

GERMAN HOUSING

Systematic Efforts for Improving Homes of Working Classes.

Darmstadt, July 1. The workingman's rent in Germany is as high as it is in England. The ratio is set down in a blue book recently issued from Whitehall as 101 to 100, the local rates being included in the comparison. This result is a remarkable tribute to the progress made in Germany in rehousing the working people. During the last fifteen years the population of cities like Frankfurt-on-Main has doubled, and there have been rapid rises in the values of building sites. The rehousing of new centres of industry have been compressed into a short period, whereas in England these processes have occupied sixty or seventy years. If rents have been kept down to the British level when the towns have been overcrowded with workers and manufacturing has been increasing with extraordinary rapidity, it has been because housing ranks in importance with employment and insurance as a supreme object of social reform. Municipalities, state governments, philanthropic societies and building associations have striven one another in enlarging the housing accommodation of the working classes, and the landed estates of the towns and the resources of the various insurance societies have been drawn upon in financing building operations.

In an old-fashioned capital like Darmstadt, the home of Princess Alice and the Russian Empress, industrial progress has been less rapid than in the coal and iron belt of Westphalia or in the textile district of Saxony. Yet the population has run up during fifteen years from 57,000 to 90,000, and there is a new quarter where improved dwellings for the working people have been constructed. As the capital of the Grand Duchy of Hesse it has been the centre of a systematic movement for improving and cheapening the housing of industrious and thrifty workers. A state inspector of dwellings has his office in the town, and everything that is done in housing reform in a long circuit of prosperous cities is directed by him. There is a most rigorous system of compulsory police inspection of dwellings and lodging houses, and these are kept in sanitary condition at the expense of the owners. It was not long before the authorities discovered that the majority of working families were too large for the quarters occupied by them, and that measures must be adopted for building hundreds of dwellings in the towns within the borders of Hesse. Money has been advanced at low interest from the state treasury to communes, municipalities and building societies, and small houses have been provided at reasonable rents for the best class of workers. The arrangements for loans have to be made in the capital, and the plans for the cottages are filed in the offices of the State Inspector Bureau. There has been a marked improvement in the housing of the poor since the establishment of this well directed bureau.

Rents in these comfortable old German towns are lower than in other cities in the Rhine section. A single room costs from \$15 to \$25 a year, the rent falling as one goes from the old to the new quarter. Tenements or flats with two rooms and about \$45 a year in the town and \$30 to \$33. Improved dwellings with three bedrooms range from \$40 to \$60 in annual charges, according to locality, and the charges increase as rooms are added. These rents are lower than those in surrounding towns because the pressure of overpopulation has been less severe and the efforts for improved housing have been most systematic. Even with minimum payments and maximum efficiency of inspection the accommodation is meagre for the requirements of health, and from a sixth to a tenth of the earnings of a workman is expended on rent. In Frankfurt, Cologne or Berlin the proportion would be nearer a fourth or a fifth, but in those cities the growth of population has been abnormal and there has been continuous speculation in land values. The housing question, serious enough as it is, would have become unmanageable if it had not been taken up with strenuous energy and practical ability fifteen or twenty years ago, and a public opinion had not been organized by imperial congresses, with hundreds of delegates, from the cities and cities of the empire, after ministers in capitals, professors in universities, pastors in churches and Socialist deputies in the German parliament had advocated drastic measures of reform.

Improved housing is greatly facilitated in the towns of the Grand Duchy of Hesse and elsewhere which official inspections are carried on. The facts are known about every human habitation in a town like Darmstadt—how many rooms there are and how many sleep in them, whether roofs are leaking, cellars are damp, ventilation is inadequate or the conditions are unsanitary in any particular. The inspectors are constantly visiting old and new houses, and there is a record of every worker's home. When repairs are required there is authority for having the work done, and when the conditions are hopeless the house has to be vacated, rebuilt or pulled down. When the family is too large for the dwelling a removal to a better house can be enforced. The chief inspector for the town or for the state can find out how everybody lives and what is necessary for the protection of the health of large or small families. These continuous processes of investigation would be disliked in England or in America, but in Germany everybody is accustomed to them, and they are justified by the generally accepted idea that public health is indispensable to social welfare.

The construction of scores or hundreds of new houses for working people has been a practical undertaking, because nearly all the towns have public land which is available for building operations. The appropriation of these estates for this purpose has been unavoidable when land speculators have put up values in suburban districts and building associations have not supplied houses within the means of ordinary workers. In Frankfurt large numbers of houses have been constructed by the municipality on its own estates, and these improved dwellings are let to tenants at rentals which are considered moderate, and the extension of suburban districts has brought remote suburban districts within easy reach of the heart of the city. The same policy will be adopted on a large scale in Darmstadt if the capital ever forgets its traditional dignity as a grand ducal court and becomes a great manufacturing centre, instead of a comfortable residential city for retired merchants and officials, with the privileges of the Elector's museum, library and palace gardens.

