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PREFACE.

This pamphlet is intended to serve as a primer on housing. It is in no way a technical treatise on this complex subject, nor is it proposed as an outline for a housing ordinance. The Commission publishes this material for the general public in the hope that many people may become interested in the housing question. A movement for better housing conditions in any community can not succeed unless it has the intelligent approval of the majority of citizens.

Moreover, suggestions are made which will enable an industrious few to survey and study the general housing evils and problems peculiar to any one community. The Commission invites correspondence concerning the subject matter of this pamphlet and, on request, will send a detailed plan of directions for making a complete housing survey of a city or town. Whenever advisable the Commission will send, without cost to a community, a housing expert to conduct such surveys.

COMMISSION OF IMMIGRATION AND
HOUSING OF CALIFORNIA.

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A. THE SURVEY.

Few, if any, of our cities have housing conditions that are above criticism. And few know just what their housing conditions really are. The intelligent, up-to-date municipality will take stock of its affairs, that it may be in a position to remedy the evils that exist, and to anticipate worse evils that otherwise might appear in the future. This municipal stocktaking is called a survey.

The Commission of Immigration and Housing of California is prepared to assist cities desiring to make such a survey, by suggesting a detailed working plan and offering personal expert service where required.

In any general plan for good housing in a city the first thing to do is to make a survey, devoting special attention to poorer quarters and the homes of aliens. Surveys are best made by men and women investigators working together, and they should be able to speak the language of aliens whose homes they inspect.

After a thorough survey the community should be educated by having photographs made of bad conditions and showing the public what they are, and where they are, and how they can be remedied. It is bad policy to try to hide things. Concealment is ultimately expensive.

B. THE CITY PLAN.*

A carefully made survey will reveal the need of a City Plan, indicating certain changes in the existing lay-out and providing for future growth.

The city should have a plan for streets, parks, playgrounds and buildings. If possible the plan should provide for detached one family houses, with lawn and room for rear garden.

This is the ideal arrangement; but where houses are connecting, as is often necessary for economy, there should, at least, be vacant space in front or in rear or both.

A plan for additions to a city or for making changes in housing in manufacturing centers should provide space for homes of working people.

Laboring people should live near their work. A ride of a laboring man to or from his work of more than fifteen or twenty minutes consumes time and money that he can not afford. If he is in a good location, the nearer he is to his work, the more time he will have for home work and leisure, and in addition save money in transportation.

The kind of homes made possible for laboring people adapted to their needs in price and location may vary with location.

With the possible exception of those living in large cities, each family should have a separate home. The problem is to have detached homes with the conveniences of private bath, good plumbing and lot space at a price that laborers can afford to pay.

*Chapter 428, Statutes of California, 1915, page 708, provides for the creation of city planning commissions.

Workingmen's homes have been built in Washington City, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati that are sanitary, having a private bath and a basement, for a rental of \$7.50, \$8.50, \$10.50, \$12.50 per month. Owing to the high price of land in these cities these buildings are in solid blocks. One day's wage of a workingman should equal one week's rent of house.

In California cheap detached homes could probably be furnished with all conveniences and ample lot space for a rental equally low.

Factories should be so located that prevailing winds will carry smoke and dust away from residences.

Livery stables should not be allowed in a residence district. As horse manure is a favorite breeding place for flies, it should always be screened.

C. HOUSING REGULATIONS.

The City Plan has to do with the general lay-out of a town in regard to zones of residence and industry, playgrounds, parks, schools, etc. Along with this there should be certain housing regulations.

The State of California has laws regulating tenements and lodging houses. As yet, there is no state regulation of single or separate dwellings.

Municipal housing regulations relate to (1) construction or (2) sanitation.

(1) Construction.

Every city should have a building ordinance. It should specify how houses should be constructed, the cubic air space in rooms, the amount of space each building might occupy on a lot, location of fire escapes.

The ordinance should only grant discretionary power to building inspectors or other officers to a very limited extent and this limit should be carefully specified. Discretionary power is dangerous and might defeat the law.

A city building ordinance should specify the minimum height of ceilings, window space or light area, and floor space per person.

Dark, windowless rooms should not be permitted. Every room should have two windows and, if possible, arrangement for cross ventilation.

Tenements for two or more families should have separate entrances. Halls should always be lighted.

Houses should not be allowed on alleys.

Rear tenements should be forbidden.

All residence buildings should be several inches above the ground. The areas for ventilation in foundation should be screened to keep out animals and insects.

(2) Sanitation.

(A) *Sanitary inspection.*

The problem of the care of houses is more a sanitary than a structural one. It is less how a house is built, though this is important, than whether it is clean or dirty, sanitary or insanitary.

