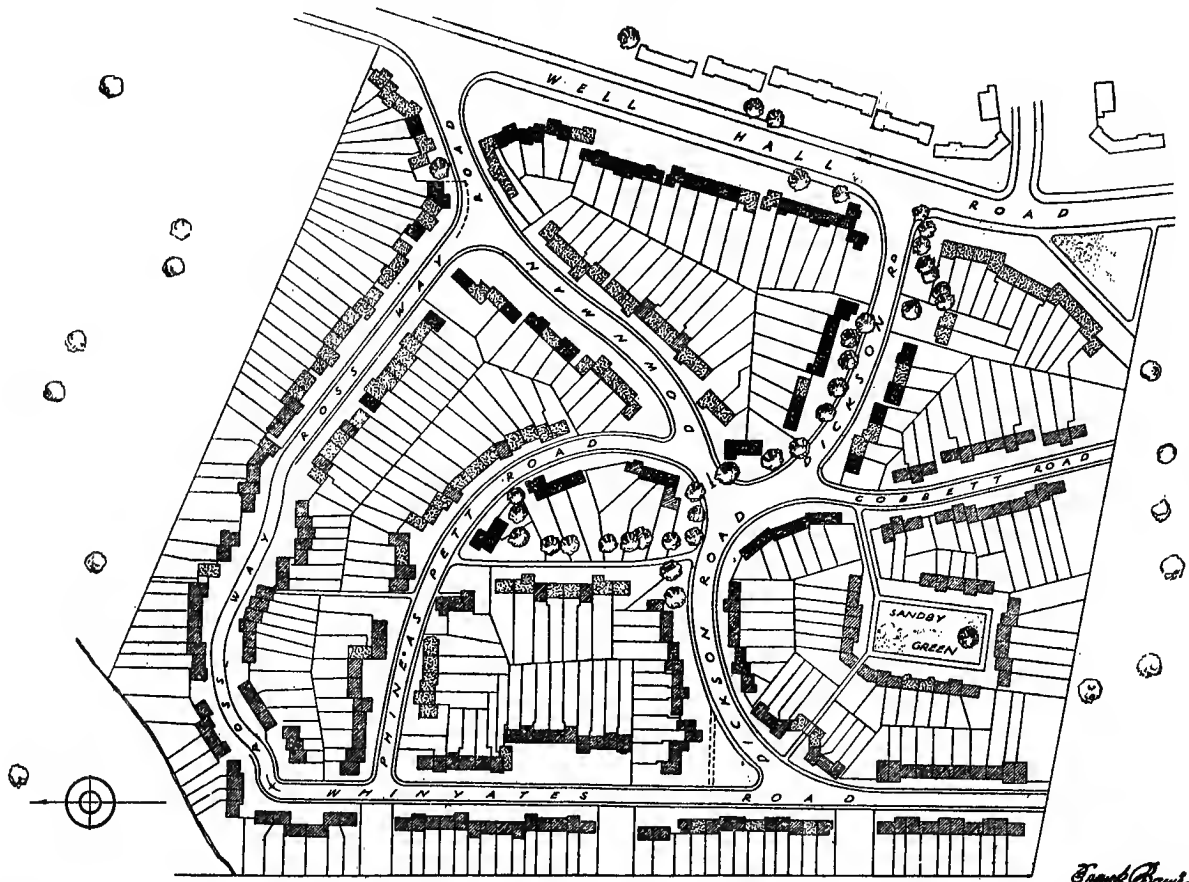


*Ground Floor Plan*

GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
Block of Flats, GRANBY ROAD, Class IV.

H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.

# GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME



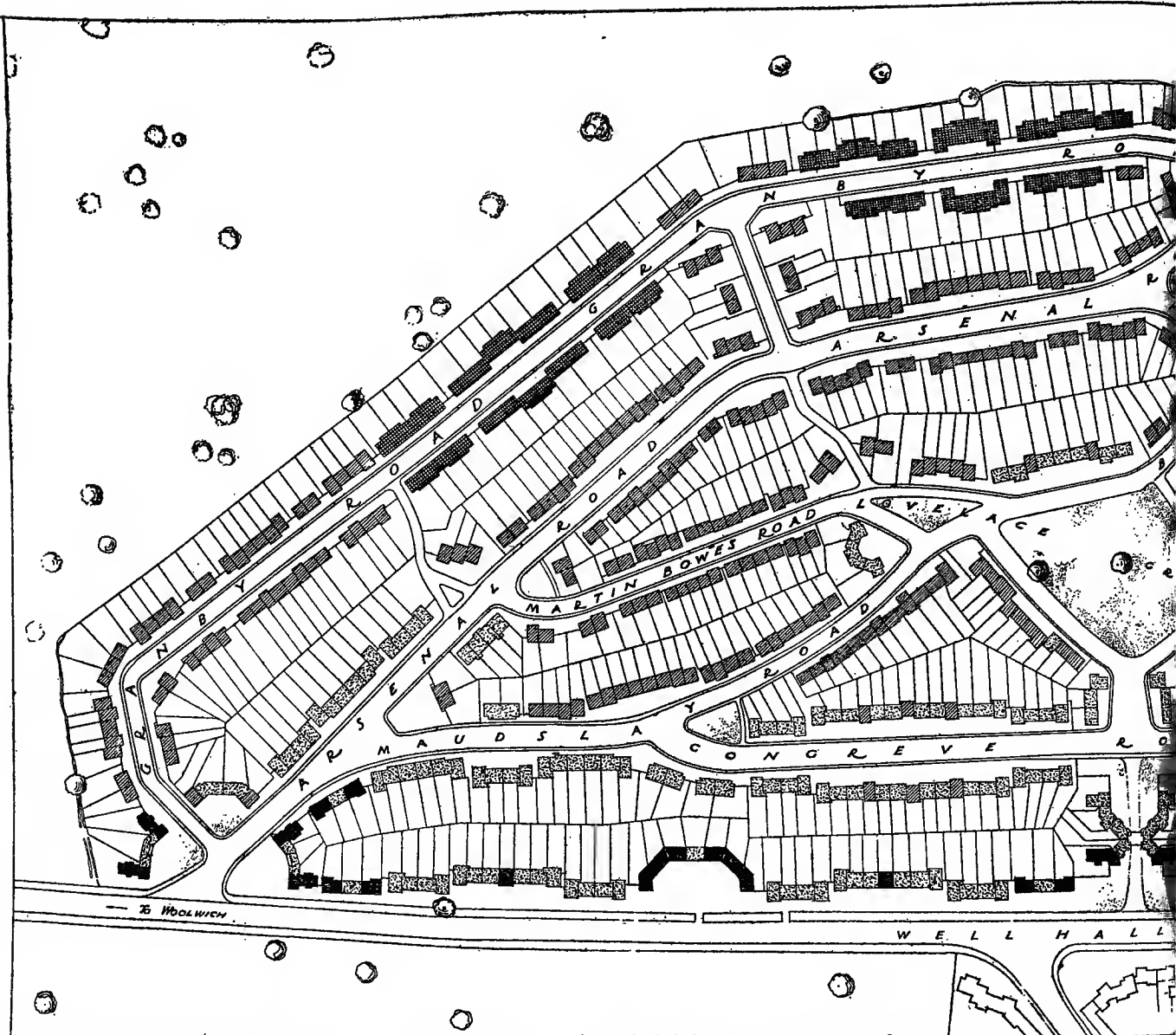
## WELL HALL + ELTHAM + KENT

H.M. OFFICE  
OF WORKS  
WESTMINSTER

**W**ELL HALL is only one of the British Government's housing operations. It is situated about a mile from Woolwich and is a complete new development. It consists entirely of permanent dwellings for workmen. There are four types of houses of from two to four rooms with bath, the rentals ranging from seven shillings to fifteen shillings and sixpence a week. There have been built some sixteen hundred houses, all of the best materials available, and the design has preserved the traditions of English rural life. Mr. Ewart G. Culpin, Secretary of the International Garden Cities and

Town Planning Association, whose article in the April Journal dealt with the application of town-planning principles to the new housing developments of England, writes that he believes Well Hall to be "easily the first thing in cottage plans and elevations for the whole world." This statement is perhaps capable of a wrong interpretation, for it is evident that the plans would not suit living conditions in the United States; but, from the point of view of a great housing undertaking deliberately undertaken by a Government and guided by experts to yield the maximum advantages consistent





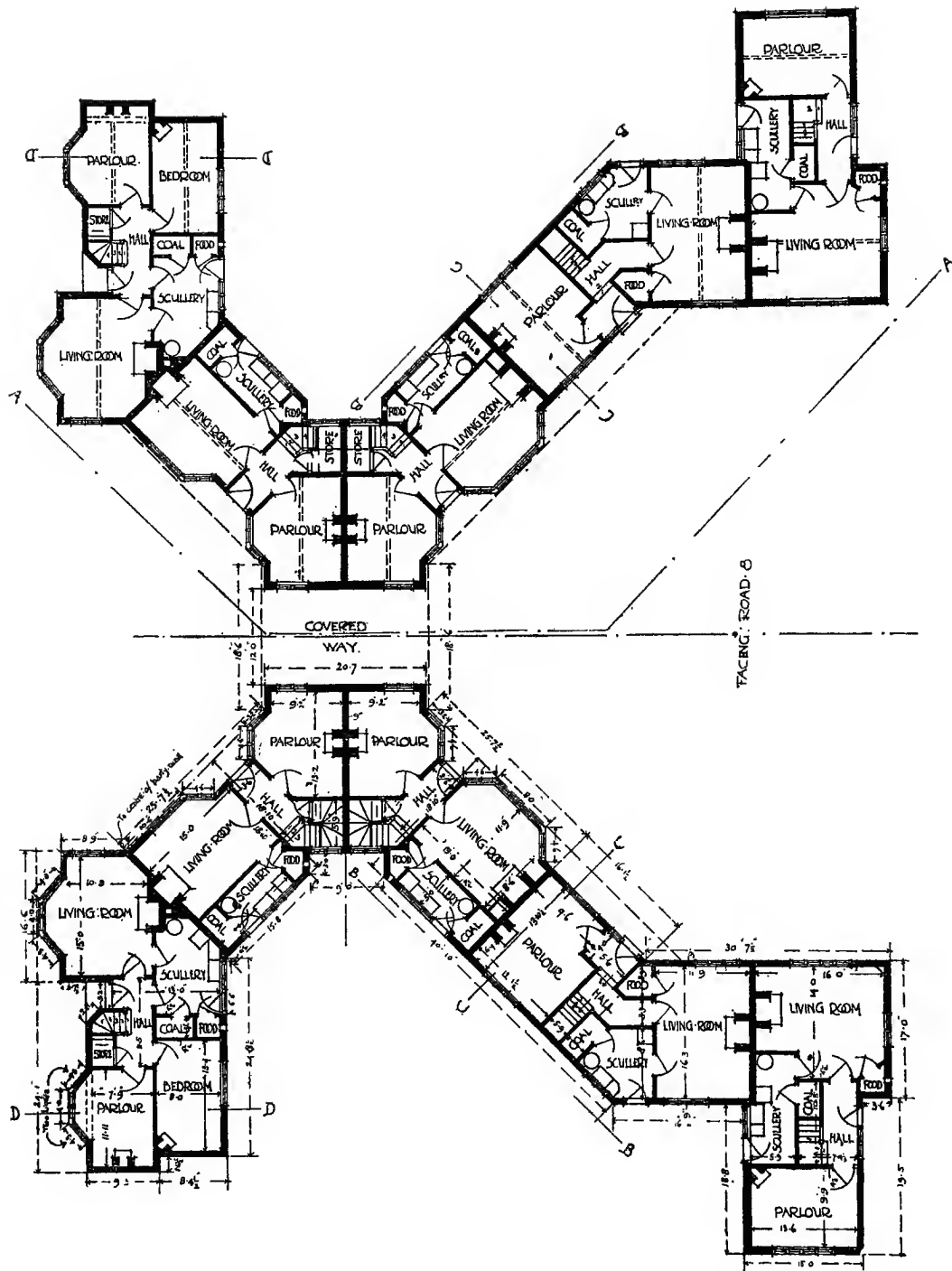
# GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME

with a given mode of life, Well Hall is undoubtedly entitled to rank where Mr. Culpin places it.

Of primary importance in the consideration of the underlying reasons which led to the building of Well Hall is the fact that in spite of urgent necessity it was decided to make it a permanent enterprise rather than a merely temporary one. This has been the consistent policy of the British Government, except where urgency made it impossible to wait upon

permanent construction, for the difference in cost between permanent and temporary work is measured by a small margin, and it was decided that it would be folly to throw away money upon makeshift expedients. Possibly this decision was also influenced by the knowledge that nothing is harder to be rid of than a temporary building. We believe that the shacks built at the time of the flood emergency in Galveston are still doing duty as slums, and such is the

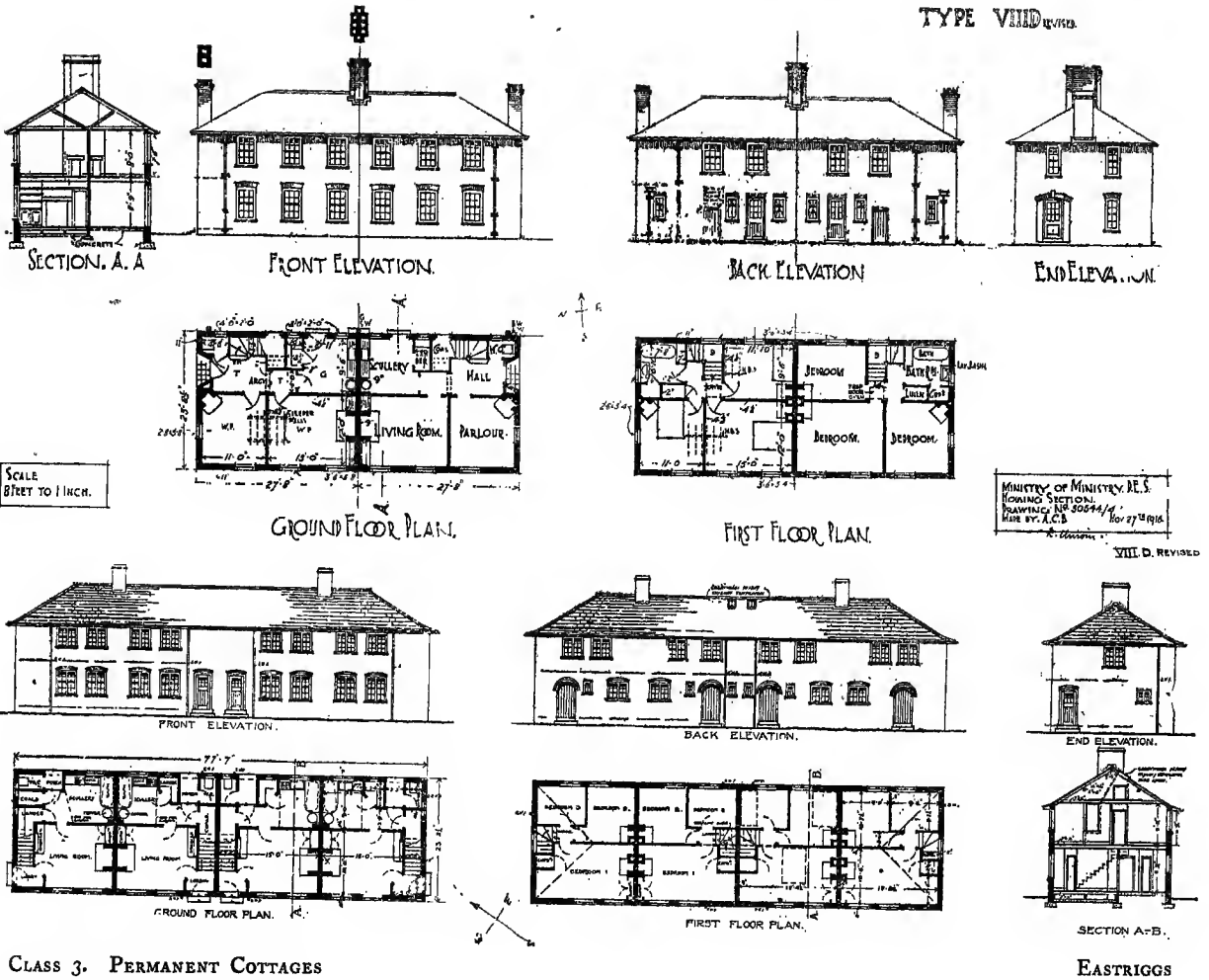




*Ground Floor Plan.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME,  
WELL HALL, WOOLWICH. 1915.  
Group facing WELL HALL and CONGREVE ROADS, 1st and 2nd Class.

