

THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

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House Not for Sale . . .

By Joanne M. Hansen

Head and Professor, Applied Art Department

There's Satisfaction in Ownership

THE President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership held in Washington, D. C., December 2 to 5, 1931, created wide interest, and was attended by over 3,000 citizens representing every state in the Union. Some readers of the Iowa Homemaker may have attended the conference, and a greater number may have heard the broadcast of the address of President Hoover at Constitution Hall.

According to the belief expressed by our President, "It should be possible in our country for any person of sound character and industrious habits to provide himself with adequate and suitable housing preferably to own his own home." With this in mind, he decided over a year ago to organize on a broad scale a thorough investigation and study of the many problems and phases of home building and home ownership. Private funds were made available for this conference. Such a large educational program necessarily meant the cooperation of many agencies and individuals. Months before the December conference a planning committee was appointed of which Honorable Robert P. Lamont, Secretary of Commerce, and the Honorable Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, were co-chairmen, and John M. Gries, executive secretary.

Approximately twenty representatives of volunteer organizations worked out a plan, and twenty-five committees were appointed to secure, discuss, weigh and organize available information in every

field of housing. Six correlating committees considered the aims and methods common to all. Able chairmen presided at meetings which were spirited, illuminating and intensely interesting. Committee members, research secretaries and assistants worked assiduously to learn

ing; Home Information Services and Standards, and Objectives. Articles will form appendices to the main subjects. The Correlating Committee in meetings took up Technological Development, Legislation and Administration, Research, and Education and Service.

One of the many interesting phases of the Conference was the exhibit of the Farm and Village Housing Committee. This included photographs and plans of farm and village homes from every section of the United States. Some were good and some poor, but they indicate the present status of housing design.

Since cutting the cost of building is one of the most important needs to more general home ownership, many possibilities were advanced, and research will

undoubtedly continue in this field. Three miniature models were shown to illustrate possibilities. One model was a charming Cap Cod Colonial cottage of siding, exemplifying a house that grows. The original house and additions are fine in proportion and design, and the grounds were well landscaped, which naturally add largely to the resultant beauty of a house. This model was shown by the National Lumber Association.

An entirely new departure from the traditional period styles in building such as the Colonial and English cottage were two models of farm houses to show construction of steel and factory made units, the latter three feet in width, the room height nine feet. The doors and stairway were three feet respectively. Rooms were in width and length necessarily

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present conditions, to assemble data and organize them into final form.

The committee's work covered the following subjects and subdivisions: City Planning and Zoning; Types of Dwellings; Fundamental Equipment; Design; Housing and the Community; Subdivision Layout; Kitchens and Other Work Centers; Large Scale Operations; Construction; Negro Housing; Organization Programs; Blighted Areas and Slums; Household Management; Taxation; Reconditioning; Remodeling and Modernizing; Relationship of Income and the Home; Utilities for Houses; Home Furnishing and Decoration; Industrial Decentralization and Housing; Landscape Planning and Planting; Finance; Farm and Village Housing; Business and Housing; Homemaking, Housing and Family Life; Home Ownership and Leas-

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based on the three feet unit. The wall one and one-half inches thick with its insulation would be as warm as a much thicker wall.

The investigations and models were made by Lawrence Kocher and Albert Frey, architects of New York, from requirements set up by the Committee of Farm and Village Housing of the Conference. The cost of the two models was \$1,500 and \$3,000 respectively, but each had the cubage of a house which under the prevalent types of construction would cost considerably more.

In order to secure adequate space for the average farm family, a dual use of rooms was made possible. The living room by means of a sliding partition could be converted into two bedrooms. A folding partition made it possible in one model to convert the dining room and living room into one room. The end of the living room in one house could be opened so as to form a screened-in living porch.

The exterior appearance of the smaller house was very simple, one block on top of another with the upper one placed so as to project over the lower block, thus forming a long narrow porch, below. A living room or sleeping porch on the second floor was formed by one end of the flat roof of the first story. Awnings were to be used to protect it when necessary.

The method of applying color to the exterior varied as widely as the type of structure. Red, yellow, blue and green were used on one house with change of color on either the first or second story or on the sides of the house.

It was interesting to watch the visitors study the models and to hear the many comments. Some saw possibilities for future progress, others were less tolerant. So it is with all new things, but progress will take place, and from new ventures in home building, great achievements may result—and achievements which will afford greater opportunities for home ownership.

The real problem of the conference will be to get the information to the people. Undoubtedly the Land Grant Colleges and libraries will be several of many agencies to undertake this task. The program is not alone for the present needs but for the next fifty years and longer. The present problem, and that of the immediate future resolves itself into one of maintaining and improving buildings now in existence. More effective arrangement, more adequate equipment and greater beautification are possible with a small expenditure if the budget allows. Much may be done by the family in cooperation with expert advice through such educational agencies as the Land Grant Colleges, the United

State Extension Service, the Department of Commerce, and Better Homes in America.

If everyone able to make some desirable improvement in the home would do so now, real assistance would result in

relieving the present unemployment, in raising the price of farm products, and in helping business and industry to recover prosperity, without which there can be no marked increase in home building and home ownership.

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