A well built house may be unfit to live in; a poorly built and inconveniently arranged house may be a model of cleanliness and healthfulness.

All matters of a sanitary nature in the construction of houses should be referred to the health department. The health department should examine plans of buildings and see that ordinances are complied with.

The health officer should have power to declare buildings unfit for habitation.

When a house is declared unfit to live in it should either be made fit for use or it should be destroyed. Houses abandoned and left standing are a menace.

A health department should not wait for complaints. Inspectors should go out and investigate suspected houses.

There should be some arrangement by which a permanent committee should study and report on housing conditions.

The committee should be representative and have a physician, a lawyer, an architect, a clergyman, a representative of labor, a business man; be made up of natives and foreigners, men and women.

Once a year the committee should go through the poorer parts of the town and inspect conditions.

It would be well for every town and city to have a clearing-house for tenants and also for landlords. Tenants might thereby get reliable information in regard to landlords and the latter learn of desirable tenants.

There is no greater force for sanitary homes among the poor than that of a visiting nurse who will instruct housekeepers in such matters and teach them cleanliness in sympathetic and helpful ways. Such a

nurse exercising patience and tact will be welcomed by the poor. A nurse should also be instructed to report neglect of landlords, as tenants fear unpleasant consequences from making complaints.

(B) *Ventilation.*

The size of rooms is less important than facilities for ventilation. A small room well ventilated may be better for two people than a large room poorly ventilated may be for one person.

The vital thing in room ventilation is an arrangement for keeping the air moving. Stagnant air is oppressive, moving air, though not perfectly pure, may be quite comfortable.

One chief danger in any community is overcrowding of the poor, especially in the sleeping quarters. A number of people will sometimes crowd in one room at night to sleep, and in a house where there are several vacant rooms. The only remedy for this is night inspection and, possibly, education of the people themselves.

(C) *Surroundings.*

An important feature of good housing is the immediate surroundings of houses.

Where residence lots are fenced these should be of wire.

A dirty yard, neglected or open garbage cans, stagnant water, slops thrown on the ground, damp places, any of these may impair the advantages of the best arranged home.

A landlord should be required to see that all parts of a building are kept free from dirt and rubbish, that cellars are free from dampness, that walls are painted or calcimined when necessary, that the roof be not allowed to leak and that receptacles for ashes and rubbish be furnished and kept in repair.

Houses occupied by six or more families should have a caretaker who is responsible to the owner.

(D) *Care of alleys.*

Alleys should be paved and curbed.

An ordinance should forbid the throwing of rubbish or garbage into an alley. Unused articles such as boxes, barrels, ashes, broken carts, etc., should not be allowed in alleys.

An ordinance should provide for carts gathering rubbish and garbage at regular intervals.

Rubbish and garbage should be placed in separate receptacles, preferably in galvanized iron cans with tight fitting covers.

In towns and cities where private residences abut upon alleys, open wire fences are better than board fences. A board fence is a screen for all kinds of rubbish and dirt. A wire fence allows for vines, flowers, and shrubbery.

An alley should be as clean as a residence street. Talks should be given in schools on the subject of clean streets and alleys and on the dangers of disease and fires from piles of rubbish.

The most sanitary home may be made insanitary by rubbish and filth in an adjoining alley.

Fires occur from waste paper and rubbish thrown in alleys. Loose pieces of paper are blown about the street where they are picked up at the expense of the city, because of people's carelessness.

(E) *General.*

Homes should be kept free from flies, fleas and bed-bugs. They carry disease.

Mice and rats carry disease. They are dangerous in a home.

Ice and milk are not infrequently infected, either before entering a private home or while in the home. They should be protected from dust and flies.

Ice boxes may be sources of infection. They should be thoroughly cleaned several times each year.

If there is a sewer system in a town, cesspools and privies should be forbidden.

If a town is too small to afford a sewer system, privies should be located where they will not pollute wells. Privy openings should be protected from flies by screens.

The sanitary arrangement of bakeries should be specified in ordinances and inspectors should see to their enforcement.

NOTE.

Any suggestion concerning the land problem in connection with housing has been intentionally omitted in the preceding pages. The Commission fully realizes that the questions of land holding, taxation, valuation, etc., have a most important bearing upon the general housing problem, and particularly upon the problem of housing congestion. But the Commission also realizes that these problems require the deepest study, and does not, at the present time, deem it proper to offer suggestions or recommendations. A thorough investigation is being made concerning the land situation in the State and, in the course of time, the Commission plans to publish its conclusions on this fundamental question.

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The Garden City Movement Up to Date—Culpin, Edward G.

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A monthly magazine. \$6 per year. Vol. I. 1904 to date.

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19 Congress street, Boston, Mass. \$5.



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