*H. M. Office of Works,  
Westminster,  
London, S. W.*



CLASS 3. PERMANENT COTTAGES

## Eastriggs

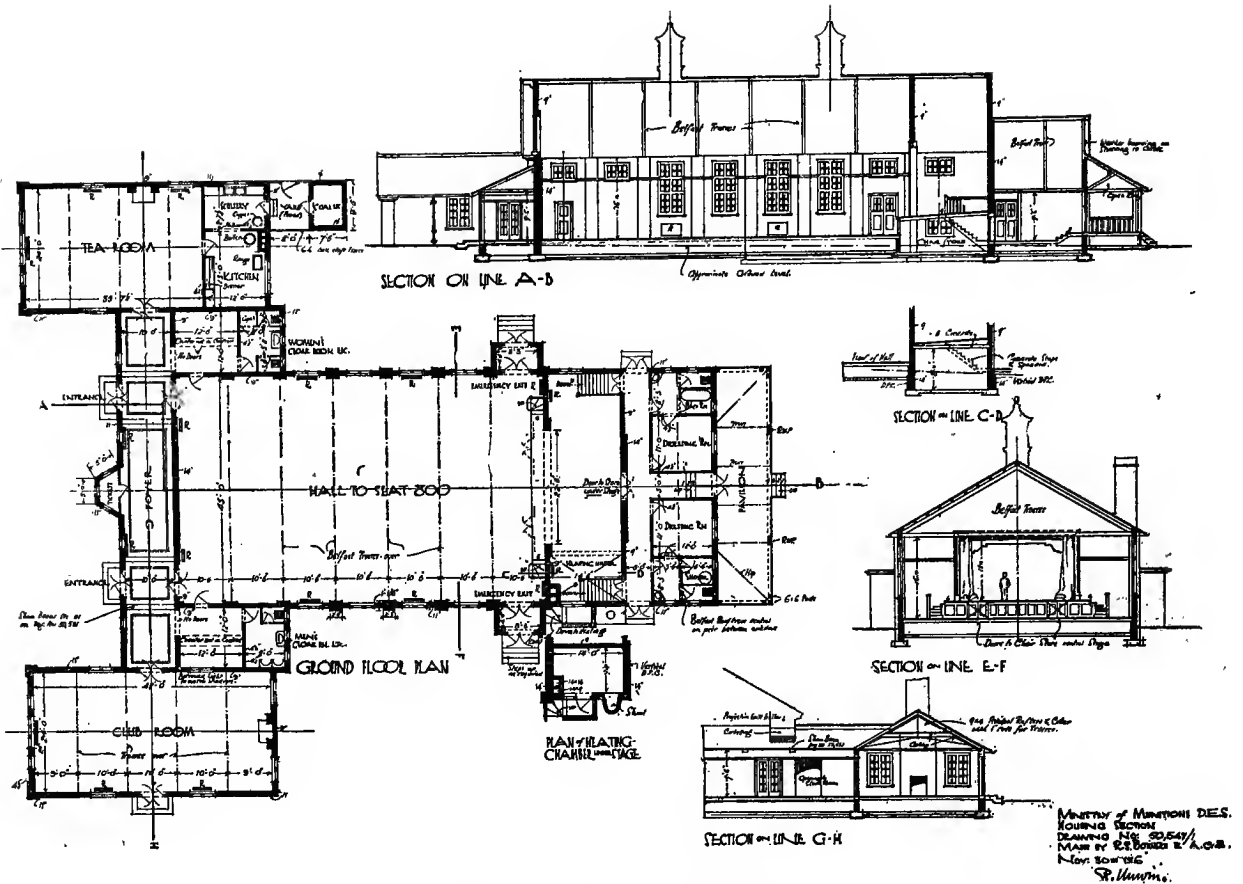
AN INDUSTRIAL TOWN BUILT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

**E**ASTRIGGS is another of the British Government's housing operations and of quite a different character from Well Hall, illustrated and described in the September Journal. Whereas Well Hall consists entirely of permanent dwelling houses, Eastriggs consists also of temporary and semi-temporary huts, permanent cottage shells temporarily connected and used as hostels, and temporary hostels of various sizes. Altogether, the buildings are of four classes: (1) Huts, (2) cottage shells used as hostels, (3) completed cottages and staff houses, (4) shops, schools, churches, recreation buildings, and other accessories of a small town.

The huts of Class 1 include all buildings of

temporary or semi-temporary character, built of concrete in blocks or slabs and wooden framing covered with stucco or weather-boarding on the outside and lined with wallboard or asbestos sheets on the inside. These huts are of three types: (I) Pairs of semi-detached family huts each having three bedrooms, living-room, scullery, bath, and other accessories. (II) Small hostels containing ten beds, which may be used for single lodgers or for a family taking in lodgers. These are readily converted into Type I and are very popular, being used by operatives, members of the staff, and often as larger houses by officials of higher grade. (III) Large hostels in which about 100 single men or women may be lodged, either in open dormitories or in dormi-

# WHAT IS A HOUSE?



CLASS 4. PUBLIC HALL AT EASTRIGGS

tories fitted with cubicles. Inability to fix hours or prescribe the character of occupancy soon developed great objection to the use of these large hostels, and many of them are today only partially occupied, even in the face of serious congestion in the locality.

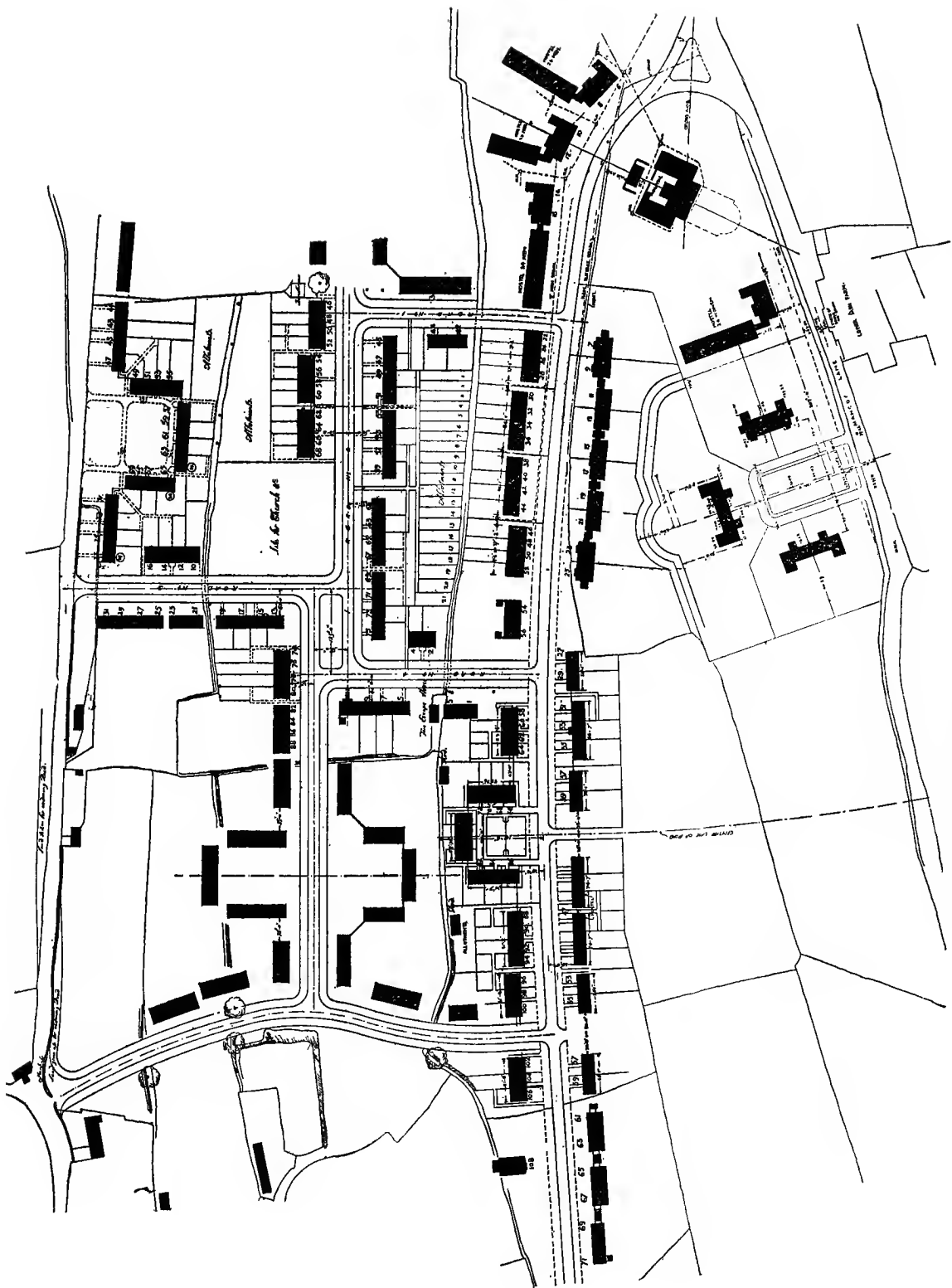
Cottage shells temporarily used as hostels, Class 2, can easily be converted into permanent family cottages. These were adopted because it was found that the cost of temporary buildings as described under Class 1 was, after taking into account the necessary expenditures for water-supply, drainage, and road-work, so little less than that for permanent buildings that it was poor economy to erect temporary houses except only where urgency of the short time available demanded it.

These hostels usually consist of groups of three blocks of four cottages each, the blocks being connected with temporary corridors and arranged either in a row or around three sides of a quadrangle.

The completed cottages and houses, Class 3, are quite similar in plan and construction to those of Well Hall, which are illustrated in this pamphlet.

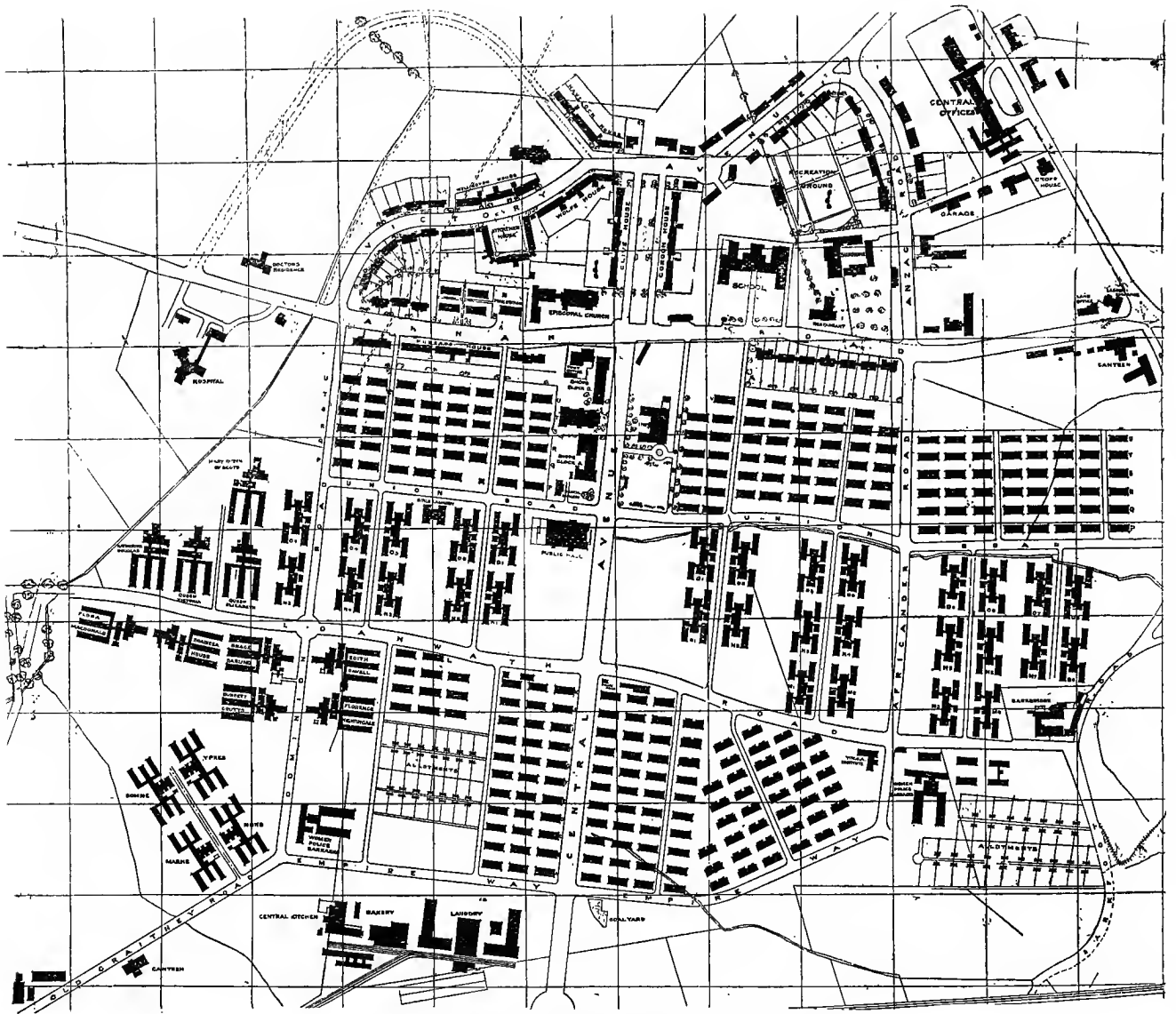
Under Class 4 are included such buildings, outside of actual houses and dormitories, as may be needed for the life of a community center. These were built as part of the housing scheme where the adjacent already existing town did not conveniently provide them. In this class are included not only schools, churches, and recreation buildings, but shops, bakeries, laundries, and central kitchens.

It is very interesting to note that even the most temporary of the Eastriggs buildings, although they are simpler in design, will compare very favorably in construction with permanent small houses of the cottage and bungalow type in this country and are even better than many of these.



### QUEENSFERRY.—GENERAL PLAN

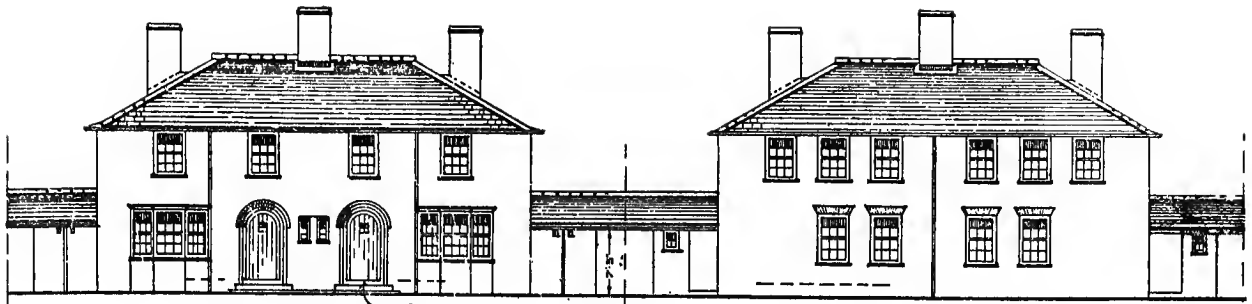
In many respects this plan was the most satisfying. It is direct and simple, the setbacks in the groups of cottages along the main roads were effective, and there was an appropriate degree of dignity maintained in the general expression. Particularly interesting in effect were the quadrangles. This plan shows in the center a section given over to allotments. This is a characteristic feature of modern English town planning. These allotment spaces are leased for a small sum by a tenant occupying an adjacent cottage in the event that he desires more land for cultivation. This system works; and it has material advantages over a scheme where the allotment area is placed at a considerable distance from a cottage.



PLAN OF THE DEVELOPMENT AT GREтна

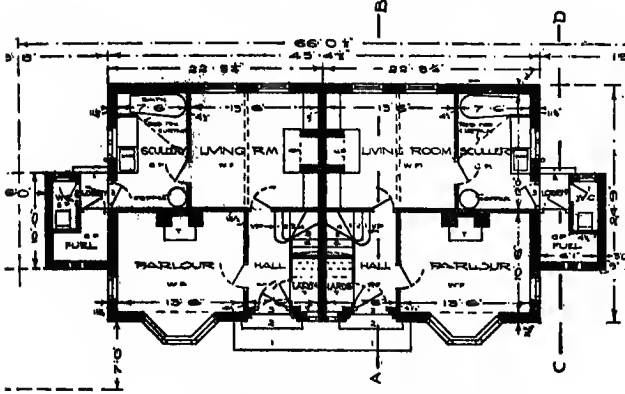
All of the buildings, such as cottages, school, police station, churches, cinema house, institute, shops, post office, public hall, hospital, at the upper end of the plan are of a permanent character and form a nucleus of the town which may in the future develop over the area now occupied by temporary hostels



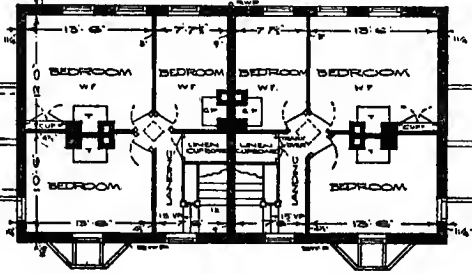


FRONT ELEVATION

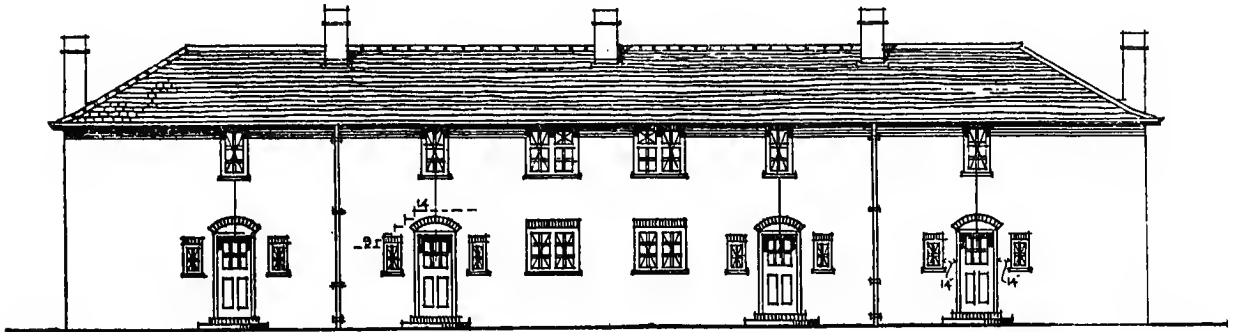
BACK ELEVATION



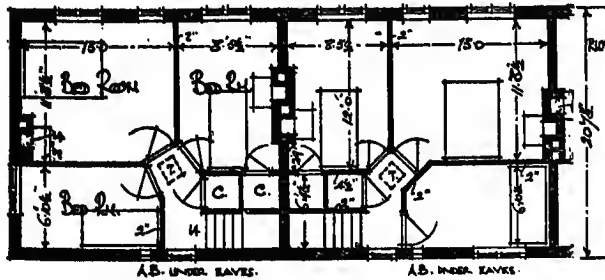
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



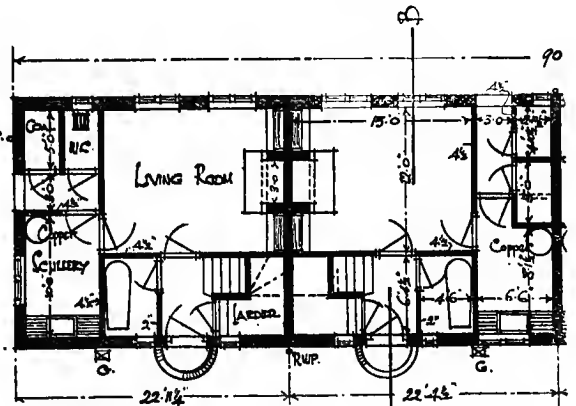
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



