

THE GARDEN CITY IDEA

Being an Interview with Mr. Henry Vivian, M.P.

By NORMAN PATTERSON



Free Trader and

Hamar Greenwood, Esquires. Mr. Vivian thinks he will be able to puncture the arguments of Lord Milner et al., when he returns, because he declares he has found much free trade sentiment in this country. But that is not the point to-day.

"What is the Garden City idea?" I asked Mr. Vivian.

"Officially we call it co-partnership in Housing," answered this earnest, square-jawed, middle-aged member of the British House of Commons. "Garden

CANADA has had some notable visitors this year, and none more interesting than Mr. Henry Vivian, M.P., father of the Garden City movement. Mr. Vivian has been in several Canadian cities meeting men, talking to Canadian clubs, and giving instruction in civic affairs to any body of citizens who thought it advisable to get it. Mr. Vivian is a free trader, and probably the main reason for his being here is to gather material to enable him to meet the tariff reformers of Great Britain on the stump and to answer their arguments which have Canada's supposed desire for preference as a basis. Until recently the tariff reformers have had a monopoly of the "Canada" argument and they have made tremendous use of it in spite of Joseph Martin and

City is a rather fanciful name, for gardens are only incidental. We are building model communities on a co-operative basis. For example, the town we have built at Hampstead Heath is controlled by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. It owns all the lands, builds houses and rents them, and finances the whole undertaking, so that every tenant has superior holdings at low rental, and in addition gets a share in the profits. In addition, the tenant has a share of the common parks, gardens, playgrounds, and all other embellishments enjoyed in other towns only by the rich."

"Wherein does your financing differ from private financing by real estate owners?"

"All the capital invested by outside capitalists gets only a fixed return—four per cent. The capital supplied by the tenants gets five per cent., and in addition they get a share in the profits, based upon the amount of rent paid. The unearned increment goes to the tenants as a whole, and not to some idle landlord. Each year a sinking fund is created, which will ultimately pay off all borrowed capital, and leave the property wholly unencumbered in the hands of the tenants. Repairs, upkeep and the administration charges are also met out of the rentals."

"Do you think this system is preferable to private ownership of houses such as we have it in Toronto?"

"Speaking generally, yes. Our system, by compelling every tenant to invest at least £50 in company stock, makes shareholders instead of owners, but what difference is there? When a man moves away, he sells his stock instead of selling his house—that is the only difference. Under co-partnership we can do much that the private owner cannot do. We can have a tennis court, bowling green and small park for every block of houses. In addition there are institutes, schools, clubs and places of worship—all owned by the people as a whole. There are play places and shelters for the children—and

we encourage children. We banish ugliness of architecture and street view; we create a healthy commercial civic life, working along strictly business lines."

"What do you think of the Canadian idea of letting real estate agents lay out all the new suburbs adjoining our larger cities?"

"It does not strike me favourably. The plotting of these new districts is not well done. It is not scientific. The houses are built by different architects, whereas all our houses are built by one set of architects, who have the beauty of the whole street and the whole suburb in mind. We secure harmony by a common plan; you secure usually only discord. No city which leaves the planning and building of its suburbs in the hands of a large number of unconnected individuals should expect to produce harmony and beauty and efficiency."

"Are your houses built for one class or for all classes?"

"We are creating communities containing all classes. One house may rent for ten shillings a week, and its neighbour for twenty shillings. We have men earning £200 a year living side by side with men earning £1,000 or even £3,000 a year. A



Social Reformer.

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AND NO BLARNEY EITHER!



T. P. O'Connor, M.P.—"Miss Canada, accept my congratulations. Here with your happy and harmonious circle of English, Irish, Scotch, French, Russians, Catholic, Protestant, and everything else, you have the finest illustration of Democratic Nationality in the world! Long life to you, Madam!"—(Vide T. P. O'Connor's speech before the Toronto Press Club, September 30th.)

Drawn by J. W. Bengough.