

# HOUSING DIGEST

## HOUSING NEWS & VIEWS

**There are two theories of housing: one is the theory of the capitalist and the other is the theory of the socialist. The capitalist theory is that housing is a business and should be treated as such. The socialist theory is that housing is a social problem and should be treated as such.**

**An abstract & index of current thought on housing problems of the foreign & domestic world issued occasionally for ready reference of staff members & others interested.**

Volume of

**WE MAY** was discontinued through a 50-cent subscription rate for one year.

**NEW YORK**, April 1, 1936. The Housing Division, U.S. Department of the Interior, is pleased to announce that the first issue of the new digest, "Housing News & Views," is now available. The digest is a quarterly publication which will contain abstracts and indexes of current housing news and views from all over the world. It is intended to be a useful reference work for all those interested in housing problems.

The digest will be published by the Housing Division, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. It will be distributed free of charge to all interested parties upon request.

make arrangements to be made to the Secretary of the Interior on or before the 15th of April, 1936. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the proposed program for the year 1936. It is hoped that this meeting will result in a more complete understanding of the program and its objectives.

The program for the year 1936 is being developed on the basis of the findings of the Housing Survey conducted last year. The Survey has shown that there is a serious shortage of housing in many parts of the country. This shortage is particularly acute in the cities and in the industrial areas. It is necessary to take prompt action to meet this need.

The program for 1936 is based on the following principles: (1) to increase the production of housing; (2) to improve the quality of housing; (3) to make housing more accessible to all classes of the population; and (4) to provide for the needs of the future.

The program will be carried out through a number of different agencies. The Housing Division will continue to play a leading role in the program. It will be responsible for the administration of the public works program and for the supervision of the construction of public housing. It will also be responsible for the coordination of the efforts of the other agencies.

It is hoped that this program will result in a more adequate supply of housing and in a higher standard of living for all the people.

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**PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION  
HOUSING DIVISION  
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION BRANCH**



## H O U S I N G   D I G E S T

April, 1936

Washington, D. C.

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Housing Division - - - - Public Works Administration

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WASHINGTON, D. C.



## FOREWORD

Since Housing has taken the spotlight among topics of major social interest, the volume of published material on this subject is constantly increasing.

It is impossible to cover the entire field of housing literature in the Housing Digest, and the scope of the reviews is therefore limited to those which apply to low-rent Housing.

Although intended primarily as a reading guide for members of the Housing Division's staff, there have been many requests from others interested in Housing for a bulletin of this kind.

Additional copies of Housing Digest may be secured upon request.



## I. PLANNING AND SURVEYS

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

BUILDING SMALL AMERICAN CITIES: Not all small cities are worth rebuilding. A sound agricultural or industrial background supported by determinable population forecast should justify civic planning.

Mr. Reeve Conover enumerates the essential steps for rebuilding.

A citizens' group must determine the town's needs. Then a planning consultant may be called in; a planning commission chosen; and an advisory committee selected to represent all elements.

Run-down residential areas require earliest attention. "First, cure these sore spots in your town, and the rest of the needed rebuilding may follow later."

The efforts to rehabilitate one neighborhood unit (not a block) will bring before the Commission all its problems: the need of a master plan -- sketched, unofficial and rather secret, at first, perhaps, but one which can be "studied and perfected and gradually publicized so that any future rehabilitation will be done with it in mind". Legal complications must be worked out for rebuilding. Also the very difficult matter of financing such an effort.

"There should be a single Federal Housing Bureau, unifying the work of the Federal Housing Administration and that of the Public Works Administration Housing Division. When a small town which holds promise of being worth rebuilding shows its interest in tackling the job through a rehousing program, this Federal Housing Bureau should stand ready to assist materially in conducting the necessary research and in making plans. How much financial assistance, if any, should be given toward reconstruction costs will, of course, depend on the facts in each case, but the major part of the planning cost must be donated."

(The Planners' Journal, Jan.-Feb., 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

NEW YORK TENEMENTS IN USE  
HALF A CENTURY:

3,029 tenements situated in the area between Fourteenth and James Streets, Third Avenue and the Bowery on the East River, were built more than a century ago. These dwellings are still in use and are occupied by approximately 60,000 people. With the exception of about 15 per cent, the tenants pay less than \$6.00 per room per month, in rent. For the most part, the rents vary from a low of \$2.50 per room per month to an average of \$5.00 per room per month.

Joseph Platzker shows that more than 25% of the tenements on the Lower East Side were erected before 1887, and many are now more than eighty years old. These 874 buildings were in use up to last January. They are widely scattered through the entire neighborhood.

These facts create a vital argument for an early adoption of a modern district plan for the entire Lower East Side, so that an intelligent plan of community reconstruction may follow. "The legal consolidation of many blocks into neighborhood units and the re-zoning of a vast area for residential use are a prime necessity for the encouragement of new housing capital to again open its doors to Lower East Side development plans. Such a means of construction should be regarded as the proper type of long range planning that would stop the further depopulation of this lower part of Manhattan Island,

(East Side Chamber News, New York, March 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

REPORT ON ALLEY SURVEY  
CITY OF BOSTON:

A two-volume report by City Planning Board covering 1934 survey of 2,263 alleys in City of Boston, through allocation of Federal Emergency Relief Administration funds.

The survey shows:

- (1) 2,263 alleys inspected, 1,843 or 81.44% private, and 420 or 18.56% public alleys. Approximately 30.45% of the public alleys and 29.37% of the private alleys are in bad surface condition. An analysis of the sanitary condition showed 887 or 39.19% to be dirty or filthy.
- (2) A direct relation between bad surface features and the unsanitary condition and bad drainage of the same alleys. Of the 37,524 lineal feet in bad surface condition, 22,204 lineal feet or 59.17% were filthy.
- (3) Uses of alleys: 354 or 15.64% gave access to front entrances to dwellings, and 1,204 or 53.20% to rear entrances. 414 or 18.29% were a means of access to both front and rear entrances to dwellings. Photographs and sketches illustrating the appalling conditions found in many of the alleys inspected, show that private alleys are the chief offenders.

To the extent that public or private alleys are useful in the public interest or service, the city should assume some responsibility for their construction and maintenance . . . they should not be permitted to blight the neighborhood, even though the owners and occupiers are negligent or indifferent." No definite program for improvement is included in the report.

(The City Planning Board, Boston, Mass., October, 1935.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

A HOUSING POLICY - AND PLANNING:

Bleecker Marquette, using "A Housing Program for the United States" developed by the National Association of Housing Officials, as a basis, declares:

"In order to improve housing conditions and prevent the creation of future slums, a housing policy regulating construction, safety, light, and ventilation, egress, privacy and sanitary conveniences in all residential buildings, whether now existing or hereafter constructed must include:

- (a) Power to vacate and condemn uninhabitable structures.
- (b) Systematic inspection of residences.
- (c) Power to order needed improvements in existing structures to bring them up to standard.
- (d) Intelligent, conscientious and continuous administration of such regulations as: (1) zoning to provide protection of residential neighborhoods, to require adequate open spaces, and to limit the density of population; (2) planning to insure proper location of residential areas and prevent waste due to over sub-division of land; (3) provision of adequate open spaces for parks and playgrounds; (4) systematic education of tenants to higher standards of housekeeping and of tenement owners in social aspects of proper management.
- (e) Prevention of residential blight.
- (f) Provision of a sufficient number of new dwellings.
- (g) Clearance of slum and blighted areas.
- (h) Park and recreation areas.
- (i) City planning and housing.
- (j) Housing as a long time project.
- (k) Room occupancy.
- (l) Property management.
- (m) Local responsibility.

(The Planner's Journal - Jan.-Feb. 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING PROGRESS: Extracts from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Health, 1934-35 show that over 15 of the 37 million acres of England and Wales are involved in some stage of town planning. Outstanding changes are an increase from 11.9% to 27% in private open spaces and agricultural or other open belts, and a decrease of from 30.4% to 14.6% of land zones for residential purposes at twelve homes to the acre. Details are given of the London County Council's proposed grant of \$2,000,000 during the next three years for the purchase or statutory preservation from building of some 113 square miles of land in a continuous belt around London. The report of the committee on garden cities and satellite towns shows must disagreement.

The housing policy of the present government includes:

(a) Abatement of present and prevention of future overcrowding by provision of the necessary new dwellings. Overcrowding beyond a defined standard is now illegal.

(b) Demolition of insanitary dwellings, the subject of an intensive campaign, amendment of the law to remove certain possible hardships under previous statutory provisions, and the provisions of the necessary rehousing accommodations.

(c) Provision of any further working-class housing apart from that arriving out of action under (a) and (b).

The Ministry recommends building of non-parlour type cottages having about 760 square feet of floor area.

(Editorial, Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, January 18, 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND HOUSING: "An efficient town and country planning system, expressed in a comprehensive system of national, regional and local plans, and an adequate machinery for their execution, is essential for any really successful housing policy," were the findings of the National Housing Committee in a report recently published.

The Act of 1935 marks a new stage in national housing policy. Under this new development, a large number of dwellings for overcrowded populations will be provided in a measurable time. It is equally important that these dwellings be built in the right places, and in proper relation to transportation facilities. Machinery is needed through which a policy can be evolved. A central point must interpret regional units and act as a control on all local projects. The Ministry of Health must be the head and controller of the necessary organization, and answerable to Parliament for all its activities.

(The Surveyor, London, March 28, 1936.)

HOUSING IN SCOTLAND: The Department of Health has approved plans for the development of a 63-acre tract in Renfrewshire for the erection of flatted cottages and tenements. Plans show the estate as a strikingly beautiful embodiment of modern ideas, not only for individual houses, but as a whole estate. It is planned to house approximately 4000 persons.

A community center will include club rooms for boys and girls, social rooms for older people, dental and maternity clinics and a chemist's shop. The flatted cottages will be two stories high, and the tenements three stories. A distinctive feature of the tenements will be the provision of a small balcony for all living rooms above the ground floor so that babies may have fresh air.

(Editorial, The Surveyor (London), March 6, 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING: All approved planning operates under the Town and County Planning Order, 1933.

H. M. Robinson, County Planning Officer, Worcestershire, makes an analysis of the order, featuring (a) The Authority's control; (b) Plan examination; (c) Estate Development; (d) The Land Unit Plan; (e) Density of Buildings; (f) Sliding Scale Compensation.

He stresses the importance of a well-organized department in order to avoid waste, overlapping, and friction.

(Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, February 21, 1936.)

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NEW HOMES FOR OLD: Housing mistakes in the past have been due to lack of careful planning. Houses and factories have been jumbled together; too great an area is occupied by streets; use of crude coal for households and factories has fouled the air; too few parks and playfields have been planned. New housing estates on the Continent include trees, swimming pools, playgrounds, and the houses rarely cover more than one-fourth of the available area.

Elizabeth Denby contends that planning for recreation has been insufficient, and that more thought should be given to municipal services and costs. "We now have a chance to modernize services such as refuse disposal. We might look at the satellite towns of Paris where the sink is also the refuse shoot, whence it is drawn by vacuum to a central incinerator, where, without being once in contact with the air, its destruction helps to light and heat the whole town."

(The Highway, London, January, 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING ESTATE PROBLEMS: Two major problems result from development of new housing estates.

