

Q. You mean they were not pre-fabricated, but they were built right on the site?—A. Yes. The technique was this: of course, he had a production line in respect to slabs. There were no foundations under them, just slabs for the foundations; the material for these houses came on the site pre-cut. And apart from that pre-cutting, those houses were put together in the truest traditional fashion, save for one thing, and that is with respect to the gang on each house or on each group of houses. They worked in groups, and they had a certain quota which was set at the beginning of the day, and they were paid for their quota. And if they were finished, let us say, at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, that was just fine with Mr. Levitt. They could all get in their cars and go their way. But if they wanted to do so, they could remain and frame another couple of houses, and their remuneration was adjusted accordingly.

The CHAIRMAN: I take it that they were on piece work?

The WITNESS: No, they were not on piece work. It was a most complicated arrangement, but it seemed to be acceptable to the unions. It seemed to have all the qualities of piece work, yet it was not classified as piece work. It was an amazing business. But I think those houses are under-priced to the ordinary market on Long Island. I think they were under-priced by about \$800 to \$900, or about 10 per cent, based very largely, I think, upon three things: the very efficient organization of Mr. Levitt, which would only be possible in an annual production of some 6,000 to 8,000 houses; very skillful purchasing by Mr. Levitt who, as a single operator had become quite an important factor in the eyes of the suppliers of building materials; and thirdly, the labour device which I am afraid I cannot explain to you, because I do not quite understand it myself, except that I could say that it worked. It was the most amazing thing to watch, Mr. Chairman; as the banded packages, with steel bands came on the site, they were opened. The whole group seemed to know just what to do. I recall that there was one piece missing and it was over in the corner of the lot. I never saw a man run for anything any harder than that man ran over to the corner. When he came back with it he tossed it to a man at the foot of the ladder and the man at the foot of the ladder tossed it to the man at the top and the man at the top had his hammer raised in his hand ready to bang home the nail. One thing that interested me there was that every man knew his job; and there was no smoking on the job, they just did not have time to smoke because one gang would be anxious to be finished by 3 o'clock and another gang might want to frame a couple of extra houses that day—I saw nobody smoking.

*By Mr. Adamson:*

Q. Would you say that the restrictions on building materials would be the cause of the restriction in developing new methods, or would that be more the result of archaic building methods. Have you anything to say about that?—A. Well, Mr. Chairman, I do not know that I am prepared to admit failure. I would say that everybody would get along better if the national building code were adopted by all the municipalities forthwith; and that if the attitude of some trades towards more modern and more economic methods were somewhat easier, I think we would all get on better. But I do not think that in housing it is possible to ascribe our difficulties to any one particular spot. I think there may be improvements on all sides—building manufacturers could I think make some improvements.

Q. But you said that there had been less improvements since the pyramids in house construction than in any other industry?—A. I think that is correct but I think that people, not only in this country but in other countries, are pretty traditional in respect to their houses. If I were going to build a house for myself; I want it in brick in the Georgian fashion, or in stone in the regency fashion—that is not the mass production type—I would want it built