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WOMEN AND HOUSING

LABOUR SAVING IN THE HOME

REPORT
OF A
CONFERENCE OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

HELD AT THE "DAILY MAIL"
IDEAL HOME EXHIBITION, OLYMPIA,
LONDON, ON FEBRUARY 10th, 1920.

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THE GARDEN CITIES & TOWN PLANNING ASSOCIATION,
3, GRAY'S INN PLACE, GRAY'S INN, LONDON, W.C.1.

1920

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Incorporated, 1917.

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CONFERENCE
OF
WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS
ON
LABOUR SAVING IN THE HOME.

Delegates from all parts of the country attended a special conference of representatives of women's organisations arranged by the Garden Cities and Town-Planning Association, at the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, on Tuesday, February 10, 1920, and discussed with spirit and enthusiasm a variety of subjects concerning the improvement of the home.

MORNING SESSION.

The Lady Emmott presided at the morning session, and in opening the proceedings, said:—It is quite unnecessary for me to labour the point of the interest of women in the Housing Problem. (Hear, hear.) It must be a great disappointment to everyone that so little progress has been made in regard to Housing, even fifteen months

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after the Armistice. We all hoped that a great deal would have been done. I do not intend to go into the question of the slowness of building or the slackness of local authorities to make up their minds as to what they want. A great deal more ought to have been done before the circulars were sent out by the Local Government Board. I think it is a disgrace for any place to be in such a position that there are not enough houses for its inhabitants. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I am very glad that for the first time the Government has officially asked for the help of women. It is not that I think women are better qualified to deal with this question of Housing than men, but I do feel that to create a public opinion the help of both sexes is necessary. They both live in the house, and the woman, being in the home more than the man, must of necessity know what is required in the interior of the house. It is most necessary that women should have direct representation on all the Housing Committees throughout the Kingdom. (Applause.) It must be borne in mind that the plans that are being drawn up now will not end the Housing Problem. This is only the beginning of the movement in the direction of securing better conditions, and there will be ample opportunity for women to take their part in this important work in the future, even if they are not doing it now. But women are showing themselves to be alive to the situation, and therein lies hope. (Applause.)

The Lady Emmott then vacated the chair in favour of Mrs. Boyd Dawson.

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THE PLANNING OF THE HOME.

Discussion was then opened by Councillor Mrs. Barton (member of the Housing Advisory Council of the Ministry of Health), who, speaking on "The Planning of the Home," said:—I am glad that we are to talk this morning about the planning of the home rather than the planning of the house, because it seems to me that we are realising at once that houses should be homes. In the past they have not been homes. Houses have been built for the purpose of profit-making rather than for use, and we are here to consider the home from the point of view of usefulness, beauty, enjoyment, and rest. (Applause.)

In the planning of the home we should study the health of the inmates. This will mean building in such a way as to get the maximum amount of sunshine into all the rooms. The old-fashioned way of using the same plans for houses whatever the aspect has meant that houses on one side of the street get most sun in rooms that are probably used the least. There is no reason why we should go on building on those lines. We should build from the point of view of irregularity rather than regularity if we are to secure the maximum amount of sunshine in the rooms.

At the present time houses are being built twelve to the acre, and I at once desire to make protest against the amount of space given to the outside of houses and the small space inside. (Hear, hear, and applause.) We are finding now that this difficulty is becoming greater. The tendency is to cut down the space, even though it

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has been decided that there shall not be more than twelve houses to the acre. When they get in touch with their Housing Committees, women should press for more breathing space in the homes. Every home should be a sanatorium. (Hear, hear.) It should be possible for people to live healthy lives in their own homes rather than have to go to sanatoria to be made well, and then be sent back home to be made ill again. (Applause.)

We will next consider the internal arrangements. The minimum provision on the ground floor should be a parlour, a living-room, and a scullery. Many houses are put up containing a living-room and scullery, but I want to plead for a parlour. (Applause.) A parlour is necessary because working people are taking a broader outlook of life. They are reading more, their children are being better educated than formerly, men and women alike are taking a greater part in working-class organisations, and from every point of view the parlour is needed. If we are going to build houses we should do it whole-heartedly, and produce homes where life can be enjoyed. A great point is being made at the present time of the eight-hour day for work-people. That has not yet materialised for the woman in the home, but when houses are built on proper lines such a thing will be possible. (Applause.)