Mr. John Sargent, Director of Education for Essex, calls attention to:

- (1) Proportion which children of school age bear to total population.
- (2) Remoteness of bulk of working population from their place of employment.

The Housing process is not "simply one of building better houses and more of them, but in fact a very delicate and in some cases dangerous operation on the body social, in which almost every branch of government is vitally concerned."

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, February 7, 1936.)

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REPLANNING IN SCOTLAND: The Scotland Department of Health has issued a memorandum to local authorities on the provisions of the Housing Act of 1935. It emphasizes that proper housing for the working classes can be accomplished only by redeveloping areas as a whole.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, January 3, 1936.)



## Planning and Surveys (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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THE LEEDS MUNICIPAL  
HOUSING SCHEME:

The idea prevails that no housing problems, and certainly no slums, exist in Canada.

Louis Rosenberg, F. R. Econ. S. says recent surveys show a very acute housing and slum clearance problem present in Canada. He suggests that the housing scheme now in operation in Leeds be studied, and believes that this scheme can be adjusted to meet Canadian needs and conditions, and can be of great assistance in planning an adequate housing program.

(Social Welfare, Toronto, Canada, March, 1936.)



## II. PROGRAMS

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

BETTER HOMES THROUGH BETTER HOUSING: Included in the annual report of the Charity Organization Society is a brief resume of the purposes and functions of its Tenement House Committee. Cooperating with many social workers in its attempt to improve housing conditions the committee keeps a watchful eye on violations. Violations are then reported to the Tenement House Department and the complaint followed through until the violation is corrected. The committee has cooperated with the Housing Authority and other social agencies in making available rental data regarding low-rent housing in the various areas.

During the year the committee submitted the following recommendations to Mayor La Guardia - the first two of which have been adopted:

- (1) That the Tenement House Department direct its attention to the worst housing conditions, with especial emphasis upon the social purposes of the law.
- (2) That its powers of evacuating families from premises be extended to property certified as "unfit for habitation".
- (3) That the Tenement House Department personnel be strengthened along the lines of a career service and given an increased staff with special training emphasizing social as well as technical aspects of housing.

The report declares the only permanent solution to the slum problem is to raise or adjust the living standards of families located in such areas. "If slum clearance and rehousing programs are to be effective, government subsidies for this purpose ought to be conditional upon rehousing the families living within a designated improvement area . . . The use of general, indiscriminating subsidies is ineffective for rehousing the worst housed families who need to be given first consideration. Moreover, it promotes wasteful building methods, constitutes unfair competition, and is unwise governmental policy."

(The Charity Organization Society of the City of New York,  
September 30, 1935.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

FACING THE PROBLEM: Great alarm was felt by the real estate interests when the Federal government embarked upon a large-scale housing program.

S. J. Woolf reviews Peter Grimm's interest in housing and his experience as Federal housing coordinator under the guise of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. The appointment was considered ideal because of his long professional connection with investment capital, and his personal interest in slum clearance and better housing.

Peter Grimm found two major housing problems facing the United States:-

1. More housing for the small home owner.
2. Better housing for the poor in large cities.

He does not approve of government construction of low-rent housing. Government efforts so far have created houses beyond the financial reach of those for whom they were intended. "It seems to me that the solution of the problem lies in a sharing in the responsibility of the construction by the federal, state and municipal governments."

(New York Times Magazine, March 1, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

FEDERAL ACTIVITY  
IN REAL ESTATE:

Eight agencies of the federal government are engaged in the fields of real estate, housing and finance. They are: Federal Housing Administration, Federal Home Loan Bank System, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Federal Savings and Loan Associations, Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, Resettlement Administration, Public Works Administration (housing division) and Reconstruction Finance Corporation Mortgage Company.

Robert B. Smith of Federal Housing Administration gives a summary of the operations of that agency and short reviews of the work done by several other agencies.

(Real Estate Record, January 18, 1936.)

NEW YORK TENEMENT  
HOUSE DEPARTMENT:

Thirteenth report of New York City Tenement House Department covers the years 1932, 1933 and 1934.

Langdon W. Post Tenement House Commission, in submitting this report, outlines the history and development of the department. He summarizes the scope of work done and shows wherein cooperation between his department and the New York City Housing Authority can effect better housing for the lower-income groups.

Special activities, and an appendix covering departmental orders and corporations' counsel opinions, are included.

(Published by Tenement House Department, City of New York.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

ACCEPTABLE NEIGHBORHOODS  
OR NEW-TYPE SLUMS?

Programs for housing projects must not only prevent a reversion to slum habits, but also provide for the proper analyses, interpretations, and adjustments of the cultural as well as the geographic differences between the groups to be housed.

John P. Murchison deals with the cultural as well as the business success of federal low-rent housing.

To achieve wholesome community life, the different backgrounds of the majority as well as the minority groups must be recognized, and a selective administration management must cooperate with local authorities. Due to misinterpretation, the minority groups have too often been pushed aside from desirable living quarters, and have lost out on their share of employment opportunities provided in the new housing projects. This will not make for the optimum social returns for the community, and can only be remedied by giving competent representation to the minority groups to be housed. Important cultural differences must be recognized and adjusted.

(The Family, New York City, March, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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THE MIDDLE WAY: Sweden has successfully trodden the middle way between collectivism and free individual enterprise. It has prospered in remaining a democracy.

Marquis Childs claims her success lies not so much in the nature of the experiments, as in the character of her people. They are essentially compromisers. Collectivism and free enterprise exist side by side. Unreasonable profits are levelled by cooperatives or state enterprise, which act as a sort of yardstick.

"Stockholm long ago began to buy up cheap land in the outlying zones and now she builds 'Magic Houses' for the working classes, in which the city helps with building lots and finance, while the work is done entirely by the people who are going to live in the houses."

Cooperatives and state enterprise are not alone responsible for the economic recovery in Sweden. There are many other factors, such as the timber exports to Great Britain, the munitions industry which has worked at full capacity for five years, and "a wise public works program based on long preparation and old experience". A wise middle course has been a sane solution of problems which aggravate elsewhere.

(Simeon Strunsky, Book Review in New York Times, February 2, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

WORKING-CLASS HOUSING Report for the Department of  
ON THE CONTINENT: Health for Scotland deals with  
the design and lay-out of large  
tenement schemes on the Continent; shows the greater  
functionalism of architecture there; and points out  
Scotland's need for considering the cultural implication  
of housing.

John E. Highton enumerates:

1. Social considerations.

Continental schemes give greater attention to grouping of tenants. Families are arranged with a view to community of interest and similarity of tastes and conditions. A more determined effort is made to produce, by precept and practical guidance, a more discriminating and artistic sense in tenantry.

2. Finance.

Governments do not assist building by direct annual subsidy, as in Scotland, but by loans at low interest. Often such loans are guaranteed by banks.

3. Housing Standards.

Continent displays a more sensible adjustment of size of family to size of house, though Scottish schemes are superior in the matter of individual bath. Continental systems of heating, washing, cooking are frequently communal, but adequate and well placed. Their communal recreational facilities are superior.



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

4. Architectural Lay-out.

A continental housing scheme is handled by a competent architect. Scotland is a slave to the tradition of facing buildings in strict alignment with street frontage. When this idea is discarded, possibilities of landscaping for recreation and social opportunities develop. Continental architecture with its variation in roof lines, its attention to lighting, to base-ment and balcony, its combination of art with utility may well become an objective for Scottish housing.

(Secretary's Report, Department of Health for Scotland, H. M. Stationery Office, Edinburgh, 1935.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

NEED FOR YOUTH  
COMMUNITY CENTRES: Board of Education Juvenile Organizations Committee conducted an investigation in conjunction with the National Council of Social Service and the New Estate Community Committee in order to acquaint themselves with the facilities provided for juvenile activities on new housing estates. Their investigation was confined to estates containing not less than 2,000 houses, under local authority management, and located some distance from central areas.

The investigators found that only in rare instances was provision made for a community centre, and that in no case was this centre sufficient in size for the needs of the community. Existing centres were shared by adults and juveniles. Not one estate had a separate centre for juvenile organizations and this lack of suitable quarters had seriously hampered work among juveniles.

It is not enough merely to rebuild slum houses elsewhere. "There must be adequate means whereby life can be made enjoyable, cooperative and progressive . . . It is a dangerous form of economy to deprive so many of the adolescent population of the cultural and civilizing influences that organizations working among juveniles are so well qualified to give."

(His Majesty's Stationery Office, London.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

ENGLISH AND CONTINENTAL  
WORKING-CLASS HOUSING:

Europe's attempt to house the working class provides the greatest problem facing the architectural profession.

Two entirely different outlooks on housing:

- (1) Continental: Cold, scientific outlook evolves a theory, puts it into a building and expects people to live in it.
- (2) English: Attempt to build around people, rather than seek to have them live in conformity with some one else's ideals.

F. B. Yerbury, speaking before the Architectural Association disclaims the use of statistics as a measure of housing accomplishment. The test lies in what is given to the tenant in return for his rent.

Climatic conditions, the type of tenant, their method of living and outlook on life determine the specific housing requirements of any country. Local housing policies make a uniform program impossible.

The urge to better housing in England came from private enterprise, while that in Europe from direct government action.

(The Builder, London, January 17, 1936.)

HOUSING FOR THE MIGRANT WORKER: The problem of housing for migrant workers, such as the fruit pickers in California who stay in one location a month or two, cannot be settled by any mass-production plan. Each locale must work out its own solution.

(Editorial, The Architect & Engineer, December, 1935.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

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HOUSING IN GREAT BRITAIN: "Houses provided in England and Wales rose from approximately 30,000, in 1921, to almost 240,000, in 1928. New building fell off somewhat in 1929 and during the next three years remained on a lower but relatively stable basis. In 1934, residential construction jumped to 266,622 new dwellings, and then to 327,517 for the year ending March 31, 1935."

Government assistance supplemented the funds available to local authorities and private builders. Policy of British government has been cooperation with private enterprise, rather than competition.

Housing subsidies in 1933 were restricted to slum clearance projects. A survey by the London Economist showed that an average of 330,000 new homes per year would be required during the period of 1931-1951 to properly house the English people.

(The Index, New York Trust Company, Publishers, New York City.)

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REHOUSING AT COLNE: Colne has unique problem for rehousing numerous persons in slum areas who live alone.

To meet objection to flats or tenements, the Colne Town Council is attempting to use bed-sitting room bungalows.

(Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, January 24, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY: In 1920 a company founded by Ebenezer Howard started the satellite town of Welwyn, near London. The ultimate goal was a self-contained community, as an experimental working model to prove that such towns with their own industries are far superior to ordinary suburbs, -mere dormitories for people who are employed in the metropolis.

Welwyn had to begin as a suburb but the original objective has been maintained and is now an accomplished fact. It has 40 industries and a population in excess of 10,000. Of 4,000 employed inhabitants 4/5 are engaged in local enterprises. At least 90 percent of the social and cultural requirements are available locally.

"Houses have been built under the Housing Acts by the local authority, by public utility societies, and by the Estate Company. Normal subsidies have been obtained on some of the housing schemes in the past but special grants for slum clearance and tenement-building have not been available for Welwyn. Nevertheless, workers' houses, within walking distance of work, with more room and with better gardens, are cheaper at Welwyn than in the suburbs of London. Houses are built also by the Estate Company and by speculative builders for sale to owner-occupiers on 999-year leases."