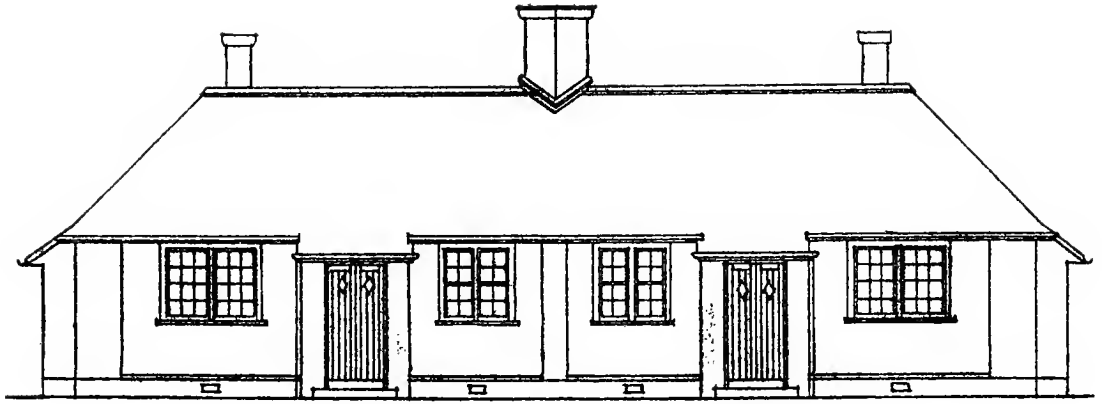
NORTH ELEVATION



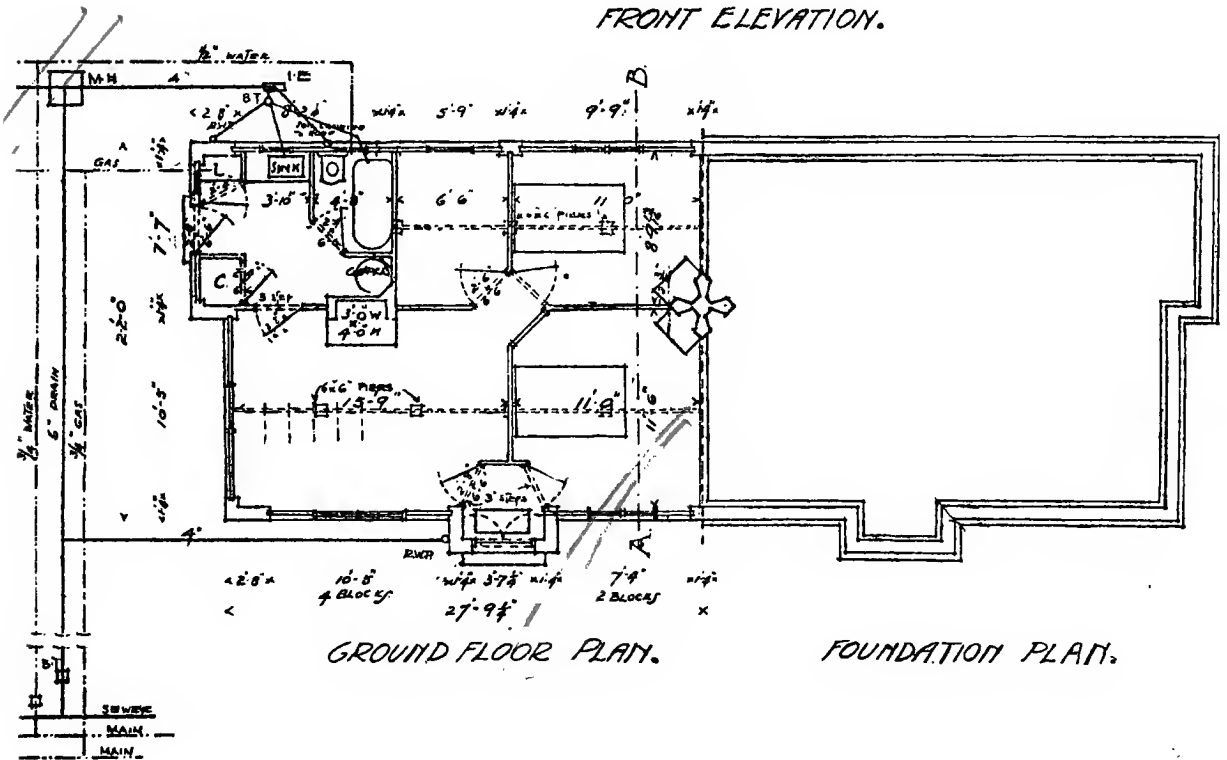
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
Solid floors throughout.

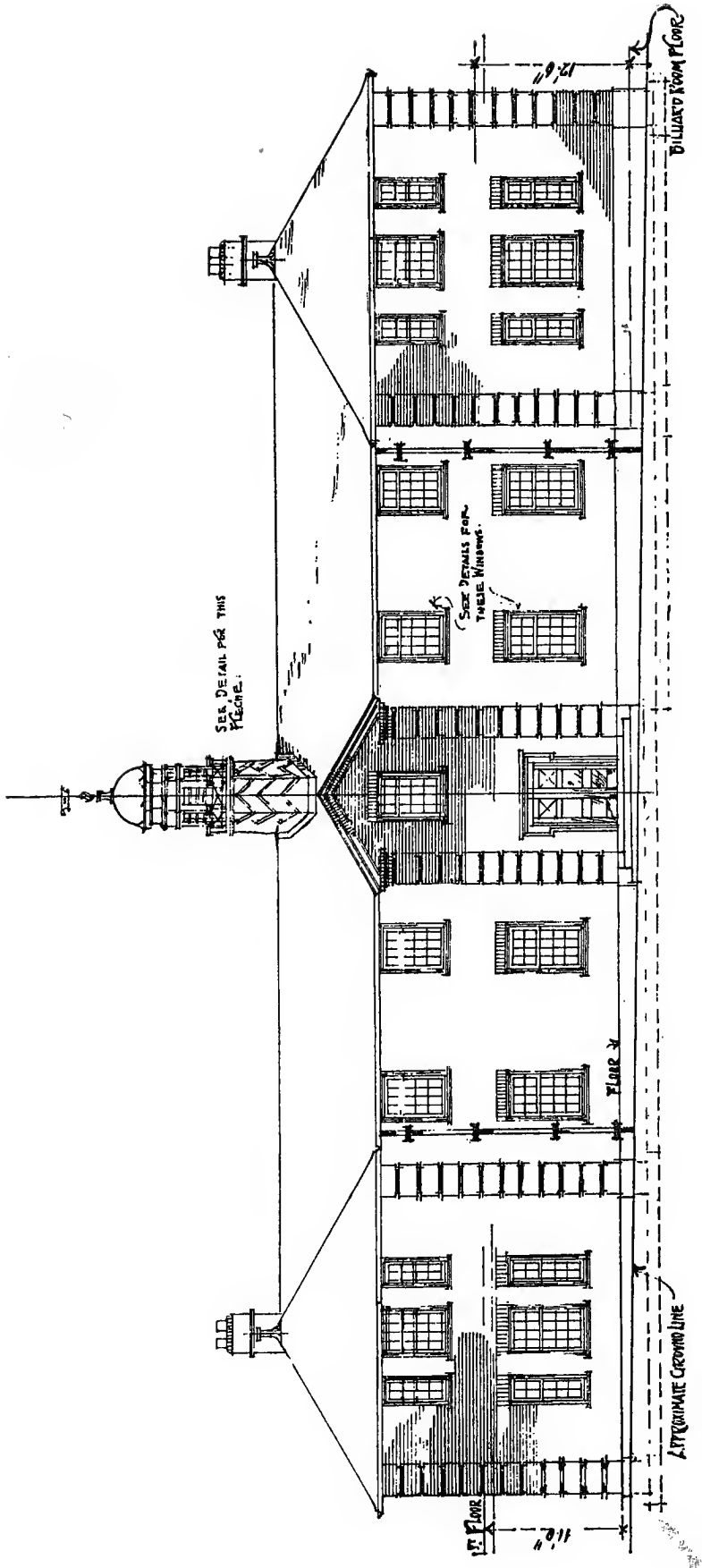


FRONT ELEVATION.



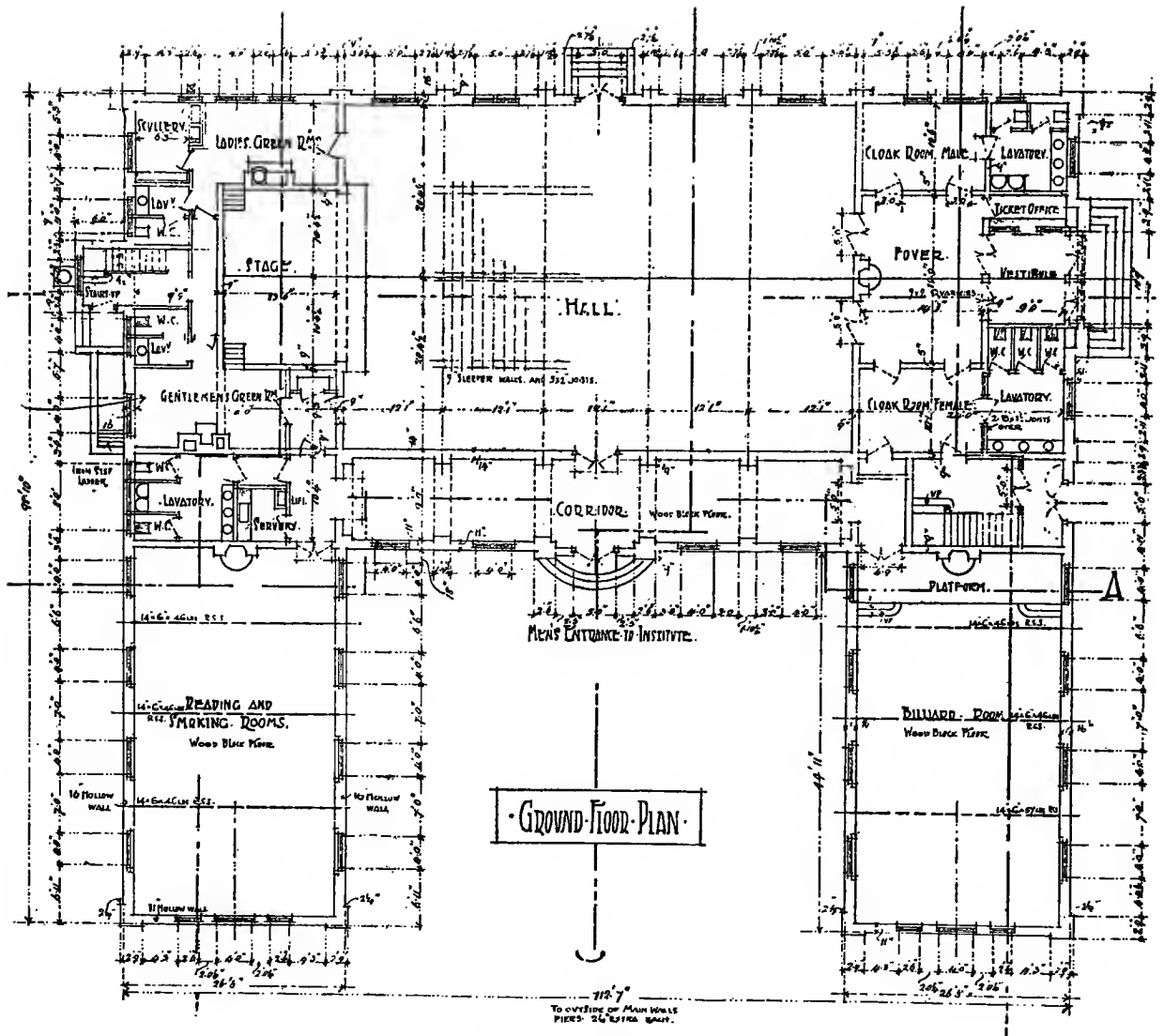
HOUSE AT MIDDLE WARD—LANARK

The one-story house was very generally used in Scotland, and the effect obtained in the small communities where this type prevailed was quite charming. In many of these, by the very ingenious use of concrete blocks and concrete slabs, a minimum of material was used. (Note the thickness of walls on the plan.)



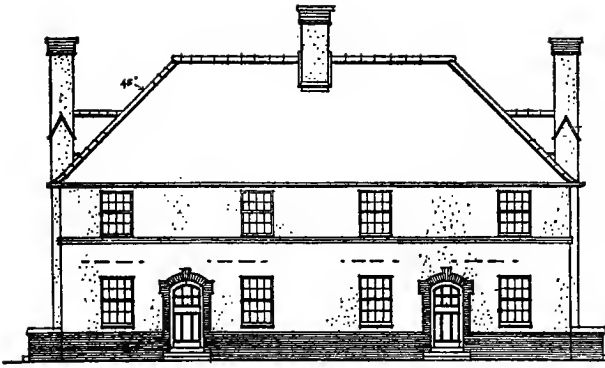
WEST ELEVATION

GRETNA—INSTITUTE

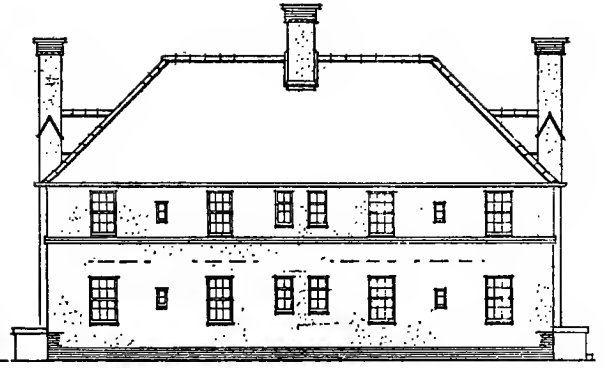


### GRETNA—INSTITUTE

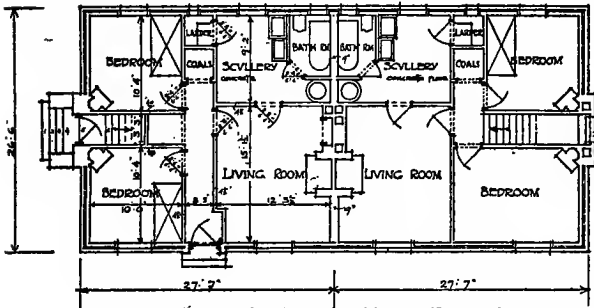
This building, together with the Public Hall at Gretna, serves as the axis around which the social activities of the community revolve. The central hall with its stage is constantly in use for entertainments of various sorts and for dancing. The first floor in general serves as a club for the men, while the second floor is a club for women. This building represents a new idea introduced into the social life of British industrial communities, and its effect upon the employees is watched with a great deal of interest throughout Great Britain.



- FRONT ELEVATION -

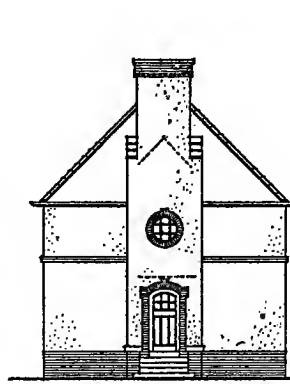


- BACK ELEVATION -

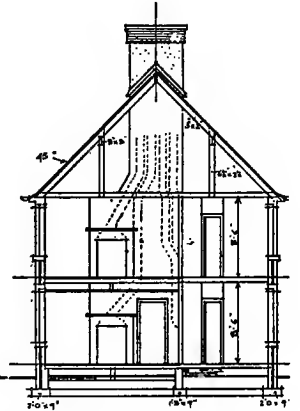


- GROUND FLOOR PLAN -

- UPPER FLOOR PLAN -



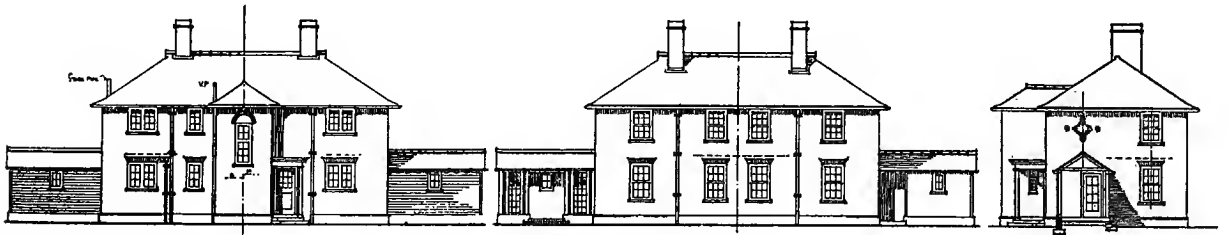
- SIDE ELEVATION -



- CROSS SECTION -



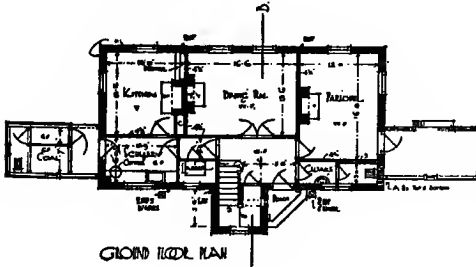
LOCAL GOV. BOARD  
EDINR.