The living-room should be a living-room, and not the workshop of the home. The work of the house should be done in the scullery, and the wife and mother should be able to sit down with her family away from her utensils. This means that in the scullery there must be a cooking-stove. The placing of baths in sculleries is open to objection—(hear, hear)—and they should be taken out

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and a cooking-stove put there. There should be w.c. accommodation in every house, both upstairs and downstairs, and at least three bedrooms should be provided, with plenty of cupboard room. William Morris always urged that furniture should be built in the homes to fit them, and if that were done it would save the wear and tear of property in removal.

Houses must be built on a larger area, and while I am a great lover of gardens, and recognise their necessity, it is as necessary to have a good home as a garden. We must begin by getting rid of old ideas and conservative methods, and adopting new ones on the lines indicated, which will not only effect a considerable economy in labour, but promote generally the health, comfort, and happiness of the home. (Applause.)

Mrs. Langston (Women's Co-operative Guild, Richmond) asked what the workers would have to pay for the class of house suggested. They had been told in Richmond, she added, that it would be impossible to build houses with even two bedrooms for less than a rental of 16s. a week.

Mrs. Bannister heartily endorsed Mrs. Barton's remarks. She lived, said the speaker, in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, where there was much that was enjoyable, with plenty of space outside the houses. But she would like more space inside them. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Mrs. Shaw (Barnes) said there were plenty of houses built with all the modern conveniences described, but none were occupied by the working classes, for the rents for them were prohibitive. Every suggestion put forward

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would tend to increase the cost of the house, and she asked where the money was coming from. (Hear, hear.)

Lady Pinney said she came up from the depths of Dorset—(laughter)—and had fought for the provision of a parlour in workpeople's houses single-handed for a year and a half. She was almost beaten because they had to tell the women in the villages that the parlour would cost them 2s. a week extra rent, and the problem was how the women could pay for the parlour. (Hear, hear.) They talked about gas and electric light, but they could not even get coal. (Applause.)

Councillor Mrs. Clarke (Barking) expressed the opinion that the Women's Housing Committees were simply set up by the Government for the purpose of keeping the women quiet, for whenever their plans were put forward they were always turned down. The question was an economic one, and must be considered from that point of view.

Mrs. Munro (Women's Freedom League) suggested an airing cupboard and a boxroom were necessities in every working-class home. She also advocated the provision of a lavatory upstairs where water and slops could be emptied, thus preventing the carrying of utensils morning, noon, and night.

Another delegate pleaded from the body of the hall for a place for bicycles and perambulators in the new small houses about to be built.

Mrs. Barton, replying to questions, said that whenever anything was wanted for the great mass of the people they always came up against the question of cost. She was prepared to go forward with a good, generous housing

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scheme, and trust to the money coming along. (Applause.) The only way to bring down rents was to have a sufficient number of houses, as at present the whole matter was in the hands of the landlords.

"You have profiteering on a colossal scale," she added, "and the only way to kill that is to have plenty of houses. So my advice to you is to push forward with your housing schemes with all possible speed, and don't be frightened by the cost. If we can spend millions on war we can find money for providing houses for the people." (Loud applause.)

THE LABOUR-SAVING KITCHEN.

Mrs. C. S. Peel, O.B.E. (member of the Women's Housing Sub-Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction), next spoke on "The Labour-Saving Kitchen," illustrating her remarks by lantern-views. She said:

If we are all determined to have better things we shall get them. We must set to work to know what we want, and to make our wants known loudly. (Laughter and applause.) Demand creates supply. That is the object of such an exhibition as this. We can all go round to see what it is possible to have, and then bring influence to bear upon our Councils to secure what we require. There are many things to interest and instruct in the Exhibition. I consider the first prize *Daily Mail* house to be the cleverest piece of labour-saving I have ever seen. It is a middle-class house, for people keeping one domestic worker, and every woman should make a point of studying it.

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Every woman respects hard work when there is need for it, but it is foolish to do work that is not necessary. In the greater number of homes in this country from a third to a half of the work done is unnecessary. There is plenty of room for our brains to set to work to remedy this state of things. It is important, from this point of view, that if a woman's energies are wasted in doing unnecessary, hard, dirty and unpleasant work she is prevented from doing her best for her children. (Hear, hear and applause.)