(Welwyn, The Idea Behind the New Town - Welwyn, 1935.)



## Programs (Continued)

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April, 1936.

THE REBUILDING OF MANCHESTER: A history of the improvement of housing standards for the poor in the 19th century, and a glimpse into plans for the future rebuilding of the city of Manchester.

E. D. Simon and J. Inman say that the horrible descriptions of slum life in Manchester and other industrial cities, have not been exaggerated. Demands for reform came partly from a few interested philanthropists, partly from the practical realization of the dangers from continuous epidemics of cholera and typhoid which emanated from these decaying spots.

Earliest efforts at bettering the housing conditions of the poor, were undertaken in Manchester in 1835, "one of the first social surveys ever undertaken in this country, a house-to-house investigation which included most of the working-class families". In 1848, municipalities received the authority to provide water-supply and drainage, to pave streets, and to arrange for the collection of refuse. "It is alleged that housing was never mentioned in Parliament in the first half of the 19th century."

Rebuilding and developing is being done piecemeal, without adequate city planning. Greater powers, both local and national, are necessary in order to zone industries and preserve the amenities of dwelling areas.

Whether to rehouse the tenant on the cleared site or in suburban cottages is a matter of policy still to be determined. As regards health and convenience, the latter system is undoubtedly most satisfactory. Wherever the colony of flats is sufficiently large to justify all communal amenities, tenement schemes are adequate. Contrary to general opinion, cottages are cheaper, even where all development costs are included.



## Programs (Continued)

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Another question to be decided is, shall Manchester extend its present authority to clear and rebuild to include the designing of all low-cost housing, leaving only the actual construction to private enterprise? The city has started with an energy and vision that should find the proper solution to its remaining problems.

(Published by Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1935.)

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HOUSING AND REHOUSING: "It is difficult to speak of the subject of housing without raising matters which appear to be regarded as controversial."

L. H. Keay, lecturing before the South Yorkshire and District Society of Architects and Surveyors, pointed out that since the war local authorities had been called on to deal with these phases of housing:

- (1) To overcome accumulated shortage.
- (2) Slum Clearance.
- (3) Relief of overcrowding.

Rebuilding on cleared sites of insanitary properties was opposed by those favoring establishing the displaced families in new estate developments on the outskirts of towns. Rehabilitation of old, insanitary areas must include acquisition and treatment of sufficient adjoining property to provide adequately for the needs of any central district.

(The Builder, London, January 10, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

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SWEDISH COOPERATIVE: The Cooperative Wholesale Society is the central organ of the popular movement in Sweden. Its chief aim is to provide foodstuffs and other necessities to its members by the best and cheapest methods.

The Architects' Office of the Society was established in 1924 to look after its building operations, the erection of industrial plants, offices, shops and business premises, warehouses, popular restaurants, apartments for employees and officers of the member societies.

A ten-year report (1924-1934) of the Architects' Office profusely illustrated with photographs, renderings and plans tells a graphic story. Site plans and views of low-cost housing developments are included. One or more floors of the cooperative business premises are often used for residential purposes. These together with larger apartment houses erected brought the number of flats designed by this agency to approximately 2,000.

(Swedish Cooperative Wholesale Society's Architects' Office - Stockholm, 1935.)

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THE MASARYK HOMES: Outside Prague, a housing project eleven blocks in size was built between 1926 and 1928 at a cost of £9,000,000. Occupied by old and young these homes are described as "a glorified form of poor relief". The cost per head per day is 2s. 8d. for adults and 3s. 4d. for children. Each old couple is furnished a private room. Provision is made for young children and 500 incurable epileptics and mentally deficient children over 14 years of age. Four infirmaries, each with 840 beds, are included in the estate. This development has received popular approval.

(The Builder, London, January 24, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

SCOTTISH HOUSING      Scottish Housing Advisory Committee,  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE:      newly created under Housing (Scotland)  
Act of 1935 has under consideration  
a request from Secretary of State that the Committee furnish  
Department of Health with a report:

"To consider the application of the Housing  
(Scotland) Acts and the Housing (Rural Workers)  
Acts to housing conditions in rural areas and  
to advise what action should be taken to facil-  
itate in such areas the provision of new houses  
and the improvement of existing houses for the  
working classes, with special reference to the  
position of farm servants, small landholders,  
and persons of like economic condition."

(Editorial, The Builder, (London), January 31, 1936.)

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REHOUSING PROBLEM      The Colne Town Council has experienced  
AT COLNE:                      difficulty in rehousing persons living  
alone. Considerable objection has  
been made to flats or tenements in this area.

Bed-sitting room bungalows are advocated as a solution  
to the problem. Plans and sketches of proposed units are  
shown in the grouping of 18 bungalows in one block of five,  
two blocks of two, and three blocks of three. Each bungalow  
will consist of bed-sitting room 16 ft. by 10 ft. 6 inches;  
bathroom 6 ft. by 6 ft.; scullery 6 ft. by 6 ft., including  
larder, fuel storage, gas boiler and hot-air oven. The  
estimated average cost is £ 185 per bungalow. Rents will  
average 5 shillings per week inclusive of general rate and  
water rental.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer -  
London - January 24, 1936.)



## Programs (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING IN  
CANADA:

"During this year there has been a focus on housing, rehabilitation of buildings and slum clearance. Progress made has been to a great extent due to research work and other activities by our profession, acting frequently in cooperation with other groups. Our main effort has been in association with the National Construction Council and to our representatives on it has fallen the important work of drawing up briefs and of presenting them to the parliamentary committee on housing."

Dominion Housing Act, passed June 25, 1935, provides for loans for the purpose of assisting in construction of medium priced housing.

No provision has been made for low-wage earners, who can pay only from 9 to 15 dollars a month rent. Investigations in Montreal, Toronto and other cities show necessity for slum clearance program for Canada. Legislation for town planning is also essential.

(Report of 29th Annual Meeting, R. A. I. C. - in Journal of Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, March, 1936.)

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REHOUSING COLORED FAMILIES  
(SOUTH SHIELDS):

In order to rehouse the colored population displaced by the demolition of the Arab quarter under the Holburn slum-clearance scheme, South Shields Town Council has been asked to approve plans for the erection of 12 two-bedroom houses and 34 three-bedroom houses on a site in Commercial Road, at an estimated cost of £23,300. This figure includes the cost of the land, roads, and sewers. It is stated that the scheme will enable the colored population to remain in one quarter of the town, within reasonable distance of the shipping center at the Mill Dam.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer - London - January 31, 1936.)



## III. SLUM CLEARANCE

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

MOVING A MORAINÉ: More than two thousand vacant and abandoned buildings in deteriorated neighborhoods of New York City have outlived their usefulness. They menace the health and safety of the community.

Senate Int. #1253 proposes to amend Section 309 of the New York Multiple Dwelling Law to empower the Municipal Housing Authority to demolish buildings which constitute a public menace.

Tenement House Committee of Charity Organization Society issues reports on its survey of abandoned buildings. Illustrations and graphic descriptions portray the use of such places as neighborhood playgrounds. In addition to their being fire hazards and unsanitary, they are breeding places for vice and crime.

Recommendations:--

1. Powers of demolition should be extended to clearly include buildings which menace health and welfare.
2. In non-deteriorated areas only, vacant buildings which are effectively boarded up should be permitted to remain standing. Buildings abandoned in slum areas should be demolished.
3. Buildings which are in the worst condition should be demolished first.

(Why Abandoned Buildings Should be Demolished,  
Tenement House Committee of the Charity Organization  
Society, New York, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

NEW TENEMENT HOUSE REQUIREMENTS: Amendments to the Multiple Dwelling Law, passed by the State Legislature in 1934, became effective January first. They call for a private toilet in each apartment, no windowless sleeping rooms, and fire retarding of basements and public halls.

The Multiple Dwelling Law has already proved effective in aiding slum clearance. Buildings violating this law have been ordered vacated, and some have been demolished by public relief workers without charge to the owners. The new requirements will submit many more buildings to condemnation or improvement, although lack of sufficient inspectors will slow down the work of demolition.

Some real estate groups complain that the cost of complying with the new requirements will be prohibitive for certain landlords. The average cost has been estimated at \$5,000 per building. They fear that inability to raise this sum will lead to many foreclosures and some enforced vacating.

The tenant has nothing to lose. If the landlord complies, his living quarters will be improved. If he is forced to move, he will go into buildings that come within the law.

(Monthly Echo, Five Points Mission, N. Y.— March, 1935.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

THE WORK OF THE ALLEY DWELLING AUTHORITY  
of the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:

An effort to rid Washington  
of its inhabited alleys:-

"little communities hidden in the centers of city blocks in all parts of the old city."

"Some of them are villages with 20, 30, 50, 60 dwellings and neighborhood stores. They live a life of their own, with standards of their own, shut away from the rest of the community by the surrounding rows of street houses. They are focal points of disease, vice and crime."

Alley Dwelling Authority is a slum reclamation agency created by law to acquire alley properties and redevelop them to beneficial use.

Rehousing alley dwellers is the most difficult part of the authority's work. A Rehousing Assistant aids families in securing new dwellings. A history of the development of inhabited alleys in Washington, D. C., gives the background of Washington slums.

(Alley Dwelling Authority, Washington, D. C., December 7, 1935.)

HOUSING IN CHICAGO: Quoting Aldous Huxley that "even a tidal wave may have something to be said for it. It does at least clear away the slums", the late depression is justified in that it occasioned the creation of the first governmental effort in low-rent housing.

P. W. A.'s housing activities in Chicago are portrayed, and the statement made that the Housing Division of P.W.A. is one of the soundest in the Administration program. The work has been slow but "one should remember that the United States has been developing during the last few years a program which is comparable to one that has been in the making in Great Britain since 1864. The aim is to build something which shall endure."

(Editorial, Polity (Chicago, Ill.), February, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance -(Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING; A CITIZEN'S      A compilation of articles by  
GUIDE TO THE PROBLEM:    English and American author-  
                                  ities on various phases of slum  
                                  existence. Written in a popular  
                                  style.

Kathleen M. England has gathered short graphic descriptions of overcrowding and the evils of the slums. They are supplemented with practical treatises on surveys, reconditioning, household equipment for low-rental tenants, management, health conditions, etc.

(Published by Chatto and Windus, London, 1936.)

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SLUM CLEARANCE      Under the government's five-year plan  
PROGRESS:            285,000 houses or dwellings would be  
                                  demolished and rebuilt by the end of  
 1938. This has been extended to 300,000 houses.

Press statements concerning difficulties encountered by local authorities have been refuted by the Ministry of Health's declaration that progress is satisfactory.

Decentralization of industry into satellite towns is advocated. The policy of more open space in rebuilt slum areas is also considered desirable.

(Editorial, The Builder, London, January 24, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

SLUM CLEARANCE: Two schemes of slum clearance submitted for the Bossom Travelling Studentship for 1935-1936 are outlined in detail.