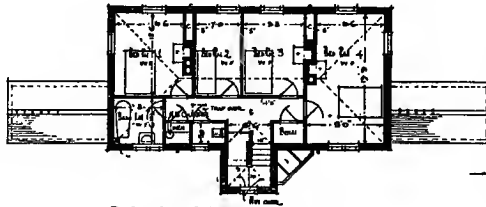
FRONT ELEVATION

BACK ELEVATION

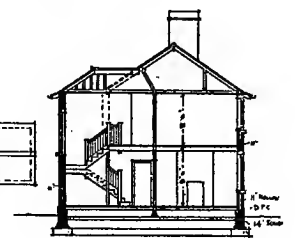
SIDE ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

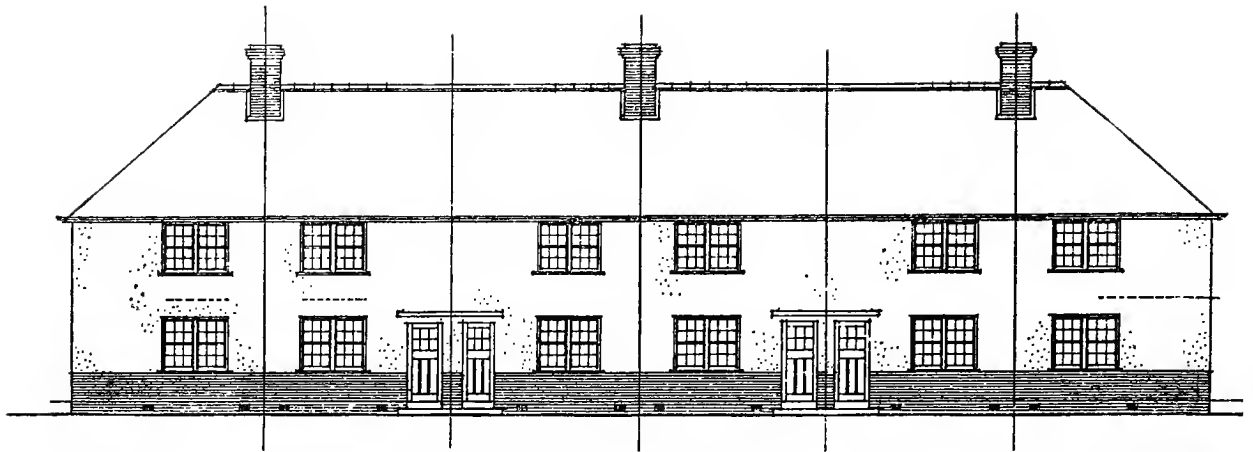


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

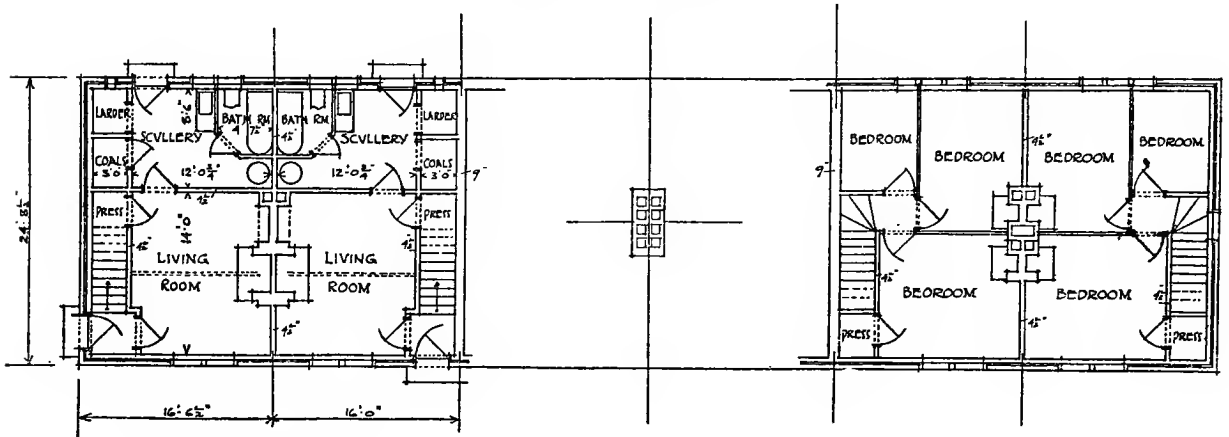


SECTION A-B

COTTAGES

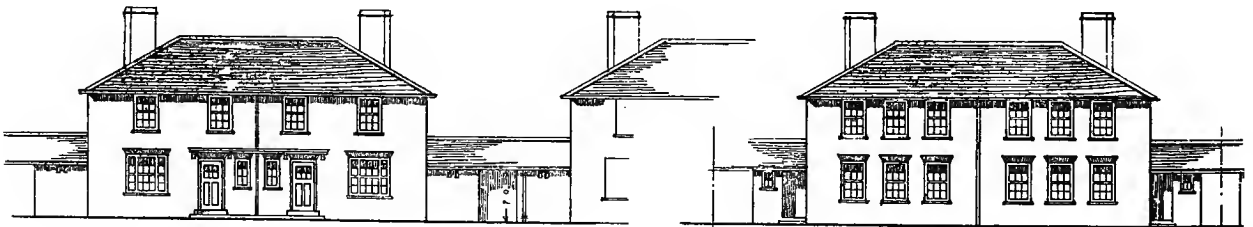


• FRONT ELEVATION •



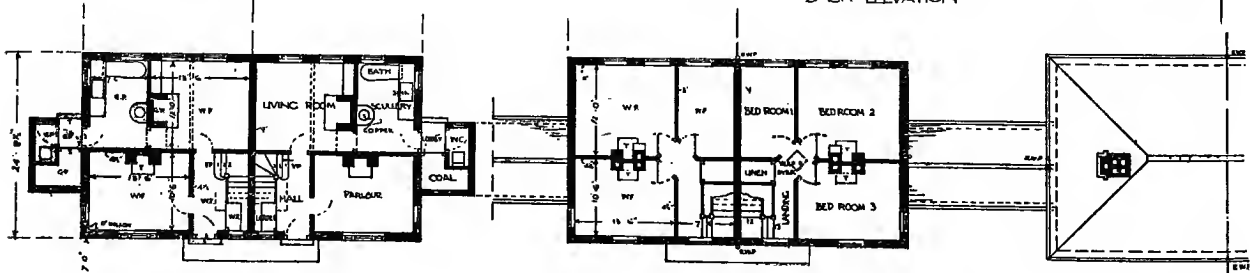
• GROVND FLOOR PLAN •

• VPPER FLOOR PLAN •



FRONT ELEVATION

BACK ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

HALF ROOF PLAN

COTTAGES







## Housing by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**I**N 1912 the Homestead Commission recommended that the uncalled-for savings-bank deposits in the state treasury be used for an experiment in housing.

Such use was found to be unconstitutional. The Commission was then influential in securing an amendment to the Constitution, ratified by the people of the Commonwealth on November 2, 1915, providing that "The General Court shall have power to authorize the Commonwealth to take land and to hold, improve, subdivide, build upon, and sell the same, for the purpose of relieving congestion of population and providing homes for citizens; *provided, however,* that this amendment shall not be deemed to authorize the sale of such land or buildings at less than the cost thereof."

The Commission then renewed its recommendation for an appropriation, asking the Legislature for \$50,000. The bill was defeated, but on the following year the sum was granted, and the Commission proceeded to apply it to a practical experiment in housing. The act follows:

### An Act to Authorize the Homestead Commission to Provide Homesteads for Citizens

**Section 1.** The Homestead Commission is hereby authorized, by and with the consent of the Governor and Council, to take or purchase, in behalf of and in the name of the Commonwealth, a tract or tracts of land, for the purpose of providing homesteads, or small houses and plots of ground, for mechanics, laborers, wage-earners, or other citizens of this Commonwealth; and may hold, improve, subdivide, build upon, sell, repurchase, manage, and care for said tract or tracts and the buildings constructed thereon, in accordance with such terms and conditions as may be determined upon by the Commission.

**Section 2.** The Commission may sell said tract or tracts or any portions thereof, with or without buildings thereon, for cash, or upon such installments, terms, and contracts, and subject to such restrictions and

conditions, as may be determined upon by the Homestead Commission; but no tract of land shall be sold for less than its cost, including the cost of any buildings thereon. All proceeds from the sale of land and buildings or other source shall be paid into the treasury of the Commonwealth.

**Section 3.** The Homestead Commission is hereby authorized to expend not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of this act.

**Section 4.** This act shall take effect upon its passage.

The principal considerations actuating the Commission to an experiment in housing were stated in their fourth annual report as follows:

"There are not enough wholesome low-cost dwellings.

"There is no prospect that present methods will ever supply enough unless the state encourages their construction.

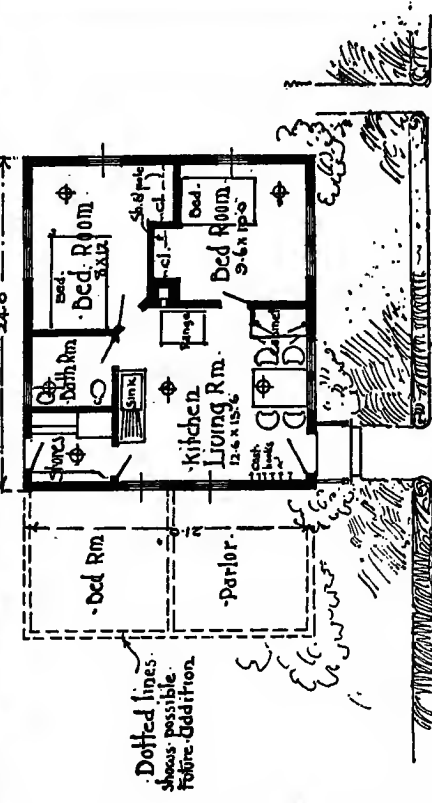
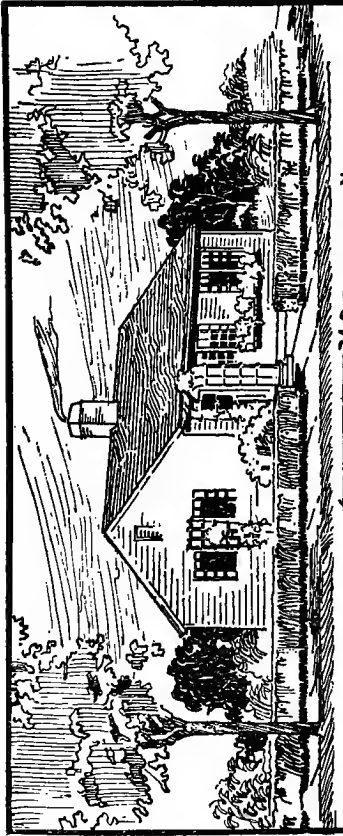
"Therefore the state should experiment to learn whether it is possible to build wholesome dwellings within the means of low-paid workers."

The Commission contemplated three kinds of housing development—the urban, suburban, and rural. For the first type, houses were to be detached or semi-detached, with about 5,000 square feet of land each, and were to be within easy walking distance of the mill or other place of employment.

The second type houses were to be detached, each house occupying a lot varying from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  an acre, and the tract of land to be within a 5-cent car-ride of the mills.

The third type were to be farm cottages, on lots varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to 5 acres.

The first experiment was with Type 1. The Commission found abundant unoccupied land in the cities visited—Boston, Lawrence, New Bedford, Fall River, Lowell, and



PLAN Scale 8 in. = 1'-0"

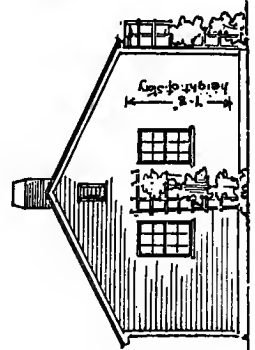
THREE ROOM BUNGALOW.

DATA -  
 COST OF HOUSE \$1100  
 AREA OF HOUSE 300 sq  
 MATERIALS -  
 Outside walls - Cedar Siding  
 Roof - Green Slate  
 Inside walls - Plaster  
 Floors - Hardwood - Electric lights

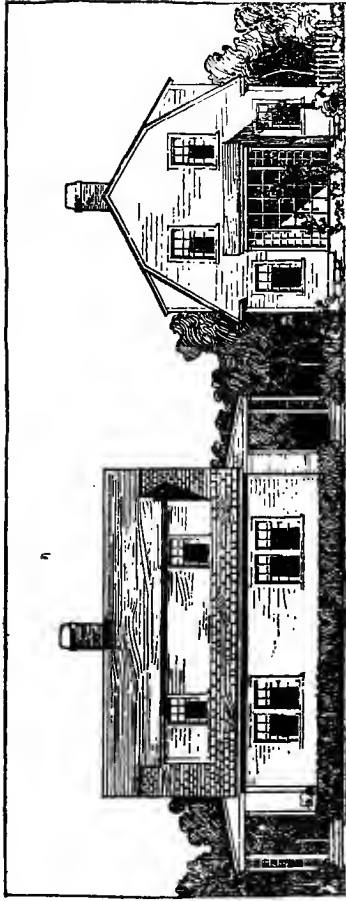
HOUSES AT LOWELL, MASS FOR THE



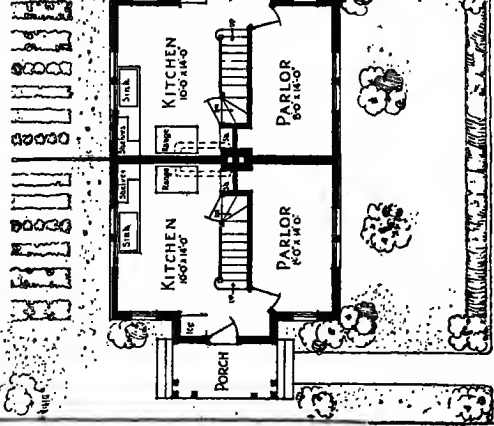
HOMESTEAD COMMISSION ARCHITECTS KILHAM & HOPKINS BOSTON



END ELEVATION.



FRONT ELEVATION

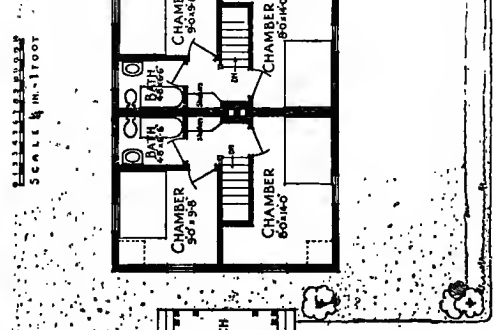


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

TWO FAMILY HOUSE FOR MILLWORKERS

KILHAM & HOPKINS ARCHITECTS 5 PARK STREET BOSTON MASS.

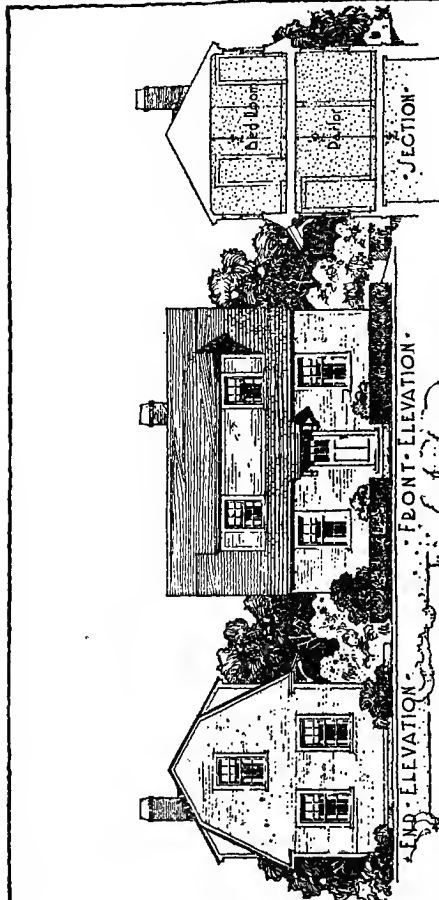
SIDE ELEVATION



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

DATA  
 COST OF HOUSE \$1870.94 Area of House 1522.330 sq  
 Cubic contents 8910 cu ft Cost per cu ft 20.9¢

MATERIALS  
 Outside walls - Shingles stained  
 Roof - Green Slate - Asphalt shingles  
 Inside walls & ceilings - Plaster  
 Floors - Hardwood - Electric lights



- END ELEVATION -  
- FRONT ELEVATION -  
- SECTION -

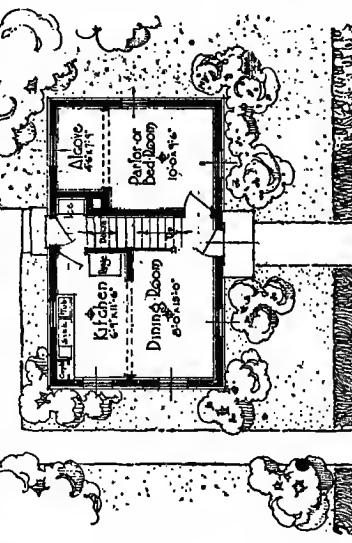
**- DATA -**  
 Cost of House - \$2360.00  
 Area of House - 484-450 sq. ft.  
 Cubic Contents - 11,180 cu. ft.  
 Cost per cubic foot - 21.5 cents  
 Cost of 5000 ft. land - \$4700.  
 Cost of Grading, Planting, etc. - \$2332.  
 Total Cost of Homestead - \$7400.  
 Rental Value @ 7% Gross - \$77.00

**- MATERIALS -**  
 Outside Walls - Shingles, Stained.  
 Roof - Green Slate Asphalt Shingle.  
 Inside Walls & Ceiling - Plaster  
 Floor - Hardwood.

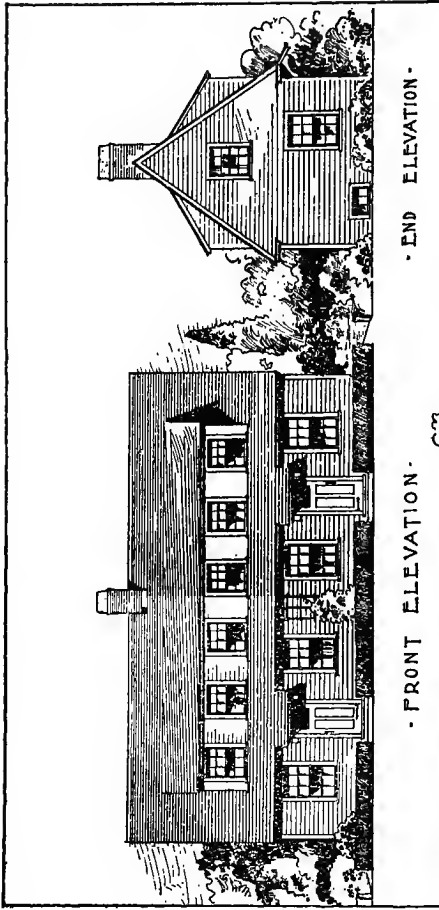
HOUSES  
 AT - LOWELL, MASS.  
 FOR THE



**HOMESTEAD  
 COMMISSION**  
 ARCHITECTS  
 KILHAM & HOPKINS  
 BOSTON.



- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -  
- SECOND FLOOR PLAN -



- FRONT ELEVATION -  
- END ELEVATION -

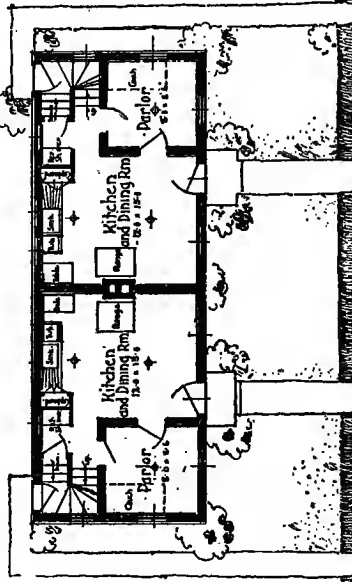
**- DATA -**  
 Cost of House - per family \$1932  
 Area of House - 214 ft.  
 Cubic Contents - 9396 cu. ft.  
 Cost per cubic foot - 27.4¢  
 Cost of 5000 ft. land - \$4700.  
 Cost of Grading, Planting, etc. - \$2332.  
 Total Cost of Homestead - \$7400.  
 Rental Value @ 7% Gross - \$77.00

**- MATERIALS -**  
 Outside Walls - Shingles, Stained.  
 Roof - Green Slate Asphalt Shingle.  
 Inside Walls & Ceiling - Plaster  
 Floor - Hardwood.