Take your minds for a moment from the home to a modern, well-managed factory, where every movement of the worker is considered with a view to saving unnecessary labour. In a factory you cannot afford to waste human energy. That is the system we want applied to our homes. Do not misunderstand. We do not want to turn our homes into factories. Our homes must be homes—places of peace, contentment, and happiness; but because they are homes we do not want to waste our energies and work in them. Slides were then exhibited on the screen showing how time is wasted and labour increased in preparing meals. In the average middle-class home, Mrs. Peel explained, a girl has to walk about 350 ft. over the process of laying tea. This, by a proper arrangement of cupboards and dressers, could be reduced to 30 ft.

Another diagram showed that in the average middle-class house, dishes, plates, and other utensils to the weight of a ton and a third have to be carried upstairs and down again every week if meals are taken in an upper room, the staircase representing a steep hill 80 yds. long. This labour in the same way can be reduced by proper arrangements.

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Further slides showed the advantages over the ordinary open and dust-attracting dresser of a labour-saving dresser with closed drawers and receptacles for the storing of necessaries for cooking away from dust and dirt. In the kitchen were seen a gas-cooker and hot-water circulator, and with the advent of cheap electrical power, which it is hoped will result from the schemes now before the Government, electrical apparatus, it was explained, can be installed which will effect still further economies in cost of labour. When improvements are suggested, many people are apt to resent them, and to declare that the methods which were good enough for their fathers and mothers were good enough for them. They must beware of false notions. In the first place, these methods were not good enough for their fathers and mothers, and in the second place they were going to be worse for the present generation. I do not believe in letting things remain as they are, and that is why I want to see women representatives on every Housing Council in this country. (Applause.)

Replying to questions, Mrs. Peel said she would like to see the family washing go out of the house. However they did it, it was a messy, nasty, dirty job to have to wash clothes where they had their food, and she suggested as an alternative the establishment of some communal arrangement. With regard to the question of expense, money spent on the improvement of the home was well spent. If as a result of living under uncomfortable circumstances one's health suffered, far more money would be spent on doctor's bills and medicines. Every advantage should be taken of labour-saving devices. (Applause.)

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AFTERNOON SESSION.

Dr. Marion Phillips presided at the afternoon session, when the subjects discussed included "Central Heating," "Communal Arrangements," and "The Need for Women on Housing Committees." The Chairman said:—

I do not now propose to give you an address from the chair, because in the regrettable absence of Mrs. Sanderson Furniss (member of the Housing Advisory Council of the Ministry of Health), I shall be taking her place and shall be speaking later on the subject of "Communal Arrangements" standing in her name. I will now call upon Miss Marion Fitzgerald to speak. (Applause.)

CENTRAL HEATING AND AIR POLLUTION.

Miss Marion Fitzgerald, A.R.San.I. (Hon. Sec., Subcommittee Air Pollution Advisory Board, Manchester City Council), speaking on "Central Hot-Water Supply and Central Heating," said:

CENTRAL HOT-WATER SUPPLY AND CENTRAL HEATING.

Labour saving in the home is the keynote of this Conference; my part is to urge that the houses should be planned in such a way as to economise fuel and reduce the smoke from domestic chimneys as far as possible. One great contribution to the excessive housework performed by women is made by coalfires inside the house and a smoke-laden atmosphere outside. The time is now ripe and the opportunity has arrived for a new departure. House-building on a vast scale is going on, and we ought not to repeat

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in the new houses the bad features of the old ones. The recent experiences of shortage of coal and its high prices have gradually been preparing the public mind for a consideration of alternatives to coal fires and to the kitchen-range in particular.

It is indisputable that our methods of burning raw coal in open grates are wasteful and extravagant to the last degree. We lavishly pile up our grates with coal, consuming as we do so many valuable substances needed for the dyeing industry, for drugs and for disinfectants. If we burnt our coal scientifically—that is, turned into coke and gas, we should have two useful forms of fuel in the place of one, both of them smokeless, and the valuable by-products of coal would then be available for commercial uses instead of disappearing up the chimney. We burn in the United Kingdom some thirty-six million tons of coal every year for *domestic purposes only*. The town of Manchester alone uses nearly a million tons a year in this way. Experts assure us that half of this is wasted through bad methods; and the evil does not end there, because domestic smoke contributes largely to the total atmospheric pollution of our towns. The smoke from dwelling houses is of a tarry, sticky nature, and is even dirtier than the smoke from factory chimneys.