Robert H. Mathew designed the winning plans and report for a slum area in Edinburgh. Site and type of house, construction details, light and heating, provision for schools, gardens and playgrounds, and a health center, are described. A method of disinfection is given and recommendations made to supply standardized furniture to tenants on a weekly basis. Capital cost, maintenance and revenue are computed. There are subsidy suggestions and emphasis is placed on the importance of proper administration.

H. Fraser Reekie, who received the Silver Medal, designed the plan for the twelve block area in the Borough of St. Pancras. The plan called for flats constructed with modern standards for comfort and sanitation, economy of construction, maintenance supply services, recreational space, and other amenities. Accommodations, construction, population statistics and wage figure, as well as estimates of cost and revenue are detailed.

(Journal of Royal Institute of British Architects, London, February, 1936.)

OVERCROWDING AT BRISTOL: Bristol reports that 3,000 more houses are needed to relieve overcrowding. Slum clearance activity continues, and the Housing Committee has recommended that 60 dwellings occupied by 235 persons (64 families) in nine areas in Bedminster, Redcliff, Ashton Gate and St. Philip's be demolished. The Medical Officer of Health has condemned them as unfit for human habitation.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, January 24, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

CLEARING THE SLUMS: Steady progress is being made in England's five-year program of slum clearance and rehousing. Figures issued by the Ministry of Health for England and Wales show that during December, 355,675 houses were included in clearance areas declared by local authorities involving the probable displacement of 24,500 people. During November, 4,260 replacements were completed under the Act of 1930. This is the highest monthly figure since the five year program began.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, (London), January 17, 1936.

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COMPULSORY ACQUISITION POWERS: In discussing the Housing Act of 1935 before members of the Architects and Estate Agents Institute, Mr. H. A. Hill, barrister, observed that for all legal purposes the Housing Acts of 1925, 1930 and 1935 were one act. Before the Act of 1935 abolished the reduction factor, compensation to an owner was assessed on the basis of the site value, where a local authority acquired land in a slum clearance area. Although not professing knowledge of any solution to the problem of the reductory factor, Mr. Hill states that he has always felt it to be wrong in principle, and that it constitutes a dangerous precedent.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, January 3, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING: The London County Council reports its activities for three years 1928-1930 under the Housing Acts.

Legislation, housing policies, program for the future and methods of government assistance are discussed fully. Other subjects include:

Cottage Estates.  
 New Block Dwellings in or near Central Areas.  
 Clearance and Re-Development of Unhealthy Areas.  
 Rehousing Estates and Sites.  
 Rents, Management, etc.  
 Status of Housing Problem in London.  
 Town Planning.

Illustrations and copious details are given concerning many important cottage estates and central area rehousing schemes.

(Published by London County Council, London, 1931.)

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SLUM CLEARANCE AND REHOUSING Latest official figures from the Minister of Health indicate continued progress in slum clearance and rehousing. 4,253 orders submitted to the Minister by local authorities involved the displacement of 17,412 persons. At the end of January, 41,665 houses were under construction and definitely allocated according to the Housing Act of 1930. Total number of houses under construction by local authorities at that time was 51,804.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer -- (London - March 13, 1936.)



## Slum Clearance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

FORECASTS AND REVIEWS: Survey of the living quarters of the tubercular poor indicates a vast improvement in the last ten years.

Three families in ten now have central heating; seven out of ten have bathrooms; they use an average of a half room more per family. From this it is apparent that tenement housing is going ahead at the rate of two and a half rooms every 50 years! This spectacular advance in the showing made by private capital in the housing field, states the editor, "ought to stop all nonsense about public building of tenements for the poor".

(Editorial, Today, February 22, 1936.)



## IV. LEGISLATION

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

RELATING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SLUM-CLEARANCE AND LOW-RENT HOUSING PROGRAM.

S. 4424            Bill Establishing a "U. S. Housing Authority" --  
                   providing revolving fund for slum-clearance  
 (H. R. 12164     and low-rent housing projects, and lump sum  
                   Comp.Bill)     payments in lieu of taxes.

Introduced by Senator Wagner, April 3, 1936.  
 Referred to the Committee on Education and  
 Labor. (Companion bill, H. R. 12164, intro-  
 duced by Mr. Ellenborgsen, and referred to  
 the Committee on Banking and Currency.)

CREATION OF AUTHORITY. The bill provides for the  
 creation of a corporation of perpetual duration to be  
 known as the U. S. Housing Authority, which would be an  
agency and instrumentality of the U. S.

PURPOSE. Its policy, based on the general welfare  
 clause of the Constitution, is to assist States and their  
 political subdivisions to alleviate unemployment and remedy  
 unsafe and insanitary housing conditions, and relieve the  
 acute shortage of suitable dwellings for families of low  
 income.

ADMINISTRATION AND CAPITAL STOCK. Administration of  
 the Authority would be under the supervision of a board of  
directors of 5 members, of which the Secretary of the Interior  
 would be a member ex officio. Capital stock of one million  
 dollars, to be subscribed by the United States, is authorized.

PRINCIPAL METHOD EMPLOYED - LOANS AND GRANTS TO STATES, ETC.  
 The Act provides for the execution of low-rent housing and  
slum-clearance projects through the medium of grants and loans  
to any public housing agency to assist the development, acqui-  
 sition, or administration of any low-rent housing project by  
 such agency. The Authority shall determine the interest rate  
and period (not to exceed 60 years) of Federal loans to State  
or local housing authorities.



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

Loans and grants are to be made to public housing agencies and loans only to limited profit housing agencies, which loans shall be limited to not more than 25 million dollars in any one fiscal year and are not to exceed 85 per cent of the development or acquisition cost of the project involved and bear interest at not less than the average interest rate paid by the U. S. on its bonded indebtedness.

Federal grants, to supplement the loans in the case of public housing agencies, are not to exceed 45 per cent of the development and acquisition costs of a project.

SUBSIDIARY METHOD - DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS. Section 11 authorizes the Authority itself to develop and administer low-rent housing and slum-clearance demonstration projects in order to demonstrate to localities the benefits to be derived therefrom. However, no such project may be commenced in any locality except with the advice and at the request of either the local governing body, a public housing agency, a public housing society representing families needing the project, or a local committee of representative and responsible citizens.

The Authority is given full powers of land acquisition and disposal. It is exempt from Section 355 R. S., which provides for title clearance by the Attorney General, but may, however, avail itself of the service of the Attorney General, especially where condemnation proceedings are necessary. Acquisition by the Federal Government would not impair the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the State over those lands.

The Authority is to sell (as soon as practicable) such demonstration projects only to public housing agencies. Pending sale, the Authority may lease any project in whole or part to a public housing agency or a public housing society or contract for administration of such project in whole or in part by any such agency. Returns to the U. S. Housing Authority, through such leases or contracts, would constitute a revolving fund exempt from the provisions of 40 U. S. C. A. 303 B, which provides that where the Government leases property it shall be for money consideration only and that the monies derived from



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

such rentals shall be deposited and covered into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts. The bill also provides that rents need not be fixed on the basis of a 100 per cent return to the Government. Sale of any low-rent housing project may be made at a price to equal at least 55 per cent of the development or acquisition cost, less allowance for depreciation. The amount of the excess development or acquisition cost over sales price is to be considered a grant.

LABOR AND CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS. Construction work in connection with the projects must be executed in accordance with Federal statutes providing for: (1) the payment of prevailing wages; (2) the prohibiting of wage kick-backs; (3) the execution of bid and performance bonds; (4) competitive bidding unless the aggregate involved is less than \$300.

TAX PROVISIONS. The property of the Authority shall be exempt from normal taxation, but provision is made for lump-sum payments in lieu of taxes.

PERSONNEL. Officers, attorneys, and experts are to be recruited without regard to Civil Service -- other employees are to be on a Civil Service status.

TRANSFER PROVISIONS. The bill provides for the transfer of the Housing Division of the FEA of PW at the expiration of 60 days from enactment of the statute, together with its funds, functions, property, and personnel.

The bill provides that the President may, in his discretion, transfer to the Authority, any other bureau or division of any department or agency of the Federal government that is engaged in low-rent housing or slum-clearance activities.

INSURANCE AND SUITS. The Authority may procure insurance against any loss in connection with its property and other assets (including mortgages). The Authority is empowered to sue and be sued in its own name, all suits to be brought in Federal courts, exceptions with consent of the Authority. Attorneys appointed by the Authority may, at the discretion of



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

the Authority appear for and represent the Authority in any case in court.

LOW-RENT MAINTENANCE. Provision is contained in section 14 to maintain the low-rent character of the housing projects in the event of breach of covenant, and the Authority retains the right to take possession, administer, and dispose of any low-rent housing project involved where such covenant to maintain its low-rent character is violated. In case of grant, the covenant is to run for 60 years; and, in case of loan, for a period equal to the maximum time allowed for repayment in full.

APPROPRIATION. There is authorized to be appropriated 51 million dollars for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1937, 75 million for 1938, and 100 million for the fiscal year 1939 and 1940. Provision is also made for loans to the Authority by the R. F. C. of not to exceed 100 million dollars, and the outstanding authorization of the R.F.C. is increased by the amount borrowed. In addition to loans from the R.F.C., the Authority is authorized to issue obligations, in the form of notes, bonds, or otherwise -- unconditionally guaranteed as to principal and interest by the U. S. (similar to the H.O.L.C. bonds) --which it may sell to obtain funds for the purposes of this act. The amount of such obligations would not exceed 100 million dollars on or after July 1, 1936, and an additional amount not to exceed 150 million dollars on or after July 1, 1937, and the same amount on or after July 1, 1938 and July 1, 1939.

REPORT. The Authority is to make annual reports to Congress of its operation.

The passage of this legislation would obviate the need for the George Bill, S. 3247, which has passed the Senate (March 27) and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

(Central Housing Committee - Legal Digest #13, April 8, 1936.)



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

Pending LegislationFederal Simplified Condemnation Procedure Bill - S.1943.

Aimed at simplifying the existing judicial condemnation procedure, which has tended to obstruct the Administration's slum-clearance and low-cost housing program, was introduced by Mr. Ashurst on February 20, 1935, referred to the Judiciary Committee on the same date, favorably reported out of Committee and passed by the Senate on May 28. Referred to the House Judiciary Committee on May 31, 1935, but has not been reported out of Committee.

The bill authorizes the Attorney General to institute condemnation proceedings in the following cases:

1. For land, easements, etc., desired directly by the United States - on request of any officer authorized by law to acquire real estate for any project or purpose authorized by Congress.
2. For land desired by any private or municipal corporation, or any State drainage district, or other public agency, in connection with a project authorized by Congress, or for donation to the United States - on request of the Federal officer charged with administration of the law authorizing such Federal project or purpose - and his certification that such land is "necessary or desirable" in connection with such project, etc. (costs and expenses to be secured before commencement of proceedings, and paid, together with the award, by the corporation or agency).

Such proceedings are against the land, and may be commenced by filing petition and giving notice to the party in possession, or last owner of record - mortgages and other lienholders to be notified of the commencement of suit "as the court may direct". Parties notified and failing to appear may be represented by an attorney appointed by the master, and are bound by decree thereafter rendered. Decrees



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

Pending Legislation

are valid as against defendants served with notice, though others are not notified.