HOUSES  
 AT - LOWELL, MASS.  
 FOR THE



**HOMESTEAD  
 COMMISSION**  
 ARCHITECTS  
 KILHAM & HOPKINS  
 BOSTON.



- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -  
- SECOND FLOOR PLAN -

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

others, at prices ranging from \$45 to \$400 or more per acre. The tract of land finally chosen was in the heart of Lowell, a city of low-paid operatives. In working out plans for houses, the minimum accommodation advisable was believed to be as follows:

Living-room, kitchen, three bedrooms, closets, cellar.

Cooking, heating, lighting, washing, toilet, and bathing facilities.

Provision for drainage, sewage- and garbage-disposal.

There need not be a heating system, but provision should be made for stoves, other than cooking-range, in places needed, and construction may well allow for a future heating system. The structure should be made as fire-resisting as possible with due consideration for cost. In order to bring the cost to the extreme low limit, it was deemed feasible to combine living-room and kitchen, and provide a parlor on the first floor suitable for use as the third bedroom if the family was large.

The sizes of rooms appear to correspond with the standard sizes recommended by housing authorities, with the exception of the height. Here 7 feet 6 inches has been fixed for the first story, and 7 feet 4 inches for the second. It is very difficult to establish a standard of height by rules of logic, and so the architects have followed custom and allowed themselves to be guided by a sense of proportion. Small rooms appear more commodious if they are low-studded, and the relation of height to lateral dimensions is pleasanter. The number of stairs to be climbed is less, and there is a substantial saving in the cost of the house. Add to this the desirability of low lines on the exterior, and the absence of any particular disadvantage to offset these many advantages, and the change from housing standards seems justified.

The equipment provided included a kitchen-cabinet, sink and drain-board with shelves under, set tub, drain for refrigerator, bathroom with three fixtures, hot and cold water piped to sink and tub, bathtub and bowl, thimbles in the chimney for kitchen range and additional stoves, a register in the kitchen ceiling opening into the bathroom floor, and closet-space for each bedroom.

Provision for hanging clothes in the bedrooms can be made by means of a closet or by a recess. The latter offers the same amount of space, but is not enclosed, and so is not likely to become a catchall. If the housekeeper is neat, she can put up a curtain across the opening. If she is untidy, the clothes will at least be subjected to the cleansing influence of light and air.

In addition to the above equipment, the houses are all piped for a gas-range in the kitchen, and are provided with electric lights throughout. Each house has a cellar the full area of the house, with carefully pointed walls and cement floor. Where possible, the back door opens upon the landing of the cellar stairs, so that the cellar can be easily and directly entered from the garden.

When minimum-sized houses are sold to operatives, it is not treating the owner generously to make these houses difficult of alteration. They should be so designed as to permit additions to be made easily and without ruining the appearance of the house. From this point of view wood has advantages over masonry.

The Commission is experimenting with bungalows in which by a simple mechanical device, it is an easy matter

to raise the roof and add a second story, or to detach an end wall and extend the house laterally.

The cost of these houses represents actual war-time conditions. The first houses were started in October, 1917, and other bids have been taken during January and February, 1918. The bids used were not exceptionally below the others; in fact, bids from two or three contractors were received which could have been utilized without injuring the financial projects of the undertaking, and the present contractor has expressed a willingness to build further houses at the same cost, showing that the undertaking has not been a losing venture on his part.

The method of sale proposed provides for a first payment of probably about 10 per cent, followed by successive monthly payments which will be the equivalent of interest plus a small amount on account of capital. By this plan the house is entirely paid for within a number of years, varying with the ability of the purchaser, but in no case more than twenty-eight years.

Massachusetts, with its admirable system of coöperative banks, provides an easy method for immediate ownership by the home-seeker. Deeds will be passed when payments amount to 20 per cent of the sale value. The Commission proposes to sell the property subject to certain restrictions. Under ordinary process of law, such property would fall within the scope of city laws and regulations as soon as sold by the state. It would then be part and parcel of the city and might, perhaps, be handled in such a way as to sacrifice some of the benefits intended by the state. On the other hand, a series of restrictions in addition may deter the would-be purchaser. Such a list, drawn up in legal terms, would very likely deter the ordinary man and would require careful explanation.

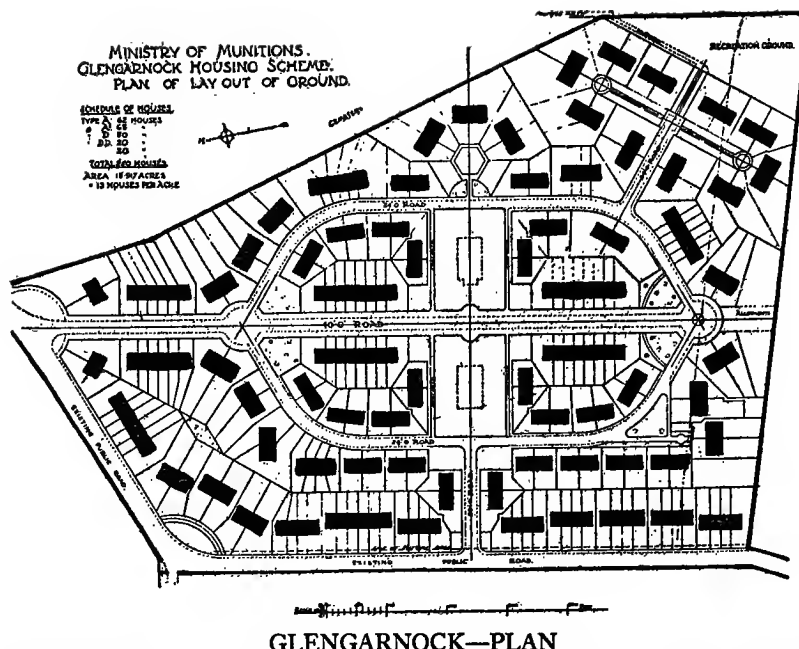
Another way of securing better neighborhood conditions in new housing developments is to provide a neighborhood center, or common building, where matters involving general neighborhood interest can be discussed, and where good fellowship can find a comfortable atmosphere in which to grow.

The Commission plans to follow the growth of its "colony," to assist in preparing the gardens, in matters of canning, cooking, and housekeeping, so that those who live in the new houses may be helped to a better mode of living and may act as disciples in spreading their ideas among others.

This spirit of common responsibility for the community welfare and of neighborhood goodfellowship may provide a better means of safeguarding the homes against bad conditions than a category of legal restrictions. Where a positive impulse is aroused, instead of a prohibition imposed, better results may be expected.

In the Homestead Commission's project there is no trace of paternalism or of charity. The act under which it is operating prohibits the sale of homesteads at less than cost. The object of the Commission has not been to supply the houses needed for the citizens of the Commonwealth, but to show that good houses can be supplied, and supplied within reach of the wage-earner. The Commission has hoped that when the results of its experiment were seen, private capital would be reassured and would enter the field of low-cost housing development.

WALTER H. KILHAM.



About Glasgow there are numerous small housing developments of which this is an excellent example. These undertakings were all in the hands of the Local Government Board of Scotland

## Small-House Reconstruction in France\*

IF THE attention of those interested in housing in the United States has been almost entirely concentrated on the housing undertakings of the British Government, it must not be thought that France and Belgium are not deeply concerned with their own problems. In the former, nothing but plans are now possible, but these are being studied in the broadest way, and there need be no fears but that the reconstruction of Belgium will proceed along lines informed with the lessons of the past. It is perhaps worthy of chronicling the fact that extensive studies for the rehabilitation of Belgium have already been made by the German authorities, and the preliminary proposals, at least in part, have been issued in printed form. But the world will still have something to say about this!

In France, the loss of the iron and coal areas resulted in a temporary industrial depression, with a consequent expansion in England, where the burden of war production fell with compelling force. Thus the French were not faced

with any such housing problems as arose in England. The restoration and expansion of the war-making industries in France was a gradual process permitting readjustments which were not possible in England, nor, as experience has so painfully demonstrated, in this country.

Much temporary reconstruction work has been done in France where there developed the imperative necessity of rehabilitating the reconquered areas which had been devastated by the enemy. But the future will require an immense amount of study and a vast expenditure. To the excited few in the United States who have so mistakingly assumed that the problem of reconstructing France was one that should be left to its lovers in this country, there may eventually come a perception of the fact that France, architecturally, is able to care for her own interests. The illustrations which accompany this article are in themselves the best of evidence as to whether the authorities and the architects of France are capable of approaching their problem in the proper spirit, and if further testimony were needed, perhaps it may be found

\*From the French of Henri Lavedan in "L'Illustration."

## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

in the appreciation by M. Henri Lavedan, a translation of which should be given the widest circulation possible. In it there dwells a perception of the housing problem which is so illuminating and so revealing—so profoundly touching in its humanity, so inspiring in its delicate message to those who face this question in other lands—that it might almost be said to constitute the basis of the human and the esthetic approach to the home. Other factors enter in, as we know, but it is only through an intelligent blending of all the various phases that there will be laid the foundations of a stable national life—if we admit that this must, in all cases, be founded and maintained upon the home. There need be no fear but that we may look hopefully to France for a contribution worthy of her great sacrifices, her noble intelligence, and her will to live. The article by M. Lavedan, to which we refer, is as follows:

Since the commencement of this year 1918, when there was affirmed with so much energy the confidence, the hope, and the faith of French hearts, there has been accomplished, quite apropos, a vivid demonstration of our will to live and to prepare without delay for the immediate future.

As is well known, a competition\* was held "for the reconstruction of the rural habitations in the liberated regions," and the Museum of Decorative Arts exhibited in its rooms, until the first day of February, the drawings, chosen from very many, that were deemed worthy of special mention and of possible adoption as the types of architecture appropriate to the regions, to the circumstances, and to the necessities of the future.

The exposition is both the proof and the fruit of a unanimous motive, of a touching and scholarly effort. We do not doubt, however, that the public went there, influenced not only by a sympathetic curiosity but by that active desire and by that generous impulse which impels us, each in our sphere and according to our abilities, to compete in the great work of general reestablishment, of universal reconstruction. It can be well said that, without active participation, we shall contribute nevertheless to the success of the common enterprise by the cordial interest which we shall have shown. We shall contribute our foundational stones, invisible and real. In these questions, the warmth of public opinion is precious and of a communicative strength that nothing equals. It alone can create the torrent of zeal that goes straight to the goal and carries away all the obstacles.

The first impression of this exhibition, which is not once changed during the length of the visit, is instantly complete. The eyes and the spirit find in it their charm and their profit. I well know that the majority of those who passed through to look at these drawings preoccupied them-

\*In the preliminary competition there were 1,498 entrants; in the final, there were 340, of whom 270 were soldiers.

selves less perhaps with their practical value and the conveniences that they offer than with their picturesque exterior and the bewitching aspect that they present. No matter. It is not necessary to possess technique in order to understand the very special conditions that the program demands, and the way, so often fortunate, in which, in different degrees it has been studied, grasped, and visualized by all the competitors.

It was not a question, indeed, of considering the rebuilding of amusement resorts or the country villas of the middle class. These, without doubt, have known as much as the others the destructive rage of the invader, and the moment will also come to determine to rebuild them in the same spirit of local and reasoned adaptation, the source of inspiration of all the good workers of the rebuilding renaissance. But the first to be considered was the most urgent—the primary and indispensable requirements of existence. The necessities of nourishment, of cultivation, of manual labor, the discipline and conditions of life itself clearly indicated and limited the immense work.

Bread made necessary the oven, and flour, the mill. The fields, no sooner cleansed and put back to a normal state, would demand the farm buildings; and everything depending on the sun and the earth, both beasts and people, would desire the roof and its shelter. The first scheme was thus naturally indicated. The inn, the bakery, the café, the smith's forge, and, above everything, the houses of the peasant, of the farmer, of the rural worker; such were the humble and sovereign edifices to be first erected, the pillar and support that should be determined and placed, the nucleus around which would group themselves afterward, little by little, in the near and far-distant future, the different and successive elements of the resurrected village. What task more important than the careful and studied reformation of all these cells, broken and obliterated! What noble attraction, what magnificent stimulus did the difficulties themselves present! No! That was not an ordinary competition, one of those cold and common tests that concern but the hand and the intellect and leave the heart a stranger. It has been absolutely necessary in this case, that, in order to succeed, the heart should aid the mind and direct the hand.

All of these drawings, the best as well as those that do not attain perfection, nevertheless permit to appear clearly the tender thoughts of their authors. In addition to their remarkable merit, they are the stirring acts of patriotic piety. One may perceive the leaven of the most exquisite solicitude at the same time that one is surprised at a kind of divination with which a number have understood and penetrated the character and spirit of the district to be restored. Neither mistake in taste nor mistake in tact. Nowhere does one find any sentimental heresy.

I admired at every instant this comprehension, so unerring and so correct. "Why," said I to myself, "it seems that these young architects never lived anywhere but in the country and in that part of the country which is the object of their study!" And it is also an object for inquiry, when one sees the precision, the confidence with which some have placed and distributed the farm buildings, whether formerly they have not been innkeepers and agriculturists.

No, that was not necessary. It was sufficient for them, knowing their trade, to be soldiers, to have seen and



## WHAT IS A HOUSE?

experienced the ravages of war. The sight of the ruins was in itself capable of suggesting to their intelligence, moved to pity, the most suitable way to reconstruct. They have learned "on the job" that the new habitation can not be well erected except by considering, respectfully, the ruins. A great number of these young men are in the army. Their ideas were conceived in the trenches, under canvas, within sound of the cannonade. In order to germinate, their ideas, like seeds, had to be put first in the earth, in the bottom of the hole dug for them. Being in the foundation ditches, they placed the piers. The air, earth, and climate of the regions where, in a close intimacy, they were forced to prolong their sojourn, informed and impregnated them until they were native to the locality. In working at the resurrection of the particular corner of France, destroyed beneath their gaze, they obeyed with fervor a sentiment of individual and filial gratitude. This is the reason why the plans were conceived and executed in a will so expressive of duty and love.

It is impossible to mention all the names of those who have devoted themselves to the work of salvation, but permit me, however, to draw special attention to M. Pierre Sardou, government architect, who no longer can count his successes. In the army since the beginning of the war, he obtained first prize for his "House of a Rural Property Owner." How charming and practical it is, this modest and solid home, all on one floor, with its wall in natural stone color and its brown roofs. Tied to the past by certain motifs, sober in line, of a good, frank rusticity, hospitable and well protected, it constitutes on the side of the road of life the ideal shelter of peace, of labor, of repose, as well made for living therein a long time as for there dying in the calm and the satisfaction of a beautiful evening.

Mr. Bonnier, an aviator, also winner of one of the first prizes, has found time between flights to realize the captivating idea of Flemish farm buildings, of which the very finished model gives us a delicious impression. With its roofs loaded with snow and its little windows lighted in the night, it looks like the setting of a Christmas tale. And, really, in the most profound meaning of the word, does it not concern the human and national nativity? And the habitation of the blacksmith, as the likeness is engraved by M. Pierre Patout, treated in old timber work, is of the most cordial and ample attraction. What a magnificent framing of this robust shed in the style of an ancient market-house! At the very sight of it one hears the song of the hammer, and the perfume of the scorched hoof rises in the air. Many others, who will excuse me, should be noticed. All, in designing houses, created poems, ballads of the new era, in which occur reminiscences of the past. Yet adapted, with a light touch, to modern formulas,

they have gathered and continued the traditions of the old provincial architecture, and this religious anxiety that guided them lends to the ensemble of their researches a ravishing harmony, a family resemblance.

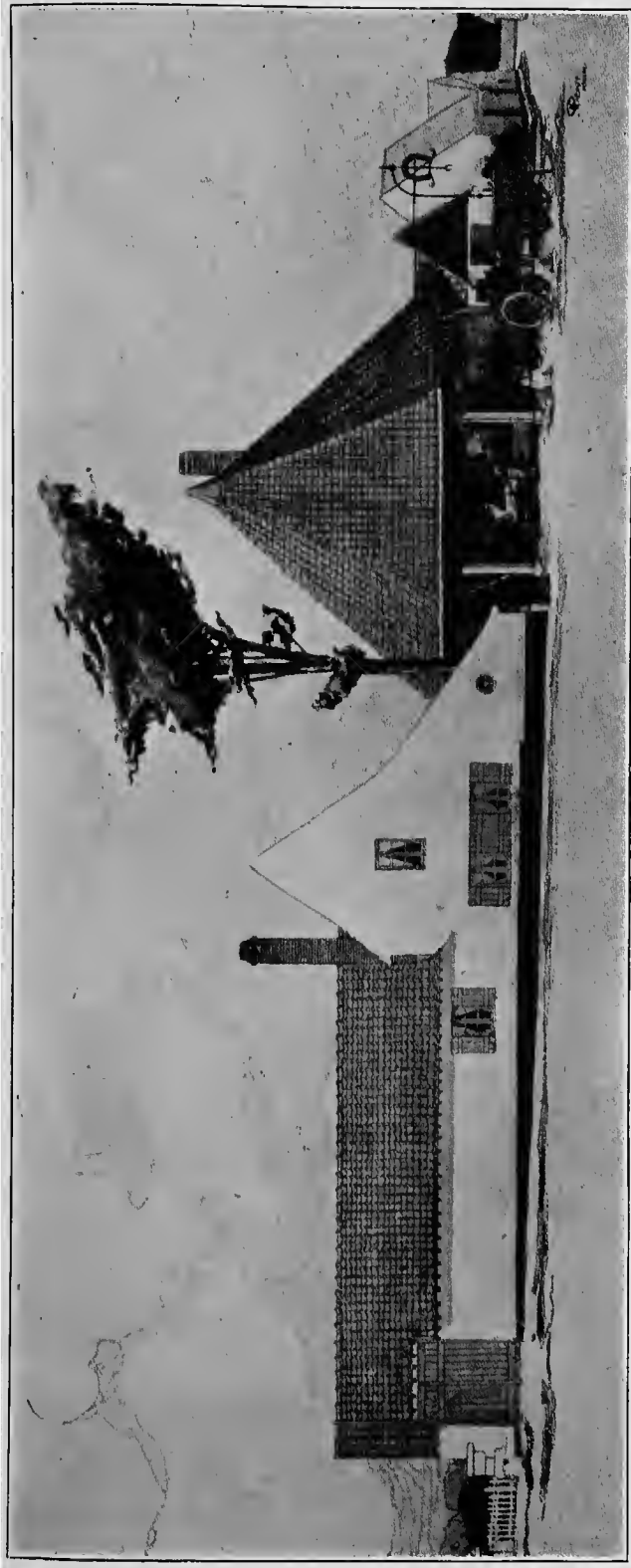
And it is also a song of action and grace, which under a serene sky, among reborn orchards, over the breathing village, declaims the cheerful and youthful house, with roofs mounting to happiness. Oh, the touching promise of the Alsatian chimneys, columns having for bushy capitals the nest of storks! Thus the ruin, alas, when forgotten, seems already to belong to ancient history. The stones of mutilated France have changed their voices. Yesterday they were weeping, today they sing.

