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HOUSING FROM THE BUILDER'S POINT OF VIEW.

Stupendous as the housing problem appears to be it is in reality quite simple. On the one hand is the high cost of building. On the other, is the inability of the tenants to pay the high rents. In between are such items as land upon which to build, material to build with, and men to do the work. There are also the items of taxes and interest on capital.

It is scarcely to be expected that while the cost of living is so high labor will be willing to work for less; and the dealers in materials declare they cannot cut prices. This makes a bad situation for both the holders of vacant land and the people who are looking for houses. If, therefore, money can be got cheap enough to enable contractors to build it will be a great boon to the land speculators.

Vacant land has been eating its head off in taxes and interests. Many owners would have certified their holdings long ago had it not been that the price was steadily rising with the growth of population, and they preferred to take the chance of a boon that would put them ahead of the game. The emergency in the housing situation appears to be their salvation. If enterprising, not to say philanthropic, men are so determined to relieve the distress of the people who are in need of houses that they will take less than the market rate of interest, the builders will save enough on loans to enable them to pay the price demanded for lots. This will enable their owners to get back the interest and taxes they have paid, and make a handsome profit beside.

But after all is this just what the people wish done? Is the public under such obligations to the owners of vacant lots and land speculators that it should handicap builders in order to lift out of a hole the owners of building sites? Builders do something for the community. They supply houses for the people to live in. But just what do the owners of vacant lots do for the people? It would seem to a man looking for a house that this was something worth serious attention.

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