Building operations for the relief of congested cities have also been aided by practical measures for financing them. In Hesse advances are made from state funds to municipalities or to societies conducted for philanthropic purposes, with the design of improving the condition of the working people rather than making dividends for shareholders. As the money is lent on easy terms, improved dwellings are built economically under government inspection and which he has contracted to furnish to the War Department has been finished and will be shipped to Washington next week. It will be assembled here and tested on the Fort Myer military reservation.

WAR DEPARTMENT'S BALLOON. Washington, July 11.—Thomas S. Baldwin has informed the signal office that the dirigible balloon which he has contracted to furnish to the War Department has been finished and will be shipped to Washington next week. It will be assembled here and tested on the Fort Myer military reservation.

FEDERAL JUDGE PURDY SWORN IN. St. Paul, July 11.—Milton Dwight Purdy, of Minneapolis, former Assistant United States Attorney General, was formally sworn in today as judge of the United States District Court, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Judge William Lochren. Judge Purdy was appointed by President Roosevelt to fill the recess term.

MEMORIAL TO T. B. WANAMAKER. Philadelphia, July 11.—A \$150,000 memorial to Thomas B. Wanamaker, who died last spring in Europe, will be erected by St. James the Less Cemetery near his grave in his native city. The memorial will be a large triangular tower rising from a stone house and containing a chime of bells to ring the passing hour.

PAVING SCANDAL IN LOUISVILLE. Louisville, July 11.—A dramatic denunciation by a member of the Board of Aldermen in full meeting last night, was followed by the arrest of Les Fleg, a prominent and wealthy contractor, on the charge of bribery. Alderman C. Hest, chairman of a committee having in charge the paving contracts of the city, charged that Fleg had offered him \$500 to make a favorable report on certain contracts.

HEALTH OF CUBANS IMPROVED. Washington, July 11.—Reports from army medical officers on duty in Cuba show a decided reduction in the typhoid fever rate since 1906. In other reports the statistics show that the general sick rate in Cuba in the last year was as favorable as that of this country, an improvement due to the health regulations enforced under American administration.

NO WALKOVER. From the Philadelphia Inquirer. From the Philadelphia Inquirer, it is learned that the effort of his life by the knowledge that this is his last chance, the impending campaign is not going to be a walkover. It is fortunate that the Republicans that they have a record upon which they need not fear to invite judgment, a platform on which they can stand, and a candidate in the person of William H. Taft, the best equipped candidate for the Presidential office ever placed in nomination for a President before the people. It is going to be a hard one, but that they will win it. The Inquirer has too much faith in the thought of the American people to entertain the slightest doubt.

ATTACHMENT AGAINST C. W. BARRON. An attachment for \$50,000 has been granted by Justice Dugro, of the Supreme Court, against the estate of Clarence W. Barron, of Cohasset, Mass., in favor of the Mercantile National Bank. The amount is alleged to be due on a note made by Mr. Barron on March 25, 1907. The attachment was granted on the ground that he was a non-resident. Mr. Barron, the principal owner of the Boston News Bureau, and also holds the controlling interest in Dow, Jones & Co., of this city, publishers of "The Wall Street Journal."

MAYOR AND HIS WIFE ON OUTING. North Creek, N. Y., July 11.—Mayor George B. McClellan of New York and Mrs. McClellan arrived here last night and took rooms at the Adirondack Hotel. They left here to-day by carriage for the Adirondack Club, thirty-five miles north of here. At the club they will be the guests of Dr. Brewer for about ten days. Mayor McClellan brought with him a supply of fishing tackle and a complete camping outfit, and expects to enjoy the full sporting advantages of the club to the full.

SEEK ALLEGED CHECK OPERATOR. The police of Brooklyn and New York are looking for Robert W. Wibber, who they say, passed a \$70 check on C. B. Repp, of the United Talking Machine Company, by means of a forged certified check for \$2,500 which he had deposited with the Title Guarantee and Trust Company. Rudolph F. Kleeman, of No. 225 West 125th street, advertised for a partner to finance a new travelling bag he had invented. Wibber applied for the place. The Rudolph Kleeman Manufacturing Company and Wibber showed that he had deposited the check with the trust company, and succeeded in getting Repp to cash the check. The trust company learned from the Commercial Bank of Washington that the check had been forged, and the matter was reported to the police.

THE WEATHER REPORT. Official Record and Forecast.—Washington, July 11. On Saturday New York, fair and warm; the central values and the lake region with reported maximum temperature of 96 degrees at Chicago and at Dubuque, Iowa. In the Rocky Mountain districts the temperature was lower, with local rains. During Sunday the crest of the warm wave will cover the Atlantic states, the lower temperatures and rains will be experienced in the plain states. By Monday the area of cooler weather and showers will extend over the central valleys and lake region, and will reach the Atlantic states about Tuesday. During Sunday the winds on the middle Atlantic and New England coasts will be light to fresh from south and southwest; on the South Atlantic coast light and variable; on the Gulf coast thunder squalls will occur, and the west and northwest winds will be variable and strong, with conditions favorable for local squalls.

FORECAST FOR SPECIAL LOCALITIES.—For New England and Eastern New York.—Fair and warmer to-day and Monday; light to fresh west and warm in south; showers and cooler in fresh portions to-day; Monday, showers and cooler; light variable winds.

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