But on the day, when to the repatriated will finally be given over the pleasant and fair dwellings newly adorned, how necessary it will be that those who there take up their abode shall endeavor to feel their charm and their moral value, all that they hold of devotion, of sacrifice, of *right*, all the loving attention and anxious maintenance which they demand. These are sanctified houses, uncommon, beautiful, and it will be an impiety to allow them to decay and deteriorate. It is therefore necessary to care for them, in order that all the good artists, who conceived them and offered them to their native land in so fine a spirit, may not in the future have heavy hearts, finding them vilified, misunderstood, and soiled. A great and useful education to undertake, and one which will forge to the front as one of the pressing needs of tomorrow.

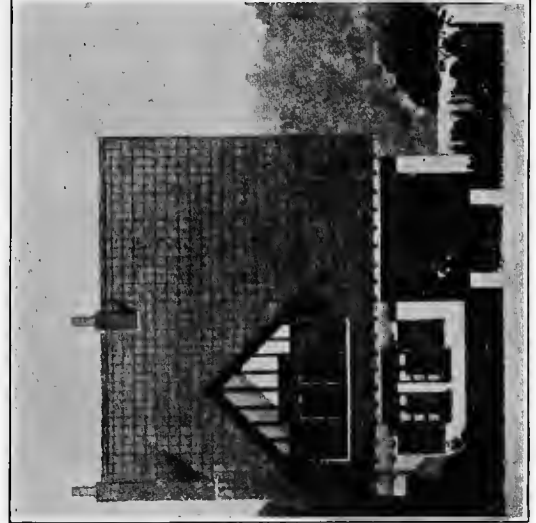
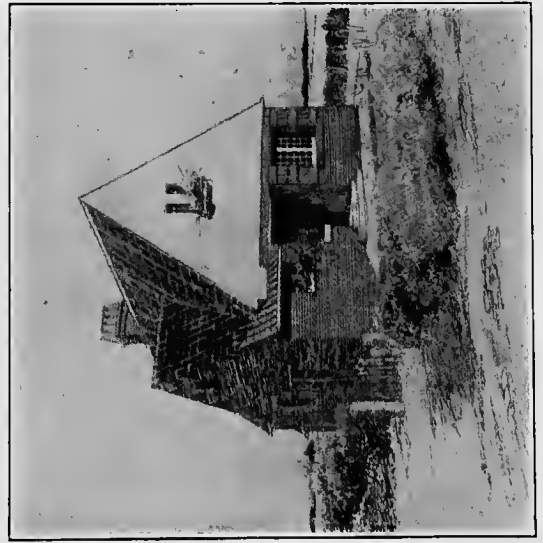
This vast and compelling question of the reestablishment of our devastated provinces is an inexhaustible thing. The depth of its perspectives extends in every direction. I have only been able, to my great regret, to put down in passing some reflections on morality, and, forced to terminate, I perceive that I have said almost nothing. Fortunately, others better prepared and instructed, of a more scholarly technique, and prepared by conscientious study, have set forth and treated in all its aspects the problem that in this article overwhelms me. I can do nothing better in concluding than to recommend to those of my readers desirous to inform themselves more fully the excellent work that, under the significant title, \**"The Homes of France,"* has just been published by M. Léandre Vaillat, apostle of this fundamental thought—each locality its characteristic house. He was one of the first and devoted organizers of the great movement of which we can appreciate today the precious results. Composed of serious studies so favorably mentioned in "*Le Temps*," the book, written by a learned and refined artist and a charming writer, is the most agreeable and scholarly labor consecrated to this great work.

\*The text and illustrations of this work were published in the *Journal* of August, 1917.

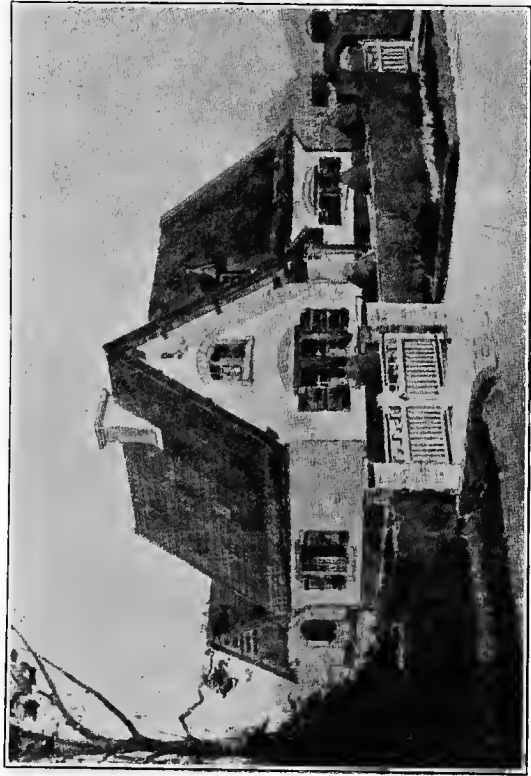




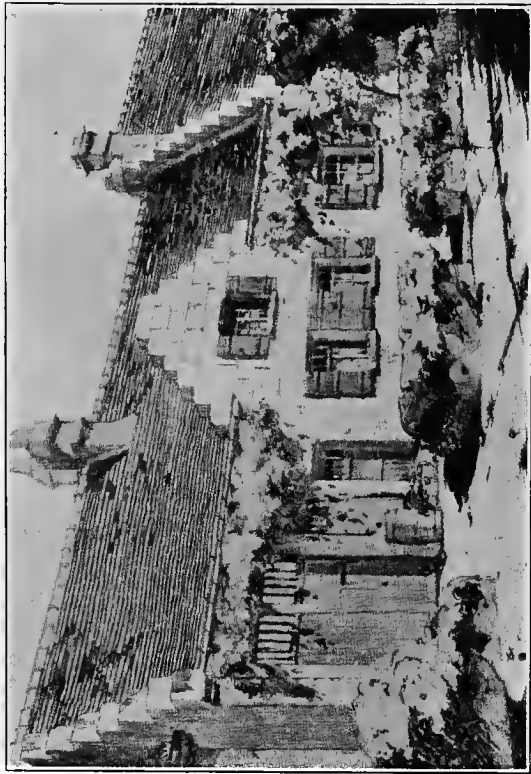
BLACKSMITH'S HOUSE IN THE NORTH (M. Pierre Patout)



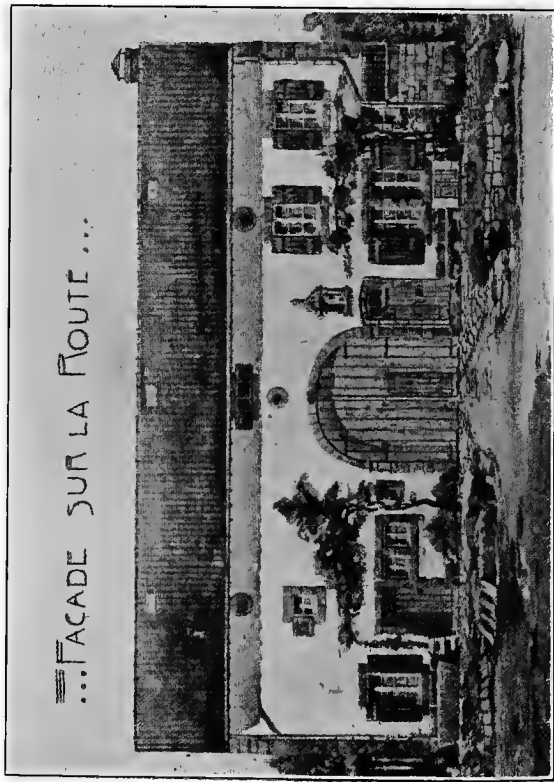
THREE HOUSES FOR FACTORY WORKERS (M. Goupil, MM. Coutan and Robida and M. Maxime Adam)



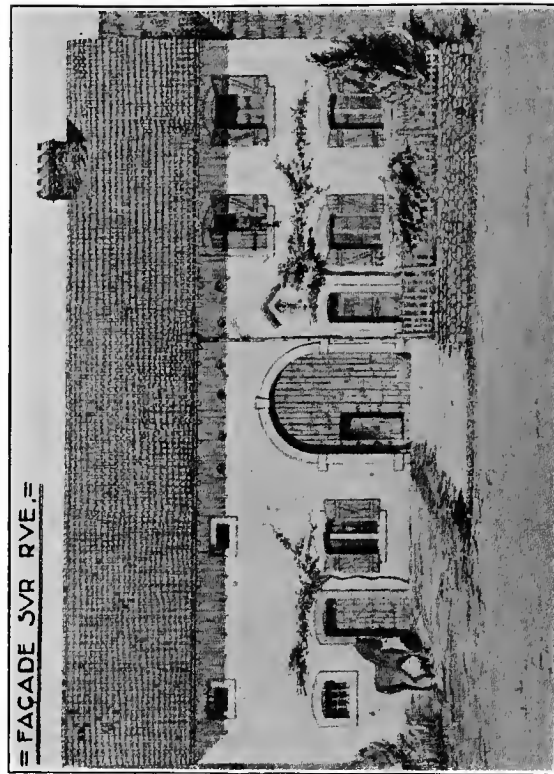
HOUSE OF A RURAL PROPERTY OWNER IN ARTOIS (M. Roger Poyé)



HOUSE OF A RURAL PROPERTY OWNER IN AISNE (M. Pierre Sardou)



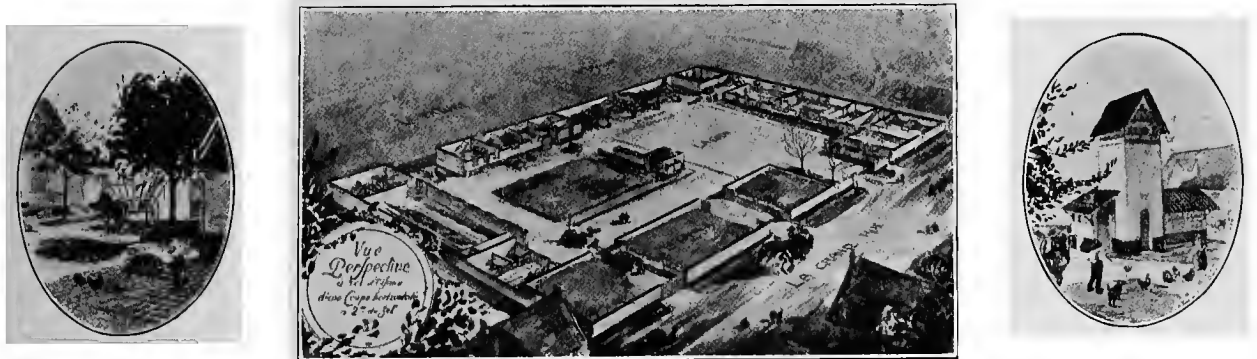
A SMALL PEASANT HOUSE IN VOSGES (M. Jankowski)



A SMALL PEASANT HOUSE IN MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE (M. Maurice Stein)



BUILDINGS OF A MEDIUM-SIZED FARM IN MEUSE: DETAILS AND PERSPECTIVE OF THE GROUP (M. Paul Tissier)



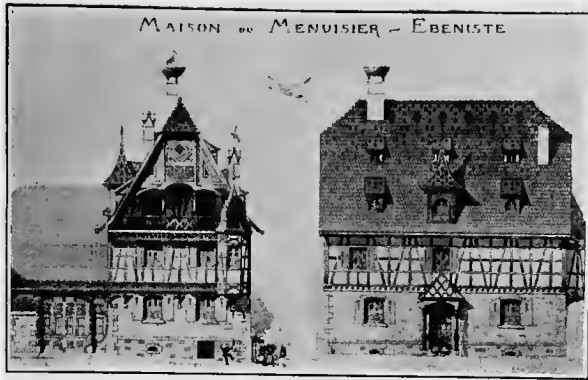
FARM OF TWENTY-FIVE HECTARES IN PAS-DE-CALAIS (M. Sirvin)



FARM BUILDINGS IN MEUSE: LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE BUILDINGS ARRANGED IN THE DEPTH OF THE LOT (M. Leprince-Ringuet)



SMALL FARM BUILDING IN THE VOSGES (M. Vidal)



HOUSE OF A CABINET WORKER IN ALSACE (M. Eschbaecher)

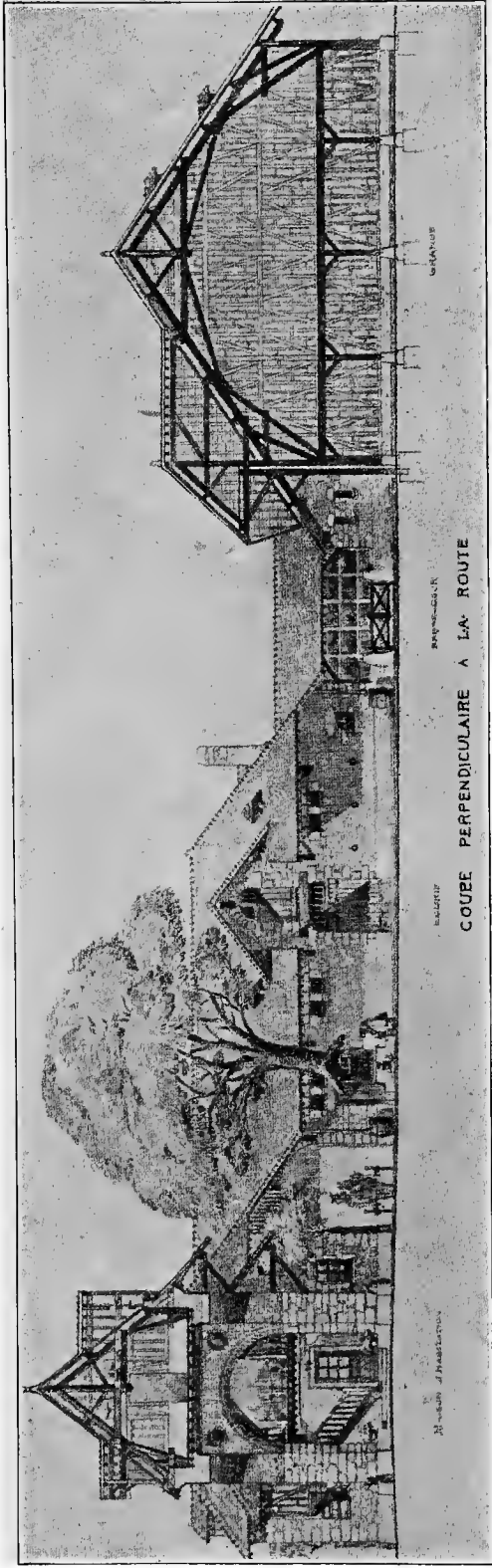


HOUSE OF A LOCKSMITH IN ALSACE WITH DETAILS (M. Dory)

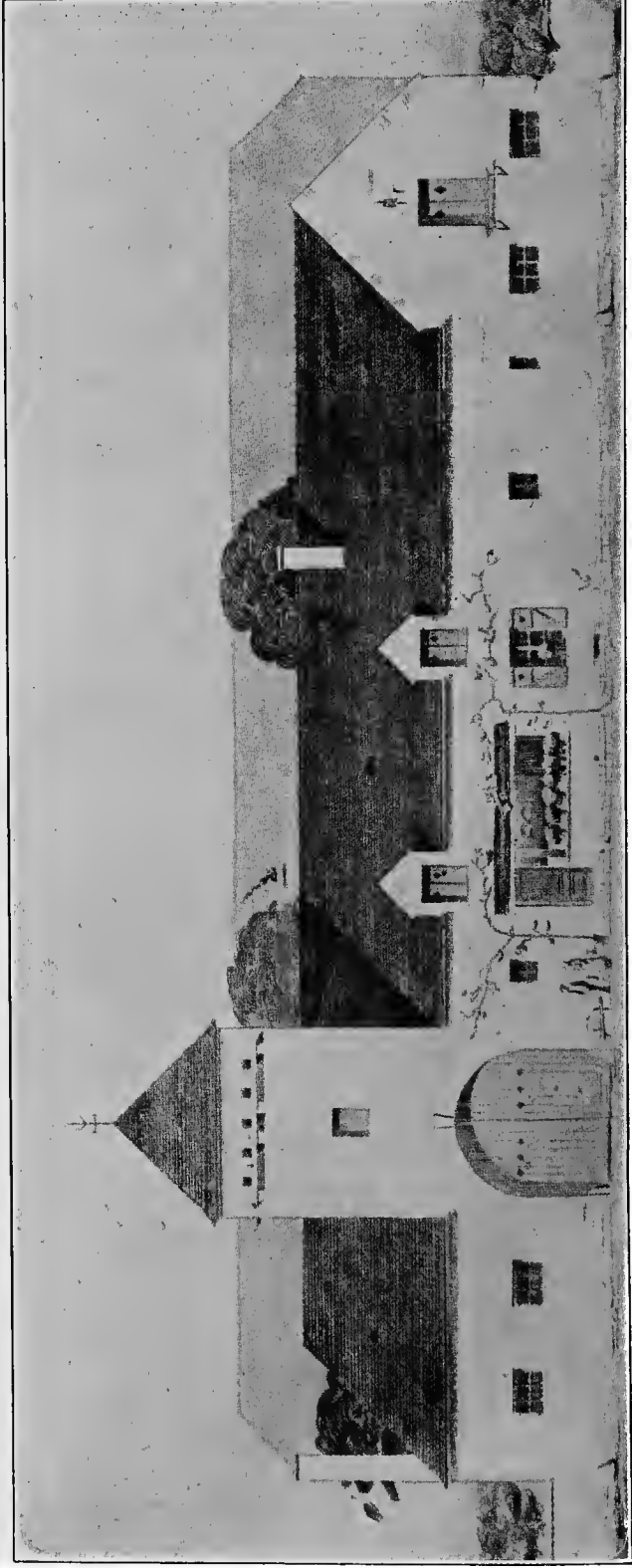


FARM BUILDINGS IN PICARDY (M. Guidetti)

