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PUBLIC HOUSING AND SLUM CLEARANCE

IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

NOVEMBER, 1951

A Report of the Housing Committee of the League of Women Voters.

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PUBLIC HOUSING AND SLUM CLEARANCE IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, NOVEMBER, 1951

The members of the League of Women Voters have for several years been interested in the housing of the lowest income groups in Champaign and Urbana. After studying the extent of substandard housing and the social costs involved, the League has taken action in favor of public housing and slum clearance. This report summarizes what has been done by the community and indicates ways in which it seems desirable to go further in solving the problem of slum housing.

PUBLIC LOW-RENT HOUSING PROJECTS

The Basis in Federal Law

The Housing Act of 1949 recognizes that the existence of slums is a national problem because the person living in such surroundings incurs more than his proportionate share of costs for health and welfare services and is less likely to develop good citizenship and to appreciate the values of democracy. Since the costs of slum clearance and rehousing are high, such enterprises are not attractive to private investment and they are often thought to be beyond the means of the local taxing bodies. The federal government therefore offers financial aid to local governments in the form of long-term loans and subsidies. Emphasis is placed on the elimination of present slums and the prevention of their recurrence, as well as upon the provision of decent, safe and sanitary housing for low-income families who cannot afford to pay the rent for such housing. The projects must be locally initiated and developed.

The Federal Government finances the housing projects in this way: it authorizes preliminary loans for project-planning, secures temporary notes sold by the local housing authority to investors, and makes loans for any part of the permanent financing not covered by the sale of bonds to investors. The rents charged do not entirely cover the actual cost of the project, and the federal government makes a further contribution in the form of a subsidy to cover the difference between operating costs and rents received. A maximum limit is set on annual contributions. (At present $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the development cost, including the interest payment on the bonds) Federal contributions end when the debt is amortized, in 40 years or less. The major cost is borne by the tenants in rent.

The contribution of the local government is in the form of tax exemption, but the Housing Authority agrees to pay up to ten percent of the rents received in lieu of taxes, in return for local government services, such as fire protection, schools, health services and upkeep of streets.

In practice in other communities these payments have amounted to much more than the taxes formerly assessed, and often not paid, on the same property. In San Francisco, the payments in lieu of taxes amounted to \$146,000 annually instead of the \$30,000 formerly assessed against the same property; in St. Louis, the payments increased 251 percent, and in Peoria, more than 300 percent. In Gary, the mayor reported that the revenues were increased without the addition of municipal services.

In order not to interfere with private enterprise, only persons who are among those having the lowest incomes are eligible to occupy the projects. The very poorest families are ineligible because their incomes are still not steady enough and not large enough to pay the minimum rent made necessary by limitations on

federal financing. The highest rent charged must be twenty percent lower than that in available standard housing. Tenants must pay twenty percent of their income for rent, including utilities, except that they are granted an exemption of \$100 a year for each minor member.

Veterans are given preference, and for the first five years of the project they need not, when chosen, be occupying substandard housing. All other tenants must either be displaced by a slum-clearance project or occupying substandard housing.

The Housing Authority must examine the incomes of the tenants each year, and when these exceed the upper limit set by the Authority, the tenants are expected to pay for private housing, and are required to move. This frequently happens, since people are likely to become more efficient when they are living in better conditions. In Decatur, over a period of eight years, 417 families moving from the project bought their own homes.

The local government must agree before a housing project is started to eliminate or bring up to standard, unsafe or insanitary dwelling units substantially equal in number to those provided by the projects. This must be done within five years of the completion of the project unless deferred because of acute shortage of housing for low-income families. Local public opinion is strongly in favor of immediate elimination of such dwellings.

The Housing Authority

The housing projects are locally designed and built under the direction of a local housing authority set up under State law. The Housing Authority of Champaign County was established in 1939 by the County Board of Supervisors under an Illinois Housing Law of 1934. It consists of five members appointed by the chairman of the County Board of Supervisors. They serve without remuneration. The chairman of the Housing Authority is Mr. Maurice Skelton, and the salaried director is Mr. Harold Sloan. The office is located at 101 N. Race Street, Urbana

The Housing Authority has these powers and duties: to investigate poor housing conditions; to suggest projects for new housing or slum clearance to the City Council, Board of Aldermen, or County Board of Supervisors; to build and operate rental housing projects for low-income families, including making arrangements for the financing of these projects. It submits an annual financial report to the Board of Supervisors. The Housing Authority operates an unsubsidized low-rent housing project at Rantoul, and in Champaign a project of 40 units for veterans built of surplus war material. It has also attempted to make available land and a few low-cost houses for sale. This report however deals only with public housing projects and slum clearance in Champaign-Urbana.

The Present Local Situation

Champaign now has 140 units of public housing nearing completion, and Urbana has begun work on 125 units. They are built under the U. S. Housing Act of 1949 although the land in Champaign was acquired with funds provided for under the Act of 1937. Negroes and whites are segregated but equal facilities are provided for each group. Champaign has 70 units for whites and 70 for Negroes; Urbana has 99 for whites and 26 for Negroes.

The Negro project in Champaign, called Birch Court after a soldier killed in World War II, is located on a five-acre tract north of Bradley Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets. The white project is on a seven-acre tract at the northwest corner of Bradley and McKinley. The Urbana project for whites will occupy ten acres lying east of Broadway and north of the Saline drainage ditch, and the project for Negroes is to be erected on a two and a half acre site north of Wright and east of Douglas Park.

The projects under construction are arranged as clusters of two-story apartment-type dwellings containing from one to four bedrooms, the buildings separated by adequate space for recreation and playground use. All but the smallest development include community rooms. They are of durable, fireproof, brick and asbestos construction, well-designed for family living and for integration with other dwellings in the community.

The projects are expensive. For this reason it is important that they be well managed and that their use be such as