The United States may take possession and expend moneys on improvements in advance of final judgment, upon making provision for payment to parties entitled - date of delivery to be specified in court order evidencing such vesting of possession. Any improvements made are removable by the United States on dismissal of proceedings.

Report of special master may be approved, modified, or set aside; if set aside, another master is to be at once appointed. If damages reported and approved by the court are not satisfactory to the acquiring officer, proceedings may be dismissed without prejudice (subject, if United States is in possession, to payment of damages occasioned thereby).

Certified copy of decree is to be recorded in proper office of the political subdivision in which the land is situated; and is prima facie evidence of regularity of proceedings.

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Federal Public Housing Act of 1936 - H. R. 10503.

This bill, which provides for the establishment of a Division of Housing in the Department of Interior under the supervision of a Director to be appointed by the President and which empowers the Director to prepare and execute a long-range slum-clearance and low-rent public housing program for the United States, was introduced by Mr. Kennedy of New York on January 23, 1936, and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. This bill is similar to H. R. 10386 which was summarized in January Digest.

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H. R. 10551, which provides that the United States shall not acquire exclusive jurisdiction over real property used in Federal low-cost housing or slum-clearance projects and that the civil rights of the occupants shall remain unimpaired, was introduced to facilitate the PWA Housing Division's low-cost housing program by Mr. Healey January 23, 1936, and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. This bill authorizes the Federal Administrator of Public Works:



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

Pending Legislation

1. To make agreements with states (or political subdivisions thereof) for payment by the United States of certain sums in lieu of taxes on these projects, the amount to be based on cost of public or municipal service supplied (less benefits derived by the state therefrom) not to exceed 5% of gross annual rentals or the amount of real property tax previously levied on the site by the state or its subdivision;

2. To fix rents at a rate low enough to make project available to persons who are unable to pay sufficient rents, to induce private enterprise to supply adequate, safe and sanitary housing - even though such rates will not make the project self-liquidating;

3. To sell or lease such projects to public bodies for similar purposes even at prices below construction cost.

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RELATING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SLUM-CLEARANCE AND LOW-COST HOUSING PROGRAM.

S. 3247 Bill Providing Revolving Fund for Slum Clearance and Low-Cost Housing Projects, and Lump Sum Payments in Lieu of Taxes.

Introduced by Senator George on July 12, 1935, and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Reported by Senate Committee March 16, 1936, S. Rep. 1693  
Passed Senate, March 27, 1936, with Committee amendment clarifying State Criminal and Civil jurisdiction.

Seeks to amend Sec. 203 (a) of Title II of NRA to make available funds appropriated thereunder to provide payment for operation and maintenance (including insurance) of any project for slum clearance or low-cost housing (whether constructed or financed under this title or pursuant to the ERA Act of 1935) and would make available any moneys received from any lease or otherwise accruing from such projects for the purposes mentioned.

It would exempt such moneys received from the provisions of Sec. 321 of the Legislative Appropriation Act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933 (47 Stat. 382, 412), thereby making it unnecessary to impound such sums in miscellaneous receipts of the Treasury, and in effect constituting a revolving fund.



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

Pending Legislation

The bill would include as an authorized program under said Sec. 203 (a) the maintenance and operation of any project for slum clearance or low-cost housing and the payment as operating expense lump sums in lieu of taxes to states, counties and municipalities, etc., in the discretion of the Administrator. It would permit the Administrator of PWA to dedicate streets, alleys and parks for public use and grant easements.

The acquisition of such property by the Administrator is not to be construed as granting exclusive jurisdiction to the United States and the civil rights under local law of the tenants of such properties shall remain unimpaired. Jurisdiction over any such properties heretofore or hereafter acquired is hereby ceded back to the respective states in which such properties are or may be located.

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ENDORSEMENT: New York City Housing Authority's endorsement of the Wagner-Ellengorgen Housing Bill was referred to Senate Committee on Education and Labor, April 20, 1936.



## LEGISLATION

Housing Digest

April, 1936

DECISIONS

EMINENT DOMAIN - LOW-RENT HOUSING - POWER OF AUTHORITY CREATED BY STATE - New York Municipal Housing Authorities Law, in Authorizing Authority to Condemn Land for Project Does Not Unconstitutionally Provide for the Taking of Private Property for Other Than a Public Use. First Court Decision on Right of State to Vest Power of Eminent Domain in Authorities Created by it for Slum-Clearance and Low-Rent Housing Purposes.

The New York Court of Appeals, the highest appellate tribunal of that State, in the case of New York City Housing Authority, etc., *y. Muller*, 3 U.S. Law Week 669-70, New York Times of March 18, held, on March 17, that the "Municipal Housing Authorities Act" of the State of New York (Laws 1934, Ch.4), was not unconstitutional in so far as it empowered an authority created under the Act to exercise the power of eminent domain for the purpose of acquiring land needed for a low-rent housing project.

The action was brought by Andrew and Rosa Muller, owners of old-law tenements at 130 and 132 Third Avenue, New York City. They objected to the city's taking over the property for slum-clearance purposes. They appealed from a final order of the New York County Supreme Court, Justice Charles B. McLaughlin presiding, which confirmed the report of the commissioners of appraisal December.17. They also brought up for review a judgment and order dated May 15, 1935, which granted the application of the Housing Authority to condemn the property owned by the Mullers and which appointed commissioners of appraisal to determine the compensation to be paid to the owners.

In the opinion of the court, written by Judge Leonard C. Crouch (concurring in by the other judges except Judge Edward R. Finch, who, while joining in the final decision, did not concur in the prevailing opinion, and Judge John F. O'Brien, who dissented from the majority opinion), it was held that the condemnation did not constitute, as the tenement-owners contended, a taking of private property for a private use in violation of the State Constitution and the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution.



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

Decisions

The court said that, "Nothing is better settled than that the property of one individual cannot, without his consent, be devoted to the private use of another, even when there is an incidental or colorable benefit to the public." However, the court pointed out that this rule did not apply to the taking of land for the authority's project, which was described in its petition as "the clearance, replanning and reconstruction of part of an area of the City of New York, State of New York, wherein there exist . . . unsanitary and substandard conditions". The condemnation of land for such purpose, the court held, contemplates a "public" as distinguished from a "private" use of the land.

"The public evils, social and economic, of such conditions are unquestioned and unquestionable. Slum areas are the breeding places of disease which take toll not only from denizens, but, by spread, from the inhabitants of the entire city and State. Juvenile delinquency, crime and immorality are there born, find protection and flourish. Enormous economic loss results directly from the necessary expenditure of public funds to maintain health and hospital services for afflicted slum dwellers and to war against crime and immorality. Indirectly, there is an equally heavy capital loss and a diminishing return in taxes because of the areas blighted by the existence of the slums. Concededly, these are matters of State concern since they vitally affect the health, safety and welfare of the public."

The court pointed out that the right to exercise the power of taxation and the police power in dealing with such conditions had been upheld by the courts. "Now, in continuation of a battle, which, if not entirely lost, is far from won, the legislature has resorted to the last of the trinity of sovereign powers by giving a city agency the power of eminent domain".

The court said further that such a condemnation of private property as that involved in this case did not constitute a taking for a private use on the theory that the land was condemned to provide apartments to be rented to a class designated as "persons of low income" or to be leased or sold to limited-dividend corporations. The essential purpose of the statute, it was indicated, was not to benefit any class but to protect and safeguard the entire public from the menace of slums.



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

Decisions

The court then indicated that there was authority in other States to the effect that "private enterprise, curbed by restrictive legislation under the police power, is adequate and alone appropriate". However, that rule was rejected in the instant case. "Legislation merely restrictive in its nature has failed", the court said, "because the evil inheres not so much in this or that individual structure as in the character of a whole neighborhood of dilapidated and unsanitary structures." The cure was to be wrought, it was stated, not through the regulated ownership of the individual, but through the ownership and operation by, or under the direct control of, the public itself. This not "novel" legislation as "the modern city functions in the public interest as proprietor and operator of many activities formerly, and in some instances still, carried on by private enterprise".

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SLUM-CLEARANCE AND LOW-COST HOUSING - EMINENT DOMAIN - Administration has Dismissed Louisville Case in Supreme Court Testing Federal Government's Power to Condemn Private Property for Purposes of Slum-Clearance and Low-Cost Housing.

On motion made by Solicitor General Stanley Reed of the Department of Justice, the case of the United States v. Certain Lands in the City of Louisville, No. 433, testing the power of the Federal government to condemn private property for purposes of slum-clearance and low-cost housing, which had been set for argument before the Supreme Court on March 5. In a statement issued by the Department of Justice on the same day, explaining the action, it was said:

"In view of the long period of delay, caused by court proceedings, the funds originally allocated have been diverted to other projects not involved in litigation and where it was possible to go forward with the work promptly. Even if the cases had been considered by the court, and the theory of the Government sustained, it would not have been possible to proceed with either of the undertakings notwithstanding the confirmation of the legal right to use the power of eminent domain in connection therewith. It was concluded, therefore, that it was not proper to submit to the court for decision cases which, as a practical matter, had become moot."



## Legislation (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

Decisions

HOUSING SITE Suits to determine the right of the  
CASES WITHDRAWN: Federal government to condemn land  
for housing purposes, scheduled for  
hearing before the Supreme Court in March, were dismissed  
at the request of the Solicitor General.

Department of Justice, in asking for dismissal, explains  
that allocation of all available funds by P. W. A. had  
necessitated suspension of the Louisville project and  
that the government did not desire the property.

Critics have contended that the government feared an adverse  
ruling would injure the status of housing and other P.W.A.  
projects.

(Current News Engineering News-Record, March 12, 1936.)



## Legislation. (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936

A VOTE FOR HOUSING AND  
LABOR LAW:

Two tenement house laws were passed in New York State last year, to become operative in 1936 providing: (1) a toilet for every family; (2) fire-retarding of public halls and stairways. A moratorium is sought on these laws which are the result of years of work by many social agencies. These laws are intended to control and eliminate some of the greatest dangers and indecencies of our old-law tenements.

Helen Hall, director Henry Street Settlement, says:

"New low-cost housing on a much greater scale than is now being planned is needed. Women especially know that measured in terms of children's health and morals and family happiness, bad housing costs the community more than it will ever lose through low interest rates. Nothing can be more effective than the active effort of women for better housing."

(Independent Woman, February, 1936.)

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HOUSING AUTHORITIES: Two years ago a proposal to place PWA funds through housing authorities had to be shelved because only six states had adopted the necessary legislation. Now twenty states have provision for the formation of such bodies in cities within their boundaries. About thirty authorities exist in these twenty states.

The National Association of Housing Officials' investigation of twenty-four housing authorities revealed that their members represented eighteen diversified professions. This disproves any accusation that such bodies are dominated by social workers or by any other group.

(Architectural Forum, February, 1936.)



## V. FINANCE

Housing Digest

April, 1936

HOUSING AT THE CROSSROADS: Thrusting aside the Wagner and Ellenbogen bills, Mr. Arthur Holden claims to have found a constitutional means of executing a National Housing Program in Paragraph 5, Section 8, Article I, which delegates to Congress the power "to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin". He contends that "through intelligent exercise of the monetary control there is vested in Congress a power adequate to accelerate or to retard the flow of credit for housing and for rebuilding and rehabilitation of undesirable sections of our cities."