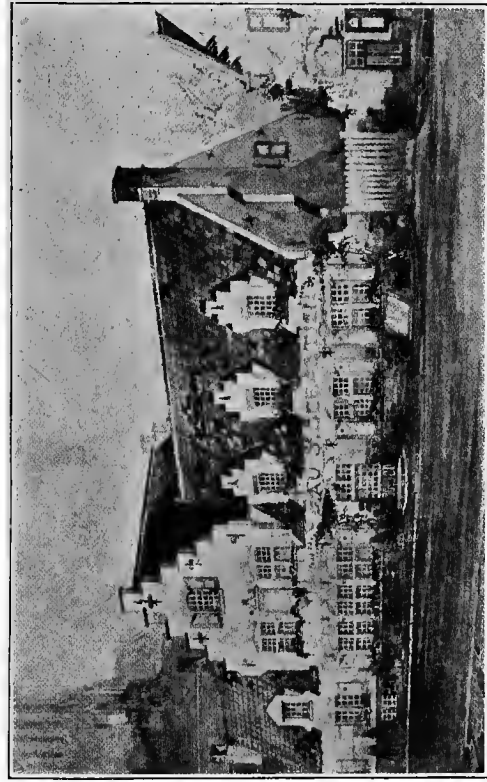




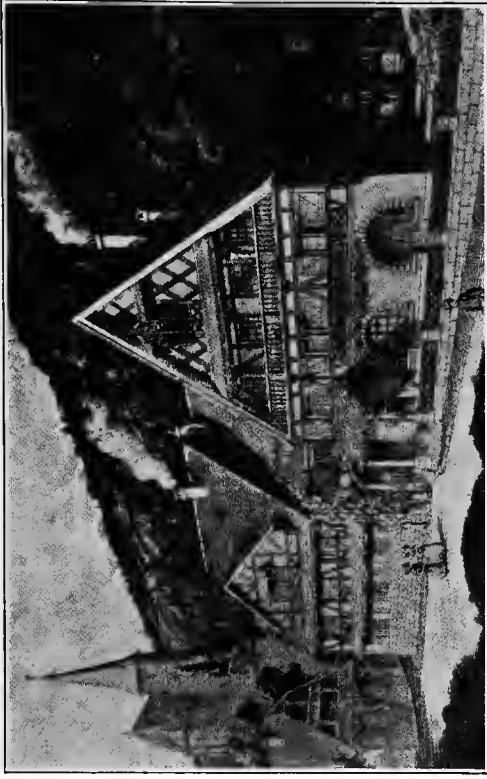
BUILDINGS OF A MEDIUM-SIZED FARM BETWEEN THE SOISSONNAIS AND THE CHAMPAGNE: SECTION PERPENDICULAR TO THE ROAD (M. Midy)



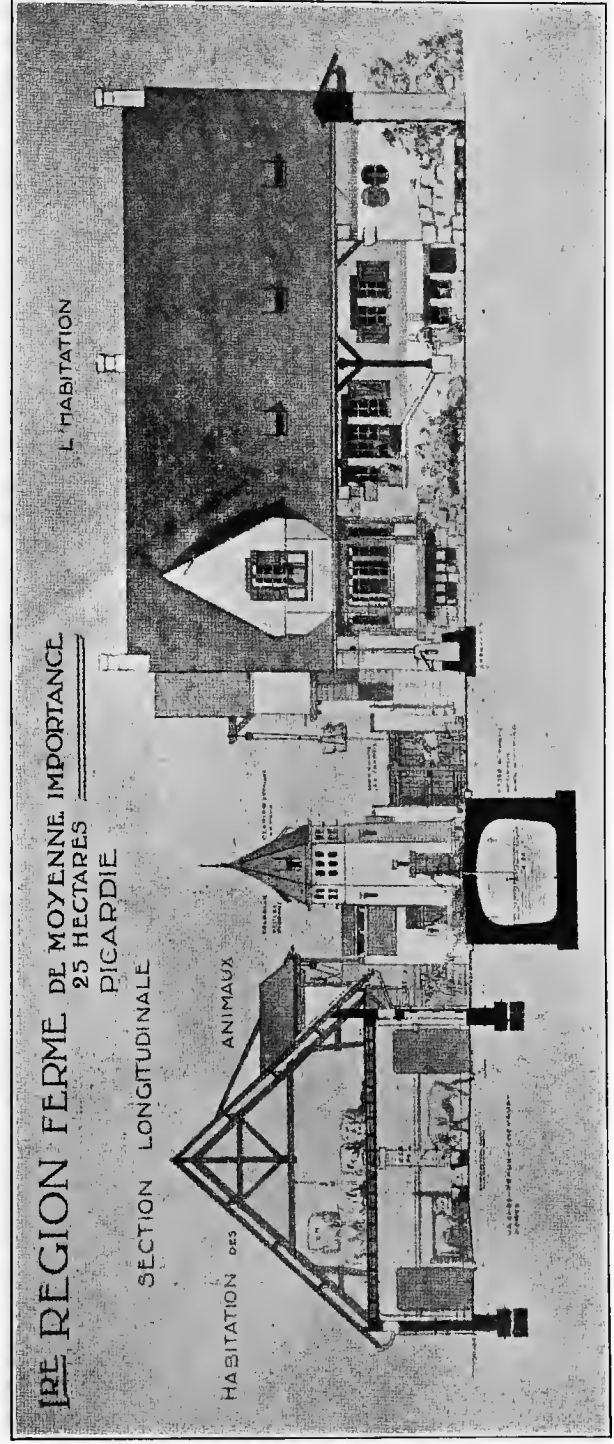
FARM BUILDINGS IN AISNE: ELEVATION ON THE ROAD, SHOWING SMALL PORCH (MM. Duval and Gonse)



TAVERN IN THE NORTH (M. Barbotin)

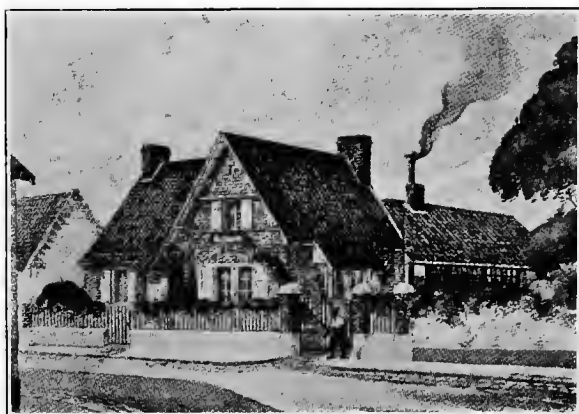


VILLAGE INN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ALSACE (M. Lambert)



BUILDINGS OF A MEDIUM-SIZED FARM IN PICARDY: COURTYARD ELEVATION OF THE DWELLING-HOUSE AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH THE STABLE (M. Anselmi)

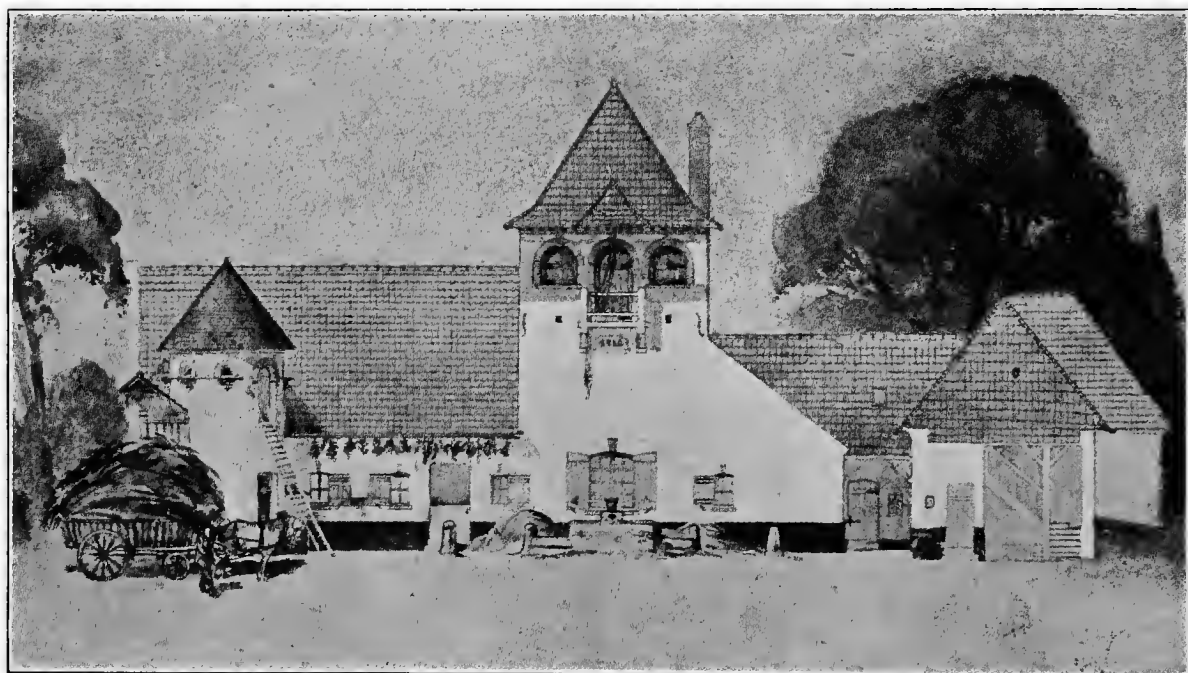




HOUSE OF A LOCKSMITH IN ARTOIS (M. Despeyroux)



BAKER'S HOUSE IN MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE (M. Bois)



FARM BUILDINGS IN ARTOIS: ELEVATION ON THE COURTYARD (M. Mulard)

## APPENDIX

# The New York City Tenement House Law

Those who have known the actual results of the New York Tenement House Law know how true the distinction is between restrictive and constructive measures in housing legislation yet some of us have lived in constant fear lest the praise of our restrictive law might induce other communities to adopt it textually. To be sure, many large communities are practically without any legislation which restrains the speculative builder. For such communities there is need of immediate legislative action, but there must be careful consideration of these less desirable effects of the New York law to which reference is rarely made.

No one will deny that the "new law" houses in New York are better from a sanitary point of view than those built under the old law. No one will deny that the law has been fairly and equitably administered. Its weakness lies, however, in the obvious fact that it is not a constructive housing law, that it is restrictive not only as against bad housing, but restrictive in a great measure as against progress in housing design. It is a law which specifies too definitely what shall be done and how it shall be done, instead of limiting itself absolutely to a statement of what is to be accomplished in the way of light and air and sanitary conveniences. It is probably true that its passage was a great achievement, perhaps the best law that could have been secured at that time, but it made no provision for progress in tenement design. Many of those who have built houses under the New York law can cite examples of betterments in design that would willingly have been made but which could not be made because of certain definite requirements of the law. Frequently the authorities have acknowledged that certain proposed features were better than those which the law required, but these could not be allowed because the law is mandatory and there is no appeal; changes can be made only by the Legislature.

The New York law has resulted, in a great measure, in facilitating the work of the man who, without any idea other than profit making, designs and builds along the lines of least resistance, adopts one of two or three standard, utterly stupid, types that can "get away with it" with the least possible expense and the maximum compression. As one young architect, who still has ideas and ideals, put it recently, "When I go down to the Tenement House Department with a plan like this, the examiners say, 'Oh, for goodness' sake, what are you going to do next? Why don't you make plans like all the other fellows? You make a lot of trouble with your original schemes.'" There is no question there as to whether or not the proposed scheme will afford better housing, but only as to whether it is in conformity with a type that has been evolved from the law.

The word of warning then is this: By all means "constructive" housing legislation, but in so far as "restrictive" legislation is necessary, do *not* copy the New York law. Visit New York, ask those who know its negative effects (they will not deny its positive virtues), see the Bronx and certain parts of Manhattan with miles upon miles of utterly stupid blocks of prison-like cells badly built, and observe the undesirable degree of congestion produced by those who build up to the limit of what is permitted by the law.

Some of us think we know what is needed to relieve a situation which is the result of our inelastic law joined to the profiteers' cupidity, but it is not necessary to go into these details now. It seemed important, however, to recall the New York situation, as some of us see it, so that it may be known to those who read Miss Wood's valuable contribution to "The Housing Problem in War and in Peace."

ROBERT D. KOHN.

## The Need of Town-Planning Legislation and Procedure for Control of Land as a Factor in House-Building Development

By THOMAS ADAMS

Town-Planning Advisor, Commission of Conservation of Canada

**T**HE use of the term "town planning" in connection with legislation dealing with the planning and development of rural and urban land has led to confusion and misunderstanding. What is called "town planning" is intended by statute to mean urban and rural planning and development. The British act, which is the precedent of legislation of this character, is, in some respects, more applicable to rural than to urban areas and, although its general object is to secure amenity, proper sanitary provisions and convenience in connection with

the laying out of land for building purposes, its operation is largely restricted to land that has not been built upon. Hence, it chiefly applies to suburban, semi-rural, and rural land "likely to be used for building purposes," and not to the remodeling of portions of towns already built upon.

### Planning in Britain

A considerable proportion of town-planning schemes in England are being prepared by rural district councils, and

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

most of the land included in all the schemes being prepared is rural in character.

In the great majority of cases the English schemes are being prepared by municipal surveyors or engineers, and comparatively little expense is being incurred in connection with their preparation. For instance, the Ruislip-Northwood scheme deals with an area of over 5,900 acres, of which only 437 acres were "in course of development" in 1913. The cost of preparing a scheme for development for this area, in anticipation of the growth for the next fifty or one hundred years, was only \$5,000. The ultimate estimated cost of carrying out the scheme, namely \$150,000, will be spread over the period during which the scheme is being carried out and as assessable land value increases. It may reasonably be claimed that the Ruislip-Northwood council has, as a result of the preparation of this scheme, laid the foundation for future development which will insure health, convenience, and amenity for the community, which could not have been obtained by any other method except at prohibitive cost.

The work being done by the Conference on Arterial Roads in Greater London, which has been at work for the past three years, is an indication of the importance attached to the subject of planning and development in England. The conference comprises representatives of 137 local authorities. It has been holding frequent meetings, with a view to determining the best lines of development, particularly in regard to the means of communication by road, for an area of 1,000 square miles within and surrounding the county of London. The greater part of this territory is rural in character. Many separate municipalities are preparing schemes for their area, but they are combining together in conference to secure a general plan for their arterial system of highways. The fact that they have been able to join together and present united decisions to the president of the Local Government Board of England shows the value of the services of the Local Government Board in securing effective coöperation. If it is possible for so many authorities to combine, surely it should be practicable for the comparatively few who are usually concerned in the control of suburban areas adjacent to large cities in America.

In Britain less confusion is caused by the use of the term town planning, because of the broader meaning given to the word town, and because a greater proportion of the rural territory is urban in character. The need for some change in the British Town Planning Act, in order that it may be made more adaptable to rural areas, is, however, being recognized by the British authorities. Mr. Henry Aldridge, in his book, "The Case for Town Planning," argues that the Act of 1909 should be amended to enable rural councils to prepare a rural planning scheme with the minimum of work and a maximum of practical efficiency. The draft of the Planning and Development Act of the Commission of Conservation of Canada makes provision for the preparation of simple rural planning (development) schemes in a form which could be made adaptable to British conditions.

### Planning Not an End in Itself

It has to be recognized that a mere plan will not do anything to conserve life or secure industrial efficiency.

The plan is only the basis on which a scheme may be made to control development of land. A plan may be prepared on paper, but no better result secured than if it had been omitted, because the thing that really matters is the development that follows. Planning is not an end, but only a means to an end; it is only part of an instrument to guide development, and is of no value unless it guides it aright.

It is important that the emphasis should be placed on the character of the development to be achieved under a scheme and not on the preparation of a plan, hence the use of the term "planning and development" instead of "town planning." The change in terminology is not, however, solely due to ambiguity of previous terms. It arises solely from the fact that the same principles which are proving successful in regard to the organization of town life must be applied to rural life. In other words, the scope of planning and development cannot in practice be limited to urban development if it is to achieve its general object of securing health, efficiency, convenience, and amenity.

### Need of Legislation

Before proper development schemes can be made, it is necessary to have legislation passed; first, for the purpose of enabling municipal authorities to prepare schemes for their areas, and, second, for setting up the provincial machinery necessary to control development in unorganized territory. Such an act has to make provision for securing effective coöperation between the state, the municipality, and the owners of land, and for determining the procedure necessary in connection with the preparation and making of schemes.

Among the reasons why new legislation is necessary is the fact that proper development cannot be carried out without some more scientific method in which provision shall be made for the exercise of reasonable discretion. Development schemes in their very nature have to deal with separate, and sometimes opposing, interests, including those of the general public and private owners. It is an essential feature of planning and development legislation that it should provide for effective coöperation between the public authorities and the private owners, and also between adjacent municipal authorities. It is therefore necessary to have a skilled department of the state government to act as a sort of court of appeal in regard to differences which are bound to arise between interested parties and conflicting or coöperating authorities.

### Boundaries of Development Schemes

It may not be practicable in some cases to prepare development schemes within the arbitrary boundaries of one municipal area. For topographical and other reasons one local authority may desire to include part of an area of another local authority in its scheme. In England it has been recognized that arbitrary municipal boundaries must not influence the boundaries of town-planning schemes. The city of St. John, New Brunswick, has obtained authority from the legislature to prepare a scheme for an area of about 20,000 acres, of which about half is outside the city limits. No objection was raised to the inclusion of the outside territory in the area of the scheme by the local authorities concerned, and only one objection was raised by an owner.

# WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

The Census Bureau of the United States, in its latest census, has shown that the arbitrary boundaries of cities were little heeded by the growth of population, industry, or development generally. Because of this it is necessary that planning and development schemes should embrace a much larger area than is covered by the administrative unit of the city or town, but if the rural municipality does its duty and prepares schemes for the urban parts of its area, it would not be necessary for the city or town to encroach on the territory outside its boundaries. The development of the agricultural areas adjacent to the city should be considered in relation to the development in these suburban schemes.

## Why Rural and Urban Development Should Be Dealt with in One Measure

*Prima facie* it would seem as if the proper way to control rural and urban development would be either to have two acts—namely, a rural development act and an urban development act—or to have one act so framed as to enable urban schemes to be prepared for urban areas and rural schemes to be prepared for rural areas. In practice, however, this would not work out satisfactorily, owing to the absence of any clear division line between urban and rural territory and between urban and rural conditions. Moreover, to suggest a division of this kind would be to emphasize a distinction between the two kinds of areas and their problems which does not exist, although it has erroneously been assumed to exist and has been fostered by many whose one-sided experience has blinded them to the interdependence of urban and rural life. Not only is there no sharp division-line between town and country under modern conditions, and no certainty that what is isolated rural territory today may not become the site of a town tomorrow, but the arbitrary divisions between urban and rural municipal areas are such that the conditions and problems on both sides of a boundary line between such areas may be precisely the same.

