

rents, a surplus of perfectly sanitary houses whose defects are merely those of less convenience within and less sightliness without." Hence the pulling down of old dwellings will become a necessary part of housing policy, involving additional cost to the national scheme. Secondly, building costs will probably fall after a few years, which means that new houses of 1955-60 will be cheaper than the houses of 1945-50, and the latter will have to be further subsidised or stand empty because people will prefer the new and cheaper houses. "This may not show itself for a time, since the 1945-50 houses should be more attractive than the 1919-39 houses, but as the latter are also cheaper the dilemma will not be long delayed."

The allocation of subsidies is next discussed, a question whose insolubility is shown by the sentence: "If the maximum social benefit is to be provided at the lowest cost, the subsidies need to vary not only from place to place but also from tenant to tenant." The article complains of Mr. Bevan's silence on subsidy policy and makes the comment: "Even though Mr. Greenwood is in supreme charge of the housing programme its costs cannot be dismissed as a meaningless symbol." The definite suggestion made by the writer of the article, however, will not be a palatable one. It is that the new Dudley standard of 990 square feet as the minimum living space per house should be abandoned in favour of the pre-war three-bedroomed Tudor-Walters house of 600-700 square feet, admittedly a reactionary proposal, but "no more reactionary than to hold that half a loaf is better than no bread."

One final quotation: "The ordinary unskilled wage-earner has never in history been able to afford the economic rent of a new house." But the article does not go on to ask why this is so, nor why workers have to be satisfied with half a house as well as half a loaf. Nor does the article appear to recognise any relation between the rate of wages and the cost of building sites, and of the land from which building materials are procured. And though reference was made at the beginning to the factor of rates in the cost of house room, there is no recognition of the relation between the high cost of land and the system of levying rates on houses and leaving valuable unused land exempt from any contribution to the rates. Yet what a difference it would at once make if the houses for the lower paid groups were free of the 4s. a week rates, and if the cost of sites and materials were reduced by bringing into the market increased supplies of land and commodities by the operation of a tax and rate upon land values? The analysis always fails that leaves this out of its calculations.

D.J.J.O.

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