My first point is that the time has come for the kitchen range to be abolished altogether so far as the new houses are concerned, because it creates dirt and produces smoke, and is a cause of much unnecessary labour. And I also think that we ought, in addition, to aim at reducing coal fires to the minimum compatible with comfort and cheerfulness. I, personally, do not advocate giving up open fires

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altogether—at any rate in this country—but only a more sparing use of them.

If we are to do without kitchen ranges and depend less upon raw coal fires we must have alternatives, and this brings me to my second point which is that as houses are about to be built by thousands, we have a unique opportunity for experiments which can only be carried out on a communal scale. It is with such experiments that I intend to deal. Mrs. Peel has spoken of the advantages of doing all cooking by gas until such a time as electricity is generally available. I want to discuss the possibilities of central hot-water supplies and central heating as two more ways in which labour can be saved and smoke can be prevented. They were advocated by the Women's Housing Sub-Committee set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction, and are now being discussed widely, if tentatively, by women all over the country, and, what is more, experiments are already being tried in both directions.

Let us deal with central hot-water supply first, because that is undoubtedly popular, whereas central heating raises controversy.

In March, 1919, in view of the house-building about to begin on a large scale, the Manchester Air Pollution Advisory Board, which is a sub-committee of the City Council, issued a report advocating continuous hot-water supply to groups of houses from a central installation consuming coke as one means of lessening the amount of smoke from domestic chimneys, assuming that gas would be used for cooking. That report was circulated to all the large towns, the Ministry of Health, the Housing Commissioners, and others.

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In February of this year the Manchester City Council decided on a central hot-water supply to a thousand houses on the largest of its new estates; the installation to be capable of expansion to two thousand houses. Manchester is the first municipality* to try an experiment of this sort with groups of houses, though the Liverpool Corporation led the way several years ago by building some tenement dwellings with a constant supply of hot water from a boiler-house attached to each block.

The scheme may be described briefly as follows:—

There will be a central boiler-house from which the hot water will be conveyed in pipes, insulated so as to prevent loss of heat, to the sink, bath and lavatory-basin of each house. The temperature of the water will be about 150 degrees F., which is quite hot enough for washing up greasy utensils and too hot for a bath without the addition of cold water.

There is hardly any need to point out the advantages of having hot water constantly on tap—day and night—to an audience of women. In addition to the convenience, there will be real economy of coal, and therefore less smoke produced. Every house will have a gas-cooker and also a gas-copper (or boiler); there will, therefore, be no need to use any coal at all in warm weather, and there will be saving of coal at other times, because it will not be necessary to keep up large fires when baths are wanted or hot water for washing-up.

* Since the Conference was held the Salford Town Council has decided to supply central hot water to an estate of 700 houses.

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There is yet another advantage. There will be less waste of water through the preliminary running off of cold water from the taps. With a central hot-water supply there is forced circulation, and the water is always hot at the taps. It has been estimated that some 73,000,000 gallons of water are wasted in Manchester annually by this running off of cold water, and as Manchester gets the larger part of its water supply from the Lake District, that is a serious matter. Moreover, the cold water which we run off at the hot tap has been heated once, and has gone cold. It is calculated that these 73,000,000 gallons which we waste have been heated by the burning of 32,500 tons of fuel. Here is another example of the ways in which we waste fuel, and of our failure to recognise that heat is a valuable commodity and none of it should be wasted.

Now I am sure some anxious economist is waiting to ask when the discussion begins, "Won't all this cost a terrible amount of money?" I will try to meet that question at this point.

It is true that to build and equip a central boiler-house, and to convey hot water in pipes to a thousand houses, planned on garden-city lines, will involve a pretty heavy outlay. But do you know what it costs at present-day prices to fit up a house on the old-fashioned system with a kitchen-range, back-boiler, cylinder, and feed-tank all to itself, with all the builders' and plumbers' work which these involve? It costs about £50 a house, for the kind of houses that are now being built by local authorities. Now you see that if you save £50 per house by not having the old system, on 1,000 houses you get a nice round sum towards paying for your central installation. It is quite true that the