The only satisfactory method, even if it be somewhat defective, is to have an act which will regulate all new settlement and development in all kinds of urban and rural areas. This is, of course, a sharp distinction between the problems that have to be dealt with in areas which are fully built up with substantial and more or less permanent improvements, like those in the central parts of large cities, and other problems in suburban areas where the land is either unbuilt upon or is only in process of being developed. Land which is fully built upon and served by improved streets which cannot be altered or replanned, except at great cost for reconstruction, is not suitable for inclusion in the area of a development scheme. Even if the planning of such land has been hopelessly bad and the streets have proved to be too narrow and are intersected by dangerous railway crossings, it is hardly practicable to remodel them by a development scheme dealing with large areas of land. The act and the development schemes prepared under it, intended to deal with both urban and rural conditions, will contain provisions which are applicable to urban and inapplicable to rural territory, and *vice versa*. But there can be no objection to this, since if any provision is inapplicable, no person or interest can be injured thereby. For instance, if a scheme provided for

control of building-lines, i. e., the distance of setback from the highway boundary in a district where no buildings were likely to be erected, this would not be a burden on the farmer, since it would not force or accelerate building development but merely provide for its regulation if and when it took place. If no building took place, the provision would remain inoperative. On the other hand, no person or government can foresee where building is going to take place, or where a town-site is going to be laid out. Restrictions which are necessary to regulate development where it is occurring may, without injury to anyone, be made to apply, even where development is unlikely to occur. If such regulations are to be effective, they must deal with the possibility and not with the fact.

## The Principal Contents of Development Schemes in Rural Areas

Practically anything connected with the development of land can be included in a development scheme under a planning and development act. Only by this means can development be planned comprehensively and its various parts be considered in relation to each other at the same time. Even those matters which are the subject of general statutes or by-laws should be permitted to be varied by the provisions of a scheme. This is an additional reason why the final approval of the scheme must rest with the provincial authority. The following outline gives an indication of some of the matters which may be dealt with:

(a) Fixing varied widths of streets and roads; altering or closing existing highways; determining building-lines or setbacks of buildings according to a comprehensive scheme for a large area. The relationship between the street and the character and density of the buildings to be erected upon it should be taken into account.

(b) Reserving land for new main thoroughfares.

(c) Limiting the number of dwelling houses to be erected per acre and prescribing the amount of any lot which may be built upon in order to ensure ample light and air for all buildings and healthy housing conditions.

(d) Prescribing zones in urban parts of rural areas within which to regulate different degrees of density and height of buildings, according to local conditions.

(e) Classifying land for use for residential purposes, factories, agriculture, timber reserves, etc., and adjusting the system of taxation and the system of planning and constructing local improvements to suit the kind of development permitted under the scheme, to encourage the economic use of the land, and to lessen injurious speculation. Under a scheme, land could be permanently dedicated for agricultural purposes and assessed at its value for that purpose to the advantage of the public and owners alike.

Every scheme can be prepared to deal with local conditions on their merits under any skilled advice that may be employed with the advantage of any local experience.

To be successful, planning and development schemes have to be flexible. One of their advantages is that they dispense with the necessity of stereotyped by-laws. Certain general principles, such as the amount of space that must be reserved around buildings of different kinds, or the width of main arterial thoroughfares, have to be

## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

definitely settled, but matter of detail affecting individual properties can be made subject to variation.

One of the purposes of such schemes should be to transfer a larger portion of the burden of making local improvements to the owners of real estate who benefit from these improvements. Among other matters which might be dealt with in rural land development schemes are:

- Cancellation and replanning of subdivisions.
- Provision of private and public open spaces for recreation.
- Preservation of objects of historic interest or natural beauty.
- Planning of sewerage, drainage, and sewage-disposal, lighting and water-supply systems in advance.
- Extension of variation of private rights-of-way and other easements.
- Planning of community centers and educational institutes.
- Protection of rural districts from noxious industries and ugly hoardings.

It is only when these matters are dealt with in a scheme that effective control of land development can be secured on economical lines. When attempts are made to get improvements carried out in respect of individual proper-

ties, such as the simple matters of fixing a building-line or diverting a road, much opposition has to be faced, or compensation paid, because the owner is being asked to give up something to comply with a requirement which affects his property only. He has to get compensation, not necessarily because he is injured, but because he is asked to confer a benefit upon the community which other owners are not asked to confer. In a development scheme the requirements of local authorities are made general throughout its area, and, in practice, what have appeared to be revolutionary proposals have met with little opposition.

In certain schemes owners have granted free large areas of land for recreation purposes and for widening roads, without cost to the community and without loss to the donors. The fact that the latter contribute, under this plan, to a general scheme of development has meant in such cases that the balance of their property was increased in value as a result of contribution to the scheme.

The reader who is not familiar with the working of planning and development legislation will probably find many questions arise in his mind regarding the feasibility and benefit of the proposals referred to in the above outline; but experience in the working of such legislation leads to the conclusion that it is the only sound and effective way to control the development of land.

## II

**I**T IS obvious that the adoption of the most perfect system of planning and development of land will not do more than provide the right foundation on which to build up a solution by a slow and gradual process. In the degree in which that foundation is well laid, the ultimate social structure will be the more stable, and will be the more capable of adjustment to suit altered conditions from time to time as development proceeds; while, obversely, in the degree in which the foundation is badly laid the structure will be proportionately weak, and it will become the more difficult to go back to the beginning and remedy fundamental defects. Success can be attained only by using skill and exercising patience and vigilance in dealing with the problem in a scientific way. Attempts to reach a solution by short cuts and quick results, as in the past, can end only in failure.

### General Considerations Involved

As a means of finding and applying the needed remedies, it seems necessary that several lines of activity should be pursued simultaneously. These include:

- (a) The improving of national, state and local government organization in connection with all matters relating to land development.
- (b) The making of a comprehensive investigation and survey of present conditions, and the preparing of detailed topographical maps and reports on rural conditions.
- (c) The adopting of some system of planning all land for purposes of health, convenience and economic use, and the securing of adequate planning and development legislation and its effective administration by the governing authorities.

(d) The creating of agricultural and industrial settlements, free of artificial pressure and on sound economic lines.

(e) The formulating of a definite policy in regard to readjustment of social and industrial conditions after the war, particularly in relation to the problem of returned soldiers.

General recommendations in regard to each of these matters are set out below.

### Government Organization

The Federal and state government legislation and machinery for dealing with the control of the planning, settlement and development of land, should be extended and improved.

There should be closer coöperation than hitherto between Federal, state and municipal governments, and between different branches of the public service, in regard to all matters dealing with land.

The surveying branches of the governments should be strengthened and more comprehensive surveying work assigned to them.

A complete and coördinated system of Federal, state and municipal administration of land resources should be devised, with the whole organization centralized in a department or permanent commission of the Federal Government.

The operations of venders of real estate should be regulated, so as to prevent misrepresentation and other immoral practices in connection with the sale of land, and all real-estate operators should be licensed by governments under safeguards designed to prevent improper dealing in land.

# WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

State governments should consider their systems of administering highways, municipal affairs and public health, with special regard to the need of securing more coöperation and efficiency in connection with land and municipal development than is possible under present conditions, and for increasing the responsibilities and powers of municipal authorities, under the advice of a skilled department of local government in each state.

To meet a temporary need, the Federal Government should take an active interest in the housing of workers engaged in munition plants, particularly in government arsenals and in small towns and rural districts where there is lack of strong local government. The Federal Government should either require adequate accommodation and proper sanitary conditions to be provided at a reasonable cost for those who are engaged in the service of the country, or itself assist in making that provision, as is being done in Great Britain and allied countries.

Whether in regard to peace or war conditions, the main objects of any improvement in government organization, of rural and of urban conditions, must be to conserve life and to stimulate production. To achieve these objects it is essential, above all other things, that greater activity be shown by governments in protecting public health, in promoting sound systems of education, and in controlling land speculation.

## The Cost of Neglect

We have the estimate from United States sources that feeble-minded children cost the United States Government \$90,000,000, and that crime costs \$600,000,000 a year. The feeble-minded child produces the strongest link that connects neglect of social and health conditions with crime.

While these figures are of value in conveying some impression of the importance of the problem of public health, they are, of course, of no value as an indication of the extent of the government responsibility; since the factors necessary to show the proportion of the loss due to individual neglect and the proportion of maladministration must continue to be unknown. Nor are they any guide as to the respective losses caused by overcrowding in cities on the one hand, and by isolation and poverty in rural districts on the other hand. But enough is known to make it clear to every student of social conditions that a large share of the responsibility for the deplorable and unnecessary loss of life and physical deterioration on this continent rests with the various governing authorities, who have the powers to regulate land development, and that there are conditions in the rural districts as injurious to health and morals as in the crowded city slums.

## Looking Ahead

At present, there is a "confusion of tongues" as to the desirability, or otherwise, of money and human energy being spent on works that are not absolutely essential to the prosecution of the war. The weight of evidence seems to be in favor of everything being suspended which can be put off without injury to our social and economic life. As conservation of health lies at the root of our social life, and as it is one of the most essential needs as a means of prosecuting the war itself, as well as to make up for the

wastage of war and to utilize our natural resources, public health expenditures should be the last to be curtailed. Moreover, whatever public works may be delayed, there should be no delay in thinking out and formulating a policy for future action, having regard to past failure and to the lessons taught by the war.

Apart from the question of general education, there is need for improvement in the training of those engaged in municipal and sanitary engineering, land surveying, and assessment valuation, in order to qualify a larger body of professional men to specialize in the work of planning and developing land, controlling public health and assessing property values. The organization of municipal and sanitary engineers for purposes of specialized professional training and for the advancement of their particular branch of engineering is needed.

In our universities, too, we want to see an awakening to a more vital interest in civic problems and in the science of land development and industrial organization. Professor Geddes claims that the universities in all the countries in the passing generation have been strongholds of Germanic thought, with its mechanical and venal philosophy. "The re-awakening movements of the universities have been slow, timid, blindfold, because lacking in civic vision."

## The Land Problem

Enough, but not too much, has been said on the subject of land speculation. The governments have a special obligation, as the original venders of land, and in view of the far-reaching effects of immoral practices in connection with its sale, to employ special means to protect purchasers from such practices. There are numerous obvious steps which should be taken in this respect, including the registration of those engaged in real-estate operations and the application of adequate safeguards to protect purchasers.

Government control of land development and the system of assessing and taxing of land should have regard to its use, its non-use, and its abuse as an instrument of production. The economic use of land must be encouraged, the non-use of land hindered, and the abuse of land prevented, by government policies; unless we intend to continue to sacrifice the surplus fruits of production—the only source from which increase of real wealth is derived—for the plaything of speculation.

## A Comprehensive Survey

A comprehensive survey of the social, physical and industrial conditions of all rural territory should be made, with the object of ascertaining: first, the main facts regarding the problems of rural life and rural development in territory already settled and organized; and, second, more precise information than is now available regarding natural resources in unorganized territory.

The survey should be so prepared as to enable constructive proposals to be formulated regarding the economic development of the natural and industrial resources of the country, and regarding the location of new towns, railways and highways.

It should include a complete inventory and an additional survey of all lands which have been already surveyed and homesteaded with a view to securing their settlement



## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

under proper conditions and to devising means to lessen injurious speculation.

It should deal with questions of taxation and assessment of land and buildings for state and local purposes.

### Agricultural and Industrial Settlements

New town settlements (garden cities) should be established where there are good facilities for profitable production and distribution, where manufacturing and intensive farming can be successfully carried on, and where advantage can be taken of the tendency to remove industries from crowded centers of rural districts or to establish new industries near waterpowers and raw materials.

Government capital, or the guarantee of bonds, should be made available for these settlements and should be made repayable at a fixed rate; the benefit of all profits derived in excess of that rate should be spent on improving the settlements.

The increment of land values created by the conversion of cheap agricultural land into a valuable townsite gives to the garden-city class of development a special financial stability, which is not possessed by the agricultural settlement.

Coöperation should be stimulated and encouraged by government action, and the facilities for coöperation should be provided by skilled planning; but this should be done without imposing undue restraint on personal initiative or freedom. Coöperative effort should be organized individual effort. In a coöperative scheme, artificial control should be limited to the prevention of wrongdoing, including the prevention of such forms of land development as are economically and socially injurious.

The recommendation that industrial, or partly industrial and partly agricultural, town settlements be established is apt to be regarded with suspicion by practical men because of its novelty. That novelty has now worn off in England, and garden cities and suburbs are no longer looked upon as visionary schemes.

The movement in England has attracted widespread attention in all European countries and in the United States and has caused influential bodies to advocate the establishment of similar communities in these countries.

### Studying the Problem in the United States

The following resolution (Senate Resolution 305) was passed by the United States Senate in the early part of this year, and the inquiry instituted as a result is still proceeding:

*"Whereas*, the garden-city and garden-suburb movement in Europe has made wonderful progress during the first eight years of its existence; and

*"Whereas*, the object of this movement is to secure permanent and comfortable homes for the people on terms within the reach of the average income, and to combine the advantages of town and country in the same community; and

*"Whereas*, this movement is contributing materially to the health, comfort, and prosperity of the people who have experienced its benefits, and

*"Whereas*, the movement, in the estimation of many, points the way to the long-sought goal of a contented, home-owning population; and

*"Whereas*, a beginning along this line is claimed to have been made in the United States, and

*"Whereas*, thousands of American citizens have petitioned members of Congress for an investigation of the movement both in Europe and the United States; therefore be it

*"Resolved* that the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry be authorized and requested to hear and consider such testimony as may be produced before said committee in Washington regarding this movement both in Europe, in the United States and elsewhere, and to report its findings to the Senate."

It is significant that this resolution was referred for consideration to the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, indicating that it is the rural rather than the urban aspect of the movement which is being first investigated.

One of the main objects in carrying out the suggestion to create combined agricultural and industrial settlements would be to provide opportunities for the employment of returned soldiers in varied kinds of productive enterprises in both rural and urban areas.

These settlements would also be invaluable as a practical demonstration of town building and land development. Social progress in England during the last fifteen years has been greatly influenced as a result of the one experiment in industrial development and housing which has been carried out in Letchworth.

Before initiating any comprehensive policy to establish new centers of population, it might, however, be more prudent to begin by developing one new manufacturing and agricultural town, where systems of rural and urban land development could be tried out, where opportunities for varied kinds of employment could be provided, where the strength and weakness of different methods could be tested, and where there could be evolved, by a process of practical experience, the soundest economic principles on which development should be guided in the future.

### Some Final Observations

False economic standards have been largely responsible for bad beginnings in land settlements, wasteful speculation, and unhealthy and haphazard developments of land that stand self-condemned as part of our social system. Some men have sought to excuse these evils on the ground that they are the outcome of natural laws, whereas they are largely caused by the refusal to recognize the demands of nature and to apply intelligent direction to what is purely artificial growth.

But probably on the whole, there is now comparatively little disagreement as to the need for investigation and reform of our rural conditions, the only doubt still prevalent being as to whether the need is great enough to cause disturbance of our minds during the war. On that point there appears to be no doubt in allied countries, in every one of which new principles of land development are being studied and applied. Even in France, where one would think that the urgency of proceeding with the work of reconstruction of devastated areas would prevent careful preparation of plans of development, time is being given to think out and prepare schemes of regional planning with special regard to health and the teachings of modern science.



## WHAT IS A HOUSE ?

Already, a law has been passed requiring every town and village in that country, whether within the war zones or not, to lay out its future developments according to the principles of modern city planning. To enforce this, there will be a Federal Commission, with a general commission in each of the departments, and, under these general commissions, community commissions to direct local work. This may seem somewhat remote as an object lesson to America, which, happily, has no areas devastated by the war; but, as a matter of fact, the creative work that has been done in America requires the application of the same principles as are required in connection with the re-creative work that is now forced upon the people of France, only we have in America the sort of advantage of starting from the beginning. But the chief lesson we may derive from the example of France in this matter is, that although that country is more directly affected than ours by the war, its rulers are not showing indifference to the work of social and economic reconstruction, on the ground that their whole activities should be concentrated on war operations.

Indeed, they recognize that the very sacrifices which are being made in the war demand, in the interests of continued national stability, that they prepare plans of development which will ensure healthy living conditions and increased efficiency in production in the future. In the degree in which our undeveloped resources in America are greater than in France, and to the extent that our hands are at present more free to deal with any necessary re-adjustment of our conditions, we have, in that degree and to that extent, the greater responsibility to apply ourselves, unhesitatingly and at once, to the work of planning for the future, or organizing and coördinating our government machinery and of ascertaining the facts regarding our social and industrial conditions in town and country.

We need not ignore the lessons of other countries, but our first duty is to acquire a thorough knowledge of our own conditions and to formulate and strive for the attainment of our own ideals, in our own way, and with the realization of our power to shape our own future.

## L'Envoi

The world has long known that impure and insufficient food or long hours of work will impair the usefulness of any man to society. Now, on a huge scale, it is being proven that the subtler results of rotten housing are an intolerable expense and drain upon national vitality.

Housing reform accordingly has passed suddenly out of its earlier stage as a negative repression of unsanitary and unwholesome conditions, and this sketchy and hasty collection of new facts and demands gives hopeful promise of a new era vast in social possibilities.

We get glimpses here of society grasping firmly a problem so huge that it governs one-quarter of the earnings of the average man, attacking the problem radically by bold constructive action, socialistic action, if you like—the name doesn't matter. We see great nations plowing into the problem with expenditures of hundreds of millions, boldly tossing hundreds of thousands of wage-workers out of black slums into sweet, sun-bathed dwellings that stand amid green acres. We see the unearned increment, ancient drag upon human progress, a burden that always grew in proportion to the community's ability to carry it, converted into a source of community revenue. We see the human machine being guarded from weather and corruption as jealously as our machines of steel—and no longer in the depressing name of charity, or philanthropy, but as a tardy

recognition of the fundamental principle upon which a democracy alone can be erected.

When in this world before has a civilized nation flung \$700,000,000, with \$1,000,000,000 more to come, into the quick solution of a social problem?

That which we glimpse today will be our future if we only see the vision and are quick to make it come true and stay true.

Employers must be shown what tangible rewards await them if they will put their new plants out upon cheap land, provide for workmen's houses to be built on that land, and then keep the land forever cheap for them by conserving the appreciation of land values as a community treasure.

The Government must be shown the opportunity, which lies now within its easy grasp, of keeping its new towns intact forever, recouping its investment by slow but sure amortization, and leaving each town eventually owner of itself, in enjoyment of the full annual value of all the lands within its borders with a total easy revenue far beyond all precedent.

By such ways shall architects perhaps find themselves presently invited to rebuild vast areas of dingy habitations in the United States more and more boldly by blocks and square miles, devising beauty and comfort, not merely for the well-to-do, but for the great 80 per cent in whose well-being lies the fate of civilization.