The creation of an independent commission with broad powers of investigation, to be known perhaps as the Real Properties Commission, is recommended. Duties would be:

- (1) Coordination of the nation's long-term credit mechanism; investigation of real property credit structure and proportion of credit invested in real property as compared to other uses.
- (2) Report regularly upon condition of real property, earnings, vacancies, taxable values and cost of administration.
- (3) Appropriation and allotments to the states - similar to functions now exercised by Housing Division, PWA, but with emphasis on planning and promotion of activity within the states rather than in details of construction.
- (4) Coordination of existing emergency financing agencies- HOLC, RFC, PWA, etc.
- (5) Preparation of a program for periods of emergency whereby differential between rent and ability to pay would be met by some form of rental subsidy.

(Survey Graphic, February, 1936.)



## Finance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

MORTGAGES START MOVING: From the present low of \$17,500,000,000 in home-mortgage indebtedness, the tide has already begun to turn. The reduction is \$4,300,000,000 from the level of 1932. Of this amount, \$1,500,000,000 is accounted for by shrinkage due to foreclosures; \$3,000,000,000 due to reduction in face value; and probably around \$1,000,000,000 due to the paying off of indebtedness during America's worst years.

Marc A. Rose deduces from these figures that we are on our way out of the depression, and says that America will probably build twice as many homes this year as last.

The United States Building and Loan League - which organization financed 7,063,000 houses from 1901 to 1934 - states that credit is flowing into home financing, but that the good cheap house is not yet in sight. The average house with lot is being built to sell at \$5,000. The \$2,500 house and lot does not yet exist, so the biggest market is still untouched.

(Today, March 14, 1936.)

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NEW METHOD OF SUBSIDY: Difficulties in agreeing upon a method of subsidy for public housing seem to have been overcome in a plan which accepts the land plus tax exemption as the contribution of the local housing authorities, and relieves the federal government of having to pay any money down. In cases where rents fail to cover varying costs, the deficit would be met by the federal government. This contribution, at the rate of three or four dollars a room per month, is estimated as roughly equivalent to the local contribution in the form of tax exemption.

(Editorial, Engineering News-Record, March 19, 1936.)



## Finance (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

EXEMPTION OF HOMESTEADS  
FROM TAXES:

The demand for exemption of all small homesteads from taxation has been spreading through the nation.

Loss of their homes through inability to meet taxes has been responsible for the national movement to defend the home.

Civic Research Institute of Kansas has compiled the laws and amendments in the various states in which homestead exemption is now effective. Six states: Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Texas and West Virginia have such provisions; two other states, New Mexico and Oklahoma, have approved a similar law but it has not yet become effective; and two other states, Utah and North Carolina, will vote on constitutional amendments for it this year. The exemption varies from one to five thousand dollars valuation. In some states exemption applies only to state taxes, and in others to all taxes. Both advantages and disadvantages of exemption are increased, and on the basis of data at hand, the Missouri application is closely analyzed.

(Civic Research Institute, Kansas City, Mo., December, 1935.)

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P. W. A.'S STAND ON  
EXTRA LABOR COSTS:

Any increase in wage rates resulting from strike will not warrant any increase in price paid to contractor.

P. W. A. takes stand against additional labor cost in the instance of strike in Cleveland housing projects. The Administrator has indicated that this attitude will prevail in other instances of strike.

(Current News, Engineering News-Record, March 19, 1936.)



## Finance (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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RENT REBATES IN ENGLAND: "In the past, housing subsidies have generally been attached to houses without regard to the means or the needs of the people who were to occupy them, so that the economic rents of all houses of the same type built under a particular Act have been automatically reduced by the same amount." However, under the Greenwood Act of 1930, local authorities were encouraged to use the subsidy so that rent relief was given only where it was needed. The Society is convinced that rent rebates must be extended over a much wider field if decent houses are to be provided to slum families at rentals within their means to pay.

Discussion of the following topics: (1) Where subsidies have failed; (2) a better use of subsidies; (3) the opportunity offered by the 1935 Act; (4) the fall in costs also helps; (5) how rent rebates can be applied. The procedure of a differential rent scheme and rent rebate schemes in operation are presented.

(The Family Endowment Society, London.)



## VI. STANDARDS AND MATERIALS

Housing Digest

April, 1936

FRENCH HOUSING: In the construction of housing projects designed by Beaudoin & Lods, Architects, a light steel frame carries moderate-size concrete wall and floor slabs which are precast at the site. Wall and floor units, window frames, balcony assemblies and cornice members, partition units and slabs of "Lap" are manufactured at field factories erected at the project for the period of construction.

Wells Bennett describes briefly the assemblage of this fabricated material at the Bragneux and Drancy projects near Paris. Details of the installation utility fixture, and other installation are also discussed at length.

(Products and Practice in THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM,  
February, 1936.)

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TECHNIQUE OF HOUSING Only 9 per cent of Rural District  
THE OLD: Councils have built specially for  
the old, 14 per cent of the Urban  
District Councils and 31 per cent of Municipal Corporations.

Housing societies are becoming interested in the matter of providing suitable dwellings for elderly couples and solitary older people of small means. Their efforts are very small in comparison to the need.

Olive Matthews outlines a scheme for adequately housing older people, using five types of dwellings. She gives construction details for making the homes comfortable, convenient, sanitary, and easy to care for.

(Journal of Royal Institute of British Architects, London,  
March 7, 1936.)



## Standards and Materials (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

GLASGOW'S 82,000                      A survey of housing in Glasgow  
OVER-CROWDED FAMILIES:        made under the Housing (Scotland)  
    Act shows 262,896 families living  
 in 257,421 homes. Of these families, 82,109 or 31.2 were  
 found to be overcrowded because of size of the family.

In 1,062 one-apartment houses, overcrowding was due  
 to mixing of sexes.

51% of families in one-apartment houses were overcrowded.

41.9% of families in two-apartment houses "        "

17.3% "        "        " three-apartment "        "

Dr. McGregor, Medical Health Officer, in his report to  
 the Glasgow City Council says: "The survey has enabled the  
 housing conditions prevailing in the smaller houses of the  
 city to be accurately ascertained. The statute aims at se-  
 curing ultimately that houses will not be occupied in  
 excess of a permissible number of persons estimated ac-  
 cording to the size of the house and its internal measure-  
 ments. It is obvious that the principal barrier is the  
 deficiency of houses of appropriate size. As the erection  
 of larger houses progresses, there will be an increasing  
 surplus of smaller houses, which in turn raises the question  
 of policy towards existing houses and built-up areas."

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer,  
 London, February 14, 1936.)



## Standards and Materials (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING STANDARDS and  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES:North and Northwestern Branch  
of the Incorporated Society of  
Auctioneers and Landed Property

Agents discuss the degradation of housing standards.

Sir Harold Belman states: "The dwellings in which a large part of the country's population have been rehoused in the past 15 years represent considerable improvements in standards of accommodation for occupiers." Since a considerable section of this accommodation is below the current standards which public opinion regards as satisfactory, he suggests cooperation of building societies with any appropriate agency having for its purpose enforcement of building standards and preservation of the amenities. Pressure could be brought to bear on careless builders by making mortgage accommodation difficult. Competition would then force the bad builder to mend his ways.

(Editorial, The Surveyor (London), March 6, 1936.)

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A LOOK AT PREFABRICATED  
HOUSES:

Prefabricated houses have been hailed as a means of bringing us out of the depression. They are not yet popular, nor has their practicability been proven.

Kathryn L. Greene says that in order to accommodate the wage-earning class for whom they are intended, they must be produced at a lower price, and financed by savings banks and building and loan associations.

Designs permit units of from four rooms and bath to eight rooms and bath. They are planned for comfort and simplicity of living, but do not permit of much originality or variation in design. Air-conditioning, heating, electrical and mechanical devices are provided, but basements are eliminated.

(American Building & Association News - March, 1936.)



## Standards and Materials (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

LACK OF LIGHT AND AIR      Failure to recognize the economic  
BLIGHTS HOUSING VALUE:      value of light and air have been  
    the greatest single error in the  
 production of housing units in the past. Producers were not  
 concerned with the problems of city planning and development  
 of desirable neighborhoods. They were concerned only in their  
 marketability. Social agencies and other groups fought for  
 light, air and sanitation. Eventually building laws re-  
 flected this pressure in improved minimum provisions. To the  
 speculative builder these immediately became maximum pro-  
 visions, and crowded tenements resulted.

William Stanley Parker, Fellow of the American Institute  
 of Architects, says: "In addition to light and air, the  
 needs of the family should also be considered. A con-  
 struction program necessitates keeping one's feet on the  
 ground . . . In doing this, local statistics require  
 careful study."

(Editorial, Architect & Engineer - January, 1936.)

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SMALL HOUSE DESIGN:      Federal housing agencies have  
    directed public attention to  
 home building and financing. Present trends indicate  
 continued activity through 1936.

Stephen F. Voorhes says: "Architects of the  
 country have devoted much time in recent years to  
 the many problems of their profession. New materials  
 and methods of construction have been studied. Ex-  
 periments have been conducted aiming toward an improved  
 technique in building that would parallel improvements  
 made in other lines of production. 1936 will see many  
 of these experiments put to a practical test in build-  
 ing."

(Architect and Engineer, February, 1936.)



## Standards and Materials (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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HEADLINES OF 1935: A review of significant events in the fields of engineering and construction for quick reference.

The review covers the most important construction and engineering news contained in the Engineering News-Record during 1935.

(Editorial, Engineering News-Record, February 6, 1936.)

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BUILDING OUTLOOK: 1935 was not a boom year in building, although certain branches, notably those connected with housing, reached a high level. Dependence of the industry on housing is declining, while industrial and commercial building are increasing. Activity in public housing will increase in 1936, for the peak of slum clearance under the 1930 Housing Act will be attained, the survey under the 1935 Act will be completed and building will proceed. There will be much alteration work by landlords in order to avoid criminal offense with regard to overcrowding.

(Architects Journal - London - January 9, 1936.)



## Standards and Materials (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

WHAT THEY ARE BUYING: Slum clearance and rehabilitation projects under low-cost housing and resettlement offer an opportunity to the retail merchant for a new line of patronage.

Esther Skaar Hansen observes that slum families moving into new quarters realize how shabby and inappropriate their old furniture is. Their need offers the retailer an opportunity to aid them intelligently in making selections to fit their improved conditions.

Rowena Steele, advisor to the tenants in First Houses finds that most of the families who are Italians, Czechoslovakians, Roumanians and Jews, like the dark oak and walnut furniture.

She finds that too much of the regular stock which is offered within their price limit consists of cheap imitations with garish decorations and of poor quality.

With a prospect of 6,000 families in New York City alone, soon to be rehoused, merchandising and manufacturing interests would do well to consider the need for substantial oak and walnut finished products for the low-price market.

(The Retailing, March 2, 1936.)

## VII. MANAGEMENT

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

FIRST FAMILIES: On December 3, 1935, the pioneer public housing project sponsored by the New York City Housing Authority was dedicated. The 120 families now living in First Houses compose a representative cross-section of Americans in need of adequate housing facilities. It is estimated that their average income is \$23.20 a week.