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central system, after you have allowed for the saving, will involve some additional cost probably between £20 and £25 per house. The Manchester City Architect estimates that the debt charges on the net additional cost per house would be met by the sum of 5½d. a week, or, if the scheme is for two thousand houses instead of one thousand, by 3d. a week, so that the difference between having to depend on a kitchen-range for hot water and having continuous hot water from a central installation works out at a few pence extra a week on the rent of each house. But that does not represent the full charge to be made for the hot-water supply, only the interest and sinking fund on the additional cost of the installation. The cost of fuel has to be allowed for and also labour—it is necessary to have a skilled man in charge and probably an assistant as well. It is estimated that fuel and labour will work out at about 9d. a week per house, making a total of 1s. 2d. That is to say, the hot-water supply will cost each week a little more than the price to-day of half a hundredweight of coal. I leave it to you to work out how many hundredweights of coal will be saved in the course of a year.

There is another interesting experiment of this kind, though not a municipal one, in the North of England. Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P. for Mossley, is building three hundred houses for workpeople employed at his works, and these houses as well as his own, which is quite close, are to be supplied with hot water from a central installation. I mention this to prove that central hot-water supplies have passed beyond the stage of a theory on paper and are actually a feature of housing schemes.

I have already inferred that there will be no kitchen-

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ranges in the Manchester houses, these being supplied with continuous hot water to the bath and sink. The living-rooms will have well-fireplaces, and the only ovens will be those in the gas cookers.

Are housewives prepared to do without the kitchen-range? Or do they cling to it in spite of the fact that it devours a large quantity of coal, pollutes the air with smoke, and causes a great deal of unnecessary labour? I have discussed the question at numerous meetings with the people best qualified to give an opinion—namely, those who do their own housework single-handed. (I purposely refrain from using the term "working-class people," because we do not know yet who are going to live in the houses that the local authorities are building, but we may be pretty sure that the majority of the tenants will not keep servants.) As the result of these discussions I am quite clear that the modern-minded women do not desire kitchen-ranges. Some say that they would not have them at any price if they could help it, and some—in Lancashire, too—have actually paid to have them taken out of their cottage living-rooms and replaced by parlour-grates. This being so, it seems a pity that this discredited apparatus should find a place in the new houses which are being built.

Those who still advocate kitchen-ranges, meaning the open Lancashire and Yorkshire range, not the closed kitchen-range of the South of England, for which nobody seems to have any special affection, do so chiefly on the ground that they dry clothing much more rapidly than a sitting-room grate when workmen come home wet. That is true, of course, especially if the open range is piled up with a great mass of coal. On this argument two comments

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may be made. First, clothing should, if possible, be dried slowly, not quickly; second, even if a kitchen-range has certain advantages for us personally, are we, as good citizens, justified in spoiling the air for our neighbours with smoke from our chimneys?

Let us now turn to the question of

CENTRAL HEATING,

by which is understood heating rooms by means of radiators. Central heating, in combination with a constant hot-water supply (all cooking being done by gas), would still further save the burning of coal, and consequently lessen the amount of smoke produced, because the fuel used would be mainly coke and gas, and only a minimum of raw coal would be consumed in domestic grates. Other advantages would be warmer, cleaner, and more easily worked houses. It is urged by experts that when a constant hot-water supply has been decided upon and a central boiler-house is being constructed, the next practical step is to run hot water through a second system of pipes to radiators in the houses. But while the idea of always having "hot water on tap" appeals to every housewife, the idea of heating rooms by means of radiators is not generally popular, except with the advanced few who realise that household drudgery must continue so long as coal fires are the rule.

Experiments with central heating for small houses have, however, begun of late, and they will be watched with great interest by all who are concerned with reducing women's labour in the home and lessening the smoke nuisance.

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The first experiment with central heating for cottages in this country was made by the Austin Motor Company in the houses built for their workpeople at Longbridge, near Birmingham. In this case each house has its own separate coke-fired installation, which heats the radiators and the domestic hot-water supply, and all cooking is done by gas.

At Swanpool, near Lincoln, a garden suburb is in course of erection by a public utility society, where the houses, 2,500 in all, will be heated and hot water supplied to the sinks and baths from a central installation; electricity is to be supplied for lighting and for cooking. Every room will have its small well-fireplace, so that coal fires can be used if needed in addition to the radiators. It is a splendidly courageous and intelligent experiment and a great step in the direction of that really civilised housing which should take the place of the badly-planned, ill-equipped structures of the past.

