

MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL HOUSES IN HOLLAND BY WOMEN.

The Municipality of Amsterdam, Holland has provided, either directly or through Public Utility Societies, a large number of dwellings for its working-class inhabitants. Up to the present time 4,000 families have been housed in these municipal dwellings, 6,000 more dwellings are in course of erection, and plans are laid for bringing the total number up to 20,000 at no very distant date.

The housing policy of Amsterdam is comprehensive. The town has assumed the duty, not only of supplying houses to meet the general shortage, but of providing houses for those for whom no one else is able or willing to find accommodation, and especially for large families. It does not, like most English local authorities, select its tenants, but accepts all even the worst class, if they are houseless citizens of Amsterdam.

In these circumstances the question of managing the municipal houses becomes a very important one. Mr. Keppler, who has presided over the Housing Department of Amsterdam for five years, went over to England to see for himself the methods of managing working-class property, introduced by Miss Octavia Hill, and it was decided, as a result of his experience, to appoint women managers to take charge of the municipal houses and their tenants on the same lines. The first two women appointed had been trained years earlier under Miss Hill in London. There is now a staff of thirteen managers working under the Chief Woman Manager.

It is the duty of the Chief Manager to receive applications from and to interview would-be tenants, to enquire into their circumstances, and to allot new or empty houses to those families whose need she considers most acute. Great care is taken in assigning the new dwellings. Some groups of houses are designed expressly for families with five or more children and are reserved for them, while families with a member suffering from tuberculosis are placed in dwellings which has a sunny balcony or garden.

The managers collect the rents from the tenants in their homes; they take a note of any repairs needed and inform the Repairs Department. They instruct the women in the use of fittings and apparatus (all the municipal houses are fitted with gas cookers and electric light) and insist upon the tenancy regulations being observed. They co-operate with a number of voluntary societies which help the tenants in various ways.

The majority of tenants are of an average working-class type, and each manager looks after some 200 to 300 families. But since no tenants are rejected for reasons of character, it follows that there are among them families which are below the average and a few which can be described only as bad; they do not pay their rent promptly, they are destructive, or they are noisy, drunken and quarrelsome. When families are considered by the managers to belong to this group, they are removed into one of the special areas set apart for them. They are placed in temporary wooden one-storey buildings built in pairs with a fair amount of space between. These special areas are in open situations on the outskirts of the town. Here the families are under strict supervision—a supervision, however, which has always in view the education and improvement of the tenant. The manager who has charge of one of these areas—on each of which are not more than 25 families—resides on the spot, in a dwelling similar to those occupied by the tenants; she reports weekly to the Chief Manager on the circumstances and conduct of each family, and does all in her power to help and improve them.

The Chief Woman Manager has a good salary. Her assistants are placed in three groups according to experience and to the responsible nature of their duties. During the first twelve months an apprentice must attend an evening course of training at the University School of Social Work in Amsterdam, where she receives instruction in various branches of social work, such as the relief of distress, social, hygiene club management, housing and town planning.

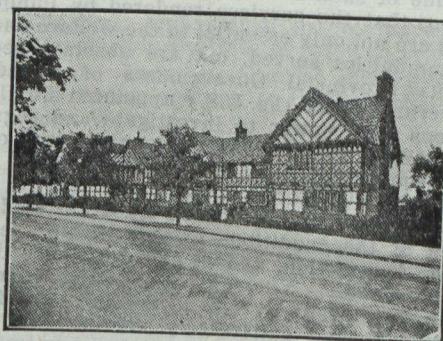
The Director of Housing regards the work of the women managers as extremely valuable from a social point of view, and he hopes to be able to find competent women to take charge of all the houses which the municipality are putting up. The salaries of the women managers are a fairly heavy charge upon the revenue, but the municipality considers the money well spent. They find that the tenants gradually improve, that rents are paid promptly and that the property is kept in good order, while good tenants appreciate the consideration shown to them and the interest taken in their welfare.—E. A. C. in "Survey."

PUBLIC UTILITIES.—Continued.

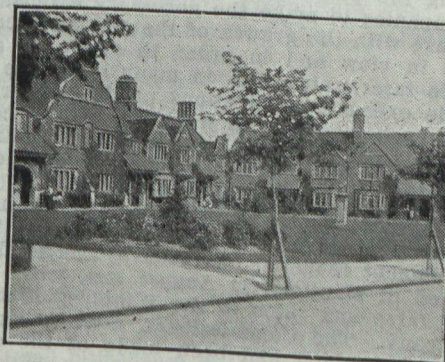
This reduction of the margin of profit in utility plants has been universal during the past year, but there are factors which make the Melbourne plant well prepared to meet it. The charge for lighting units has remained practically unchanged since 1912, and for power units since 1911, and both are low. The scale is variable, that for lighting units ranging from 6 pence to 1 penny; and that for power units from 2 pence to half-penny. It is obvious that these rates could be increased without hardship to consumers, if the city administration should decide that an increase in revenue was desirable.—"American City."

MUNICIPAL BRICK-MAKING.

The Glasgow (Scotland) City Council recently instructed the housing director to prepare plans and specifications showing the building and machinery necessary for the manufacture of nine million bricks per annum.



HALF-TIMBERED COTTAGES, PORT SUNLIGHT.



BATH STREET, PORT SUNLIGHT.

The model village of Port Sunlight, opposite Liverpool, Eng. Built by the firm of Lever Bros., Limited, to house its 5,000 employees.