Mrs. May Lumsden, the manager of First Houses, tells the story of the selection of these tenants from the long waiting list and their reactions to the "conditions of tenancy".

The discussion of management problems which arose shortly after the opening of the project and the intelligent manner in which they are being solved should prove interesting and helpful to those expecting to handle future housing developments.

(Survey Graphic, February, 1936.)

HOUSING ADMINISTRATION Housing law, being the basis  
in ENGLAND: of housing administration,  
forms the foundation for a  
volume on the practical features of housing.

Stewart Swift, chief sanitary inspector of Oxford, supplies practical and legal information in a non-technical treatment of his subject. He reviews legislation on Housing from 1838 and discusses the subject of Housing Inspections, Clearance and Improvement Areas, Individual Unfit Houses, Rural Housing, Pests in relation to Housing, and Housing Records and Registers. He deals extensively with the effect of vermin upon household conditions, and the social consequences of failure to cope with pests heretofore.

(Published by Butterworth & Co. - London - 1935.)



## Management (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

NEW HOUSING ESTATES AND THEIR SOCIAL PROBLEMS: Common interests arising from proximity of residence manifest themselves in the function of community associations. They are becoming a powerful factor in English life, - through promoting the social and cultural aspects of community life.

Dr. Ernest Barker, professor of Political Science of the University of Cambridge is chairman of the New Estates Community Committee. Encouragement of wholesome community organizations enriches the lives of tenants and prevents housing estates from becoming merely dormitories.

Character of Population, Provision of Social Amenities, Community Centers, Relations with Local Authorities, are among the topics treated. Typical programs and a list of affiliated organizations are appended.

(Published by New Estates Community Committee, National Council Social Service, London, 1935.)

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GASSING VERMIN: Demonstration of disinfestation of household furniture and personal effects of tenants removed from unfit houses to new Council houses was witnessed by subcommittee of Urban District Council of Shipley. The furniture was treated with hydro-cyanic gas by a contractor with special knowledge of the work, and the bedding, clothing and soft goods were treated by means of a steam disinfector.

(W.D.C.Topics, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, March 6, 1936.)

## VIII. OPINION

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT: Opposite viewpoints relating to the right of government to regulate business are expressed by recognized leaders of American thought.

Harold L. Ickes, Federal Administrator of Public Works, expresses the New Deal view:-

"Government has never been an end in itself, but only a means to an end, that end being the highest possible welfare of the people." Mr. Ickes explains that it has always been a recognized right of this government to interfere with private industry. When business has something to gain, it asks government aid. It is only when a government, like the New Deal, seeks to restrain the strong from exploiting the weak, that private industry cries out for "less government in business".

Regulation under the New Deal is intended to protect the rights of the majority and to restrain the unscrupulous from taking unfair advantage. It does not seek regimentation, but rather a social order which will not leave great numbers to suffer want, in the midst of prosperity.

Harper Sibley, President, U. S. Chamber of Commerce, says business can devise ways to guard against natural risks, but cannot protect itself against artificial risks created by political action. Until the government removes these uncertainties by stating a definite policy and balancing the budget, business cannot fully resume its normal functions of creating employment and meeting the expenses of government.

He admits business is well on the road to recovery, but asserts this recovery is due to natural causes, not to artificial aids.

(New York Times Magazine, February 2, 1936.)



## Opinion

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

FIRST HOUSES  
CONSTRUCTION COSTS: In addition to providing adequate living quarters at low rental, First Houses was "also a first experiment in the use of relief labor for useful construction on a large scale".

Langdon W. Post says "Building costs resulting from the use of relief labor cannot be made a criterion of fair cost. The cost of relief labor is greatly in excess of the cost of equivalent labor supplied by contract. . . . under existing conditions relief labor has not been permitted to reach a high degree of efficiency."

Justification of this higher cost rests on the grounds of the permanent benefit from employing relief labor.

Contra Opinion is expressed by John F. St. George who blames excessive cost of First Homes upon the incompetency of the New York City Housing Authority. He also brands tenant selection of this project as unsocial. Claims that the financial qualifications of prospective tenants in a project which is 78% subsidized, tax exempt, and with all overhead paid, were unreasonable.

(Real Estate Record, January 18, 1936.)

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CONGESTION IN SCOTLAND: Available statistics show that Scotland is the worst housed country in Europe.

Mr. James Maxton, M. P., in criticizing Scotland's overcrowding says:- "The best area in Scotland from the point of view of overcrowding is worse than the worst area in England." He urges educators to realize that children cannot do their best work during school hours if they have to spend the rest of their lives in existing housing conditions.

(The Builder, London, January 3, 1936.)

## Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

AN EXPERIMENT "Hillside Homes is an excellent illustration of the ability of private business to march hand in hand with State and Federal government in socially desirable ventures."

IN LIVING:

--Gov. Herbert H. Lehman, of New York.

Julia Chandler sketches the history of the Hillside Homes project from the time when Clarence S. Stein, architect, conceived the plan of a complete, integrated community within the large framework of the city to accommodate people of moderate incomes. It became a reality through the generosity of Nathan Straus who sold the required land at an extremely low figure. Financing was done by the Public Works Administration under its original loan plan to Limited Dividend Corporations.

Hillside Homes contains 1,416 apartments. It is self sustaining, self-liquidating, but not tax-exempt. It operates under direct supervision of the State Board of Housing. Social activities of the community are directed by Miss Louise Blackman, "recreational consultant" for the project. She hopes to "help the hundreds of children living in Hillside Homes to a success in social contacts that will serve them through life, and to instill in them that sense of security that is born of domestic permanence and a personal share in community interests and activity."

(Christian Science Monitor, February 26, 1936.)

"DEAD END" "That graphic play, Dead End, a  
DRAMA OF THE SLUMS: Broadway success this season, ironically shows society, through its police, ridding itself of one gangster even while, in the same block, it is manufacturing scores of others. Most of our gunmen are bred in the slums; sent to 'reformatories', they are often only hardened in crime. This is a big problem; what can one man do?"

(One Man Power, Reader's Digest, March 1936.)



## Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

A LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY: Dropping of the Supreme Court condemnation suits by the Federal government is seen as another step toward decentralization of slum clearance.

"Acknowledgment that low-cost housing is a local matter does not, however, assure any low-cost housing. Cities must decide whether they favor public housing as a policy. They have before them the demonstrated inability of private business to cope with slum-clearance housing, the shameful procrastination of slum-building owners to provide even a minimum of fire safety or sanitation, and their disposition to fight any attempt to bring about improved conditions, as is now being done in New York. The problem of low-cost housing and slum clearance is, at any rate, now on the municipal doorstep, and soon it will be apparent whether any progress is in prospect or whether the sore will be allowed to fester further."

(Editorial, Engineering News-Record, March 12, 1936.)

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"Peter Grimm, of New York, was called to Washington to coordinate the 52 agencies of government concerned with housing programs. Mr. Grimm's office made the total 53. Now he has resigned, leaving 52. This is sometimes called progress."

(Forecasts and Reviews, Today, March 28, 1936.)

## Opinion (Continued)

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Housing Digest
April, 1936.

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GOVERNMENT AID OR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE? To determine the probable direction of Government activity in low-cost housing, 500 persons well-informed on the subject, were quizzed by The American City in collaboration with The Architectural Forum.

A sample questionnaire indicates the returns by 137 individuals amplified by some of the pertinent comments, selected as typical.

(The Architectural Forum, February, 1936)

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ROOSEVELT'S BIGGEST FAILURE: President Roosevelt is accused of failure to support the efforts of Senator Wagner or Representative Ellenbogen to obtain congressional action on a permanent housing program.

Declaring strongly for a permanent federal public-housing authority independent of existing departments, the writer quotes Evans Clark of the New York City Housing Authority in his attack upon the Administration's Housing activities.

(Editorial, The New Republic, February 19, 1936.)



## Opinion (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HIGH HOPES FOR                      On April 3, 1936, Senator Wagner  
LOW-COST HOUSING:                introduced S.4424, a housing bill  
intended to continue government sub-  
sidy of slum clearance and low-cost housing.

Albert H. Jenkins claims the real estate interests will exert strenuous opposition to the bill. Senator Wagner has sponsored the effort to provide cheap, decent housing for families earning less than \$1,500 a year. He claims private industry can only build six million of the fourteen million dwellings required in the next ten years.

(Railway Conductor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa - February, 1936.)

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ZONING ROUND TABLE - ONE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES:

Edward M. Bassett discusses the advantages of single owned homes over apartments for children in developing the new citizenship. He contends that the new apartments built in New York with federal money, increase the rate of population per unit area two to four times, and are too expensive for the very poor for whom they were originally intended.

(Planning & Civic Comment. Oct.-Dec. 1935.)

## Opinion (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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HOUSING PROGRESS  
(SCOTLAND):Slum clearance has not created  
fresh slums.

John E. Highton, Secretary to Department of Health for Scotland, in a paper entitled "Housing and Social Welfare" maintains that fully ninety per cent of the tenants from slum areas reacted immediately to their new environment. If the best results are to be obtained, there should stand between the local authority and the tenant some intermediary who "understands his weaknesses and prejudices, who can deal sympathetically with his troubles and who can influence him to appreciate the new standards expected of him in his new home."

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer - London - March 6, 1936.)



## IX. RURAL REHABILITATION

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

GREEN-BELT TOWNS FOR Two methods are offered to solve  
THE MACHINE AGE: the housing and planning problem:-

1. Replanning existing cities and providing new housing communities within them.
2. Decentralizing by establishing new garden cities or satellite towns.

Albert Mayer says that growth of suburbs proves desire for decentralization. The garden city attempts to retain in urban-rural communities the theoretical advantage of the suburb.

By planning for ultimate population, streets, parks, playgrounds, residential areas, can all be provided on an adequate basis for pleasant living. Ideal density of dwellings is from five to ten dwellings per acre. Surrounding this should be a "green belt",-land which is left in its natural wooded or meadow state, which may be cultivated as truck gardens.

English garden cities of Welwyn, Letchworth and Becontree near London and the German cities of Praunheim, Roemerstadt and Westhausen are cited as examples. Radburn, New Jersey, is America's nearest approach to the European garden cities.

Resettlement Administration is building four green-belt towns; Bound Brook, New York; Beltsville, near Washington, D. C; Mount Healthy near Cincinnati, and one near Milwaukee. This new method of housing can "not only accomplish rehousing in an inherently economical way; it opens a way of life that is pregnant of possibilities."

(New York Times Magazine, February 2, 1936.)

## Rural (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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RURAL HOUSING: Annual report of the Minister of Health presents interesting figures relating to rural housing. Some houses originally scheduled for demolition can be satisfactorily reconditioned. In areas where cottages have been substantially built, reconditioning has sufficed in a great proportion of cases. In increasing numbers, houses are being built without subsidy, both by local authorities and by private enterprise. The number of houses so built in the last year was 53,742. The total number of houses built in rural districts since the armistice is reported at 601,760, of which 363,500 were built without state assistance.

(Editorial, The Surveyor (London), January 31, 1936.)



## X. MISCELLANEOUS

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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NO MEAN CITY: With gangster terrorism as its "leitmotif", the story of Glasgow's slums appears in a novel of gripping intensity.