In this comparatively sunless climate of ours it is certain that people will not be willing to forego the use of radiant heat altogether, but, given the provision for open fires on occasion, centrally-heated houses ought not to be unpopular. There will be less labour in carrying coals and clearing up grates; the houses will be much cleaner, and they will be more efficiently warmed. On the present system one or, at most, two rooms only of a small house are warmed.

When, in addition to these obvious advantages of central heating, people realise that to depend entirely upon burning coal in open grates as the sole means of heating rooms is a wasteful as well as a smoke-producing process, they will, I think, be ready to reconsider their ways.

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The time may come when coal fires, except when required in very cold weather to supplement central heating, will be regarded as luxuries, permissible for sociable reasons when the family gathers together in the evening or when visitors are entertained, and on a level, let us say, with the chocolates and the cigarettes with which we regale our friends on convivial occasions.

COMMUNAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Dr. Marion Phillips followed with a brief address on "Communal Arrangements." She said:—

We recognise frankly that we are not going to get good communal arrangements made where you have old houses built on the old lines. What we suggest is some kind of co-operation in the new housing schemes. A proposal has been made for rationing rooms until there are enough houses for everybody, but that is a palliative of bad housing which is not likely to commend itself. No communal arrangements for better house management should be made at the expense of the privacy and completeness of the working woman's home.

Let us take, as a first point, therefore, that each family should have a house, for decency, privacy, and comfort. Next we must consider how to obtain further amenities. There must be proper cooking arrangements, and in regard to co-operation in the preparation of food I do not suggest this in place of, but as an addition to, the arrangements in the home. An enormous amount of time is occupied in marketing and the cooking of food, and we suggest that an extension of the National Kitchen movement whereby in every working-class district good food can be bought

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ready cooked would be an advantage. (Hear, hear.) The idea of the National Kitchen is that by this means food of good quality can be more cheaply purchased than privately for one's home because it is bought in large quantities and with an economy in cost.

With regard to Child Welfare, the Nursery School is the best means of lightening the working woman's toil and doing something for the child. Communal arrangements, it will be seen, have their importance on the social as well as the housing side. In a large number of industrial districts and agricultural areas, as well as in many mining villages, there is a complete absence of any form of social centre outside people's homes.

As part of any housing scheme there should be provided a public hall with library, including a children's library, and in the case of large areas, a theatre in addition, where elevating entertainments may be enjoyed by the people. (Applause.) What is desired is a communal hall run to meet the needs of the inhabitants from every point of view. The necessity for such institutions is as much felt in the crowded parts of towns as in rural areas, and they should be provided for in the establishment of every new housing district by the municipality. (Applause.)

Co-operative Holiday Homes are another necessity. There should be holiday homes for the children, and holiday homes for the mothers, in order that a mother might sometimes take a holiday away from the children, knowing perfectly well that the children will be safely looked after and enabled to enjoy a holiday on their own account. (Hear, hear.)

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In housing schemes we should recognise not only the immediate needs of the family, but endeavour to raise the level of life and provide amenities for improving the whole standard of civilisation. (Applause.)

WOMEN ON HOUSING COMMITTEES.

"The Need for Women on Housing Committees" was introduced by Miss Browning, of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, who said:—

One of the first efforts of the Government in securing the co-operation of women in the work of housing was to appoint a committee of women to advise them as to the kind of houses women wanted. Having done this with excellent results, the Government felt that their example should be followed, and they suggested to local authorities who had to deal with housing schemes that women's opinions should be taken on the matter, and women's help sought. The local authorities were advised to co-opt women on their Housing Committees, and also to seek the assistance of women on Advisory Committees.

The Government have done more than this. Last December they issued a circular to the authorities again urging them to seek the assistance of women. Up to this time, women's opinion was mainly asked as to the inside of the house, but now women's advice is also to be sought regarding the lay-out. (Hear, hear.) It is important that all women should be made aware of this circular, so that they may know what is being done on this question in their various localities.

The question arises how are we to obtain practical results? The only way to get what we want is for the voice

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of women to be heard all over the country. (Applause.) In going up and down the country my experience has been that women, generally speaking, do not know very much about this question, and are too patient—in fact they have a patience which ought not to belong to this country at all. (Laughter and applause.)

