

HOMELAIERS' CHAT

Thursday, December 29, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "BED CLOSETS FOR BUNGALOWS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Farmhouses for both owners and tenants tend to be more compact in design than they used to be, although they may not be called "bungalows". And just as the "bungalow" borrowed an idea from the city apartment, putting all the rooms on one floor, the newer small farmhouses have a feature that has enabled apartment dwellers to use the same room for more than one purpose- for living in by day, and sleeping in by night.

Farm architects of the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering tell me that many small house plans show a space for a "bed-closet", just big enough to take an up-ended roll-away bed edgewise, or possibly large enough to be used for storing other things, or for a dressing-room. A space two and a half feet wide along a 9-foot room wall can be divided to give a general closet and a bed-closet. Sometimes the disappearing bed is the only bed in a two-room house, or, if there is a bed-room, it may still be needed for visiting relatives, as in the case of many apartment dwellers.

A roll-away bed always reminds of the grim old-fashioned folding bed in the parlor of the "gay nineties." There was nothing gay about that folding bed. It operated on weights which let the bed-part down for sleeping and hoisted the mattress and bedding into concealment in the morning. I was always afraid I'd get shut up in the thing! Thank goodness you seldom see such ugly furniture anymore.

Nobody could get accidentally caught inside a roll-away bed. The mattress may be folded over once, in some styles, but more often the bed is tilted up to occupy only as much space as its thickness. Different shaped bed-closets are used, depending on the space that can be spared in the house plan, and the storage needs of the family. If the roll-away bed is chiefly used for occasional overnight guests or if a nearby bed-room provides a place to dress in and a closet for clothes, the bed-closet need be only large enough to hold the bed.

The usual dimensions of a double bed are 5 feet wide, 7 feet long, and 24 inches thick. A closet 27 inches by 60 inches with a door on one end will accommodate it standing vertically. If the closet is to be opened along the broad side, double doors make it easy to get the bed in and out. A single wide door can be used if the closet is a few inches deeper.

Where the roll-away bed is intended for use in a particular room it is more convenient to open the bed-closet directly into that room. If the bed is likely to be used continuously for long periods, as in a two-room house, it is desirable to make the closet large enough for two people to dress in. A floor area of 39 to 54 square feet can be arranged to provide comfortable dressing space and

clothing storage for two persons.

To illustrate: A bed-closet 66 inches by 96 inches (5 and a half feet by 8) will give room for two clothing cabinets and mirrors on one side, and on the other a shelf with a rod for hangers under it, in addition to space for storing the bed. This closet is shown in one plan, with a window at one side. Light may be provided by means of a window or an electric fixture, or both. This closet opens into the living-room. Some very convenient plans have the closet open into a hall. This avoids cutting a door in the wall of a small room where the bed will be used, reducing wall space.

The closet for the roll-away bed is often used for miscellaneous storage in addition to housing the bed. Games, card tables, children's playthings, keepsakes, magazine files, and traveling bags, are some of the things that are troublesome to store in a small house, for which the bed-closet offers space.

Most homemakers have increasing sewing problems as the children grow older and there are more of them. Bed-rooms may be added on, but when a whole room cannot be spared for sewing equipment, sometimes the long narrow closet that once held a roll-away bed, before the house and the family began to grow, can be made over into a sewing closet. Or a little sewing room may be also a guest room, with a bed closet containing a small hinged dressing shelf, and a mirror on the door, as well as the emergency bed. Again a room formerly used for a sewing room or farm office may become a bed-closet and dressing room when the family increases.

One of the best ideas connected with bed-closets is shown in a small house which has two sleeping porches. Each sleeping porch has a fairly large bed-closet (6 by 9 feet) with two doors. One door opens directly onto the sleeping porch, for pulling out the bed. The other opens into the hall. Thus the bed-closet is a warm dry place to keep the bed and bedding during the day, a warm dressing-room, and a passageway to the inside of the house. It gives convenient access to the bath-room. This plan would be particularly good for a summer cabin where open air sleeping is enjoyed and low building costs are desirable.

Among all the different suggestions for planning a bed-closet, probably in a farmhouse the type opening into a hall is the most useful, since the bed can then be pulled into any one of several rooms as desired. People may use an emergency bed in the living-room, the dining-room, sun parlor, sewing room, child's play room, study, den, or on a porch, as well as in a bed-room furnished for some other purpose. When the roll-away bed is no longer needed and is stored away in a store-room, the closet will have plenty of uses.

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