Alexander McArthur, presents the sordid details of slum life in the meanest districts of Gorbals, in Glasgow, Scotland. First-hand knowledge acquired during five years of depression experience permits his vivid portrayal of characters who face the daily struggle of a hopeless existence.

Placed in the period of 1921-1930, the story describes unemployment conditions, brought on by the depression, but clearly pictures the terrible housing conditions which Scotland has permitted to exist for more than a century.

The workers of the Scotch industrial districts are the pegs on whom are hung the garments of the volume. The filth, disease, vermin and immorality of congested living dress the book. But its main theme is gangsterism, why it develops, how it thrives and where it leads.

Through the lives of three couples, born and reared in the tenements, the story shows the rough, barren home life and the most degrading physical surroundings under which people live, breed and die, no better than animals. A few individuals make a desperate struggle to lift themselves out of the vulgar surroundings, but through sheer circumstance are drawn again into the vortex of the slum, only to be engulfed by its horrors. The law stands by helpless and civilization does not yet touch the problem.

(No Mean City, Published by Longmans, Green and Company.)

## Miscellaneous (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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THE NATIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM: Though we were probably over-built in 1930, family increases, obsolescence and new construction scarcity, have been factors causing the housing deficit which is variously estimated at from one to two million family dwelling units.

John W. Brabner-Smith and V. Joyce Brabner-Smith say it is fortunate that social problems and the economic aspects of housing are closely related. The fact that one third of the wage earners of the country do not earn enough money to afford decent housing would indicate the necessity for governmental participation by subsidy. Efforts by local authorities have been limited although a number of states have adopted housing laws similar to the State Housing Board Laws of New York State. The burden of financing and of managing must continue to be borne for some time by the national government.

The government housing program is classified according to financial aid to limited dividend corporations, PWA housing financed and built by the government, and the rural and suburban work of the Resettlement Administration.

The furnishing of public funds for housing and the condemnation of properties for slum clearance and housing projects by the national government "are social questions involving one of the most serious constitutional interpretations ever presented to the Supreme Court - the extent of the power of the Congress to appropriate public funds and to control their disposition." Our higher tribunal may soon be forced to decide this question after one hundred and fifty years of increasingly liberal interpretations by the legislative and executive departments of our national government.

(Illinois Law Review, January, 1935.)



## Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING THE NEW YORK  
TUBERCULAR:

Survey of housing conditions among 410 families under the care of the tuberculosis division of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor shows 68.9% of the families without steam heat, the majority of them depending upon the kitchen stove for warmth. Comparison with a similar study made in 1926 indicates living conditions of these families to be better today than ten years ago. According to the 1926 survey, 86.9% of the apartments had no heat, and only 33.1% had bathrooms. Today, 68.8% have bathrooms.

In ten years, the average apartment size has increased from 3.6 rooms per family to 4.1 rooms per family, and the average rental has decreased from \$6.67 per room to \$6.00 per room. Most of the families live in old-law tenements but six out of seven of the \$25 a month apartments have baths. Apartments renting for less than \$25 a month rarely have baths. The average number of persons per room in \$25 a month apartments is 1.14 in the Bronx and 1.10 persons per room in Manhattan. The "average per room", however, does not show the true picture of existing overcrowding because the figure is kept down by the fact that 150 of the 410 apartments studied have three persons or less per apartment.

Living conditions of the 410 families are typical of the half million families living in old-law tenements of New York. The AICP bulletin declares the organization will continue to promote adequate housing; it will provide funds when living conditions are unbearable and the family's income is not sufficient; it will teach better house-keeping methods; its nursing bureau will continue to watch families in the tenements and educate them in sound health practices, and it will help build up the health and morale of tenement children through fresh air camps, vocational guidance, nutrition and nursing service.

(Statistics and Registration Bureau, N. Y. Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor - New York City, February 7, 1936.)

## Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

PALACE TO SKYSCRAPER: Describing the evolution of  
A FIFTY-YEAR PLAN. American architecture from  
 1886 up to the present time.

H. I. Brock discusses the evolution of American architecture from 1886 up to the present time. He states that slum clearance projects seem to be opening the way to a new style, particularly because of the grouping of units.

Architecture of the future will be closely related to city planning and the orderly disposition of groups of buildings for various purposes, both in the city and in the country. "The federal housing projects present examples of such coordinated building. Modern slum clearance undertakings propose to substitute an orderly and decent group of dwellings for haphazard and insanitary accumulations of tenements."

(New York Times Magazine, February 16, 1936.)

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THE RECORD - A. H. S.: A pictorial bulletin prepared by the pupils of the Anne Hutchinson School, Public School 78, Bronx, with explanatory notes of furniture and furnishings suitable for present-day modern apartments at medium rentals. The plan of a four-room apartment in Hillside Homes was used for model.

(The Anne Hutchinson School, January, 1936.)



Miscellaneous (Continued)

THE HOUSING LOWDOWN: A building boom for this country is predicted. The acute shortage will be met by it. Whether to rebuild America or to meet the acute shortage first is the vital question.

Allie S. Freed, president of Paramount Motors, and chairman of a private group called the Committee for Economic Recovery, has proposed a program for the relief of the present housing shortage. His plan provides for 750,000 new homes over a period of ten years; assuming that houses can be built for the vast majority between \$2,500 and \$6,000. Mr. Freed proposes to set up a National Association of Home Builders within the Department of Commerce to promote factory pre-fabrication of parts, larger volume, etc. A sum of \$30,000,000 would be secured by underwriting forty home building companies and reducing mortgage rates.

Most trade associations concede that housing needed by families below the subsistence level should be provided by the government, and that tax exemption is the most that states or cities can contribute to housing for some time.

(Editorial, Business Week, February 1, 1935.)

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NATIONAL HOUSING CONFERENCE: During the summer of 1936 the National Housing and Town Planning Council will hold a series of regional housing and town planning conferences of local authorities at London, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bath, Exeter, Norwich, Caernarvon and Cardiff. The subjects to be considered are: the general housing situation; the progress of the anti-slum campaign, and the administration of the Housing Acts, 1925 and 1930; the overcrowding problem and the administration of the Housing Act, 1935; the Town and County Planning Act, 1932, and the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935.

(Editorial, Municipal Journal & Public Works Engineer, London, February 14, 1936.)

## Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

NOTES OF AN AMATEUR HOUSER: Impressions of Europe's low-rent housing projects formed while touring England, France, Czechoslovakia, Holland and Belgium.

B. Charney Vladeck mentions Plessis-Robinson near Paris, with 4000 apartments, in which six rooms with taxes, heat, light and water can be had for \$20 per month; Prague, with its two-room apartments renting for approximately one-sixth the tenants' earnings; and Hilversum, the new city for skilled workers of Amsterdam where the Blumen-Quartier is built on simple, cheerful and impressive lines.

Stepney, in famous London's East Side, was disappointing; room layouts are uneconomical and rentals comparatively high. In many places near London, housing is being built privately. Houses are small, construction and architecture commonplace, but within the environs of London housing can be bought for as low as \$2,500.

(Architecture, March, 1936.)

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POLICY IN REGARD TO FLATS: Discussions at the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers and the Town Planning Institute reached an agreement that the small house is preferable to the flat.

Among the twelve conclusions formulating the opinion were (a) the value of a private garden, (b) the disadvantages of long flights of stairs, especially to invalids and expectant mothers.

Evidence is not conclusive that tenants in central areas are employed in the immediate vicinity.

(Housing Notes, The Surveyor, (London) February 22, 1936.)



## Miscellaneous (Continued)

Housing Digest

April, 1936.

HOUSING NEWS ITEM (ENGLAND): English housing activities for December and January, 1935-1936, include:

The Building Industries National Council's Quarterly Survey indicating that the peak of the house building by private enterprise has been reached. If a serious falling off of total activity is to be avoided, local authorities must push forward with slum clearance measures for dealing with overcrowding.

The Glasgow Housing Census completed by the city assessor revealing that in some areas 40% of the houses are below desired standard. A total of 37,871 families live in one-room, and 112,743 families live in two rooms. Many families of ten or eleven persons occupy one room.

Housing Returns showing that the total number of houses built for the half year ending September 30, 1935, amount to 148,588. This compares with 160,138 for the corresponding period of the previous year. Private enterprise built 125,621 of these houses.

Slum Clearance and Rehousing Status: For the six months ending September 30, 1935, a total of 16,795 houses were demolished; 65,553 persons were displaced, and 9,103 houses were reconditioned.

The total number of houses under construction, September 30, 1935, was 40,093; March 31, 1935, 24,895 houses; September 30, 1934, 19,301 houses and March 31, 1934, 10,512.

House Production for three years: Year ending Sept. 30, 1933, local authority, 49,213, and private enterprise 169,100, or a total of 218,313 houses; September 30, 1934, local authority 53,101, and private enterprise 260,327, or a total of 313,428; and for year ending September 30, 1935, local authority 41,133, and private enterprise 275,232, or a total of 316,365 houses.

## Miscellaneous (Continued)

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Housing DigestApril, 1936.

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Estimated new dwellings completed by the London County Council, December 31, 1935, in block dwellings, approximately 2,340 flats, and on cottage estates, 2,010 houses and flats.

The Overcrowding Survey covering 6,000,000 houses provided employment for over 15,000 persons, and in London alone 1,300 enumerators were at work. In some districts, particularly in rural areas, lack of staff delayed the survey.

Liverpool Rehousing: A scheme is being considered for the redevelopment of a central area covering over 50 acres, and rehousing 10,000 persons. It includes the construction of a new road, five or possibly ten-story blocks of flats with lifts, and a two-acre playground with clubs for boys and girls. The public recreation space will be equivalent to 1.5 of an acre per 1,000 persons, or less than one square yard per person.

(Editorial, The Housing Centre, February 1, 1936.)



Appendix A

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Barnes, Alfred H.

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Fitch, Henry.

Doors. (Bulletin of the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, February 1936. p. 8-9.)

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Markwardt, L. J.

Strength and related properties of woods grown in the United States, by L. J. Markwardt and T. R. C. Wilson.

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Moller, Ch.

Experience in sound insulation. (Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Jan. 18, 1936. p. 291-98.)

Portland Cement Association.

Continuity in concrete building frames; practical analysis for vertical load and wind pressure. 57p.

Raley, Dorothy. A Century of Progress in Homes and Furnishings. 127p.

## NEW PERIODICALS

American Society of Planning Officials. News letter.

American Society of Women Housing Managers. Management News.

Industrial Arts Index.

Recreation.

Roads and Streets.

Western City.

## APPENDIX B - ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Exhibits

International Amphitheatre	May 4-9.
Federation of Women's Clubs, Atlantic City	May 7.
New York Museum of Modern Art	May 11 to end of month.
Texas Centennial	June 1-Nov. 30.
National Emergency Council -- Exhibits of Government Departments at Paterson, New Jersey,	May 27-30.
Chicago Centennial Celebration,	June 7-15
Great Lakes Exposition at Cleveland,	June 16-October
Democratic Convention, Philadelphia,	June 27.



OMISSION

Housing Digest for January carried on page 49 a reference to an article captioned "May Housing Management Be Your Forte?" in the December "Independent Woman".

The name of Mrs. Beatrice Rosahn, author, was unintentionally omitted, and belated credit is extended to her for her well-written article.