

Amelioration of social conditions, of which housing is a salient feature, is followed sooner or later by the normal and intellectual advance of the individual.

A NATIONAL POLICY OF HOUSING

The deliberations of the Committee have naturally led to its consideration of national housing policies in other countries.

The new British Housing Act is a vastly comprehensive and complicated measure covering rural as well as urban problems. It contains two basic principles, namely, the prohibiting of overcrowding by law and the providing of an ample supply of houses for lower wage earners involving Government subsidies, where necessary.

In Great Britain there have been 212 different reports and Bills on housing since the year 1838. In England the obligation of local authorities or municipalities to provide adequate housing accommodation is statutory. The Housing Act 1930, Section 25 (1), sets forth: "It shall be the duty of every local authority to consider the housing conditions in their area and the need of the area with respect to the provisions of further housing accommodation for the working class . . . and as often as occasion arises . . . to prepare and submit to the Ministry proposals for the provisions of new houses for the working classes."

Legislation embodied in the Housing Act, England, 1934, makes overcrowding a statutory offence, and prescribes the minimum adequate standards of accommodation permissible in England and Wales.

The number of houses built in England and Wales since 1919 is 2,335,122. Of these, 1,184,600 were built with subsidy. The National and Local Governments have contributed in subsidies £178,270,000 (\$891,350,000). In addition to this they are pledged to £16,000,000 (\$80,000,000) per year for many years to come. They have also invested in Recoverable Loans £337,000,000 (\$1,685,000,000).

In the United States the recommendation of the National Association of Housing Officials is: (a) the responsibility of securing provisions of adequate housing accommodation for those income groups of citizens in the United States whose housing needs are not taken care of adequately by ordinary commercial enterprise should be recognized as a Government one and its discharge should be entrusted to appropriate public authorities and government controlled agencies, (b) that the public credit and powers should be used to secure the needed standard of dwellings and of rents low enough to be paid by as many as possible of those now living in sub-standard housing without involving any charge on the taxpayer and that as regards those unable to pay even such low rents the minimum standard of housing should be recognized as a necessary part of subsistence and that considerable provision by some appropriate form of public subsidy or assistance should be made available for as long as may be necessary.

The following is a translation of a decree recently enacted in Mexico: "The Department of the (Federal) District, considering that on initiating for the first time in the Republic the solution of the problem of the workmen's house in urban centres the utmost facilities should be given and a sincere confidence among the classes which are to be benefited created, has seen to it that the houses of the workers should be at a cost within the means of the economic conditions of the persons acquiring them; lowering the property tax on them, abolishing the interest on the capital invested in their construction; creating a life insurance to cover the event of the death of the interested person; granting liberal periods of stay in partial payments in cases of suspension or loss of work; giving facilities for the acquisition of these houses by means of the intervention of institutions of credit and of the office of pensions; and, finally, giving facilities to the industrial or commercial enterprises of the Federal District to acquire blocks or houses for their workers."