But we have other matters besides the interior of the house to consider, such as the lay-out plans and the question of open spaces, and gardens—indeed the whole range of questions involved in national housing schemes. Circular No. 40, which has been issued by the Government provides for the co-option of women on Housing Committees and Advisory Committees, which is done by the Council calling together representatives of every women's organisation in their area, such, for instance, as the Women's Co-operative Guild, the National Council of Women, and similar bodies, and requesting them to appoint a Women's Advisory Committee.

It is further proposed that plans of proposed houses should be exhibited at women's institutes before being sent to the Ministry of Health for final sanction. Now, that is a good thing, but it is not enough. The women in all the villages should have the privilege of appointing a Women's Committee if they so desire. (Hear, hear, and applause.) In cases where women are not invited to join local Housing Committees it should be possible for any group of women's associations to form a Committee themselves. Such a Committee could in many ways approach the Council, and invite them to take steps to get things done. Such a Committee may act as a go-between between the Council and the rate-payers, and may prove an effective driving force. (Hear,

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hear, and applause.) Such a Committee of women who will devote themselves to this question in a fervent spirit could do valuable work in the way of investigation and inquiry which the Council itself might not have time to do. Moreover, they could bring to the attention of the Council the new ideas and methods of which we have heard to-day.

The Government having given this lead, it is for us to take the matter up and see to it that in every town and village in the country we have a Women's Housing Committee. Women must organise and make their power and influence felt. What we need is to feel that as one strong united body the women in the country can move and get the housing schemes carried through as they know they should be carried through. (Applause.)

Miss Constance Cochrane (member of the Cambridgeshire County Council and Caxton and Arrington Rural District Council), who also spoke briefly on the subject, said that now women had secured the vote they were invested with considerable responsibility on the housing question. It was their duty to see that the houses that were to be built were suitable for them to bring up their children in. She criticised the Ministry of Health plans for houses in that the third bedroom was far too small. It should, at least, be large enough to accommodate a double bed. There should be women on every Housing Committee to attend to these matters, and she looked for the co-operation of women to help the men in planning houses. Women knew "where the shoe pinched," so to speak, and what was wanted in a house. One essential was a large larder, which should face the north, to avoid the sun getting on the food. Another was the position of the copper—whether it should be placed

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in the scullery or in a shed outside. Again, women often knew better than men where doors should be placed, and realised the need for cupboards and proper pegs. There were many other details on which women could give invaluable advice. If men would not listen to them, let them know that women would not return them at their next election. (Applause.)

Miss Browning, in reply to a question, said she agreed that women should have a voice in fixing the rents of municipal houses. This, she added, was another reason for the formation of Women's Committees, and to have them alive and alert. (Applause.)

A delegate from Basingstoke said that their town council was very sympathetic towards the housing question, and had drawn up plans of houses as the women desired—only to have the plans turned down again and again by the Ministry of Health. It was a disgrace and a shame, after trying to get these labour-saving houses, for their efforts to be frustrated by the Ministry of Health. (Hear, hear.)

A Voice: What we want is more women at the Ministry of Health. (Hear, hear.)

The conference then closed.

The Garden Cities and Town Planning Association

Founded 1899

Incorporated 1917

3, Gray's Inn Place, Gray's Inn, W.C. 1

THE Garden Cities and Town Planning Association is an educational body founded in 1899. It endeavours to secure the improvement of housing conditions, the proper planning of towns and the application of the garden city principle to the development of towns. The following are the main lines of the Association's policy:—

1. The establishment of garden cities on suitably chosen areas with a view to the relief of congestion and overcrowding in existing towns and the development of the resources of the country.
2. The development of existing small towns on the garden city principle where they are suitably placed for such extension.
3. The application of the garden city principle to existing large towns with the object of preventing their extension, except by the establishment of satellite garden cities separated from the main town by an adequate rural belt.
4. The improvement of village life and the development of agriculture by securing the better planning of villages and the close co-ordination of village and town life.
5. The good administration of the Housing and Town Planning Acts.

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Membership of the Association is open to architects, engineers, surveyors, officials and members of local authorities, and members of public utility societies, students of town planning, and all other persons interested in housing and town planning. The annual subscription is 10s. 6d., but subscriptions of larger amounts are invited to support the educational work that is done. Members are entitled to receive *The Garden Cities and Town Planning Magazine*, a sixpenny monthly review, which contains important contributions on housing, town planning and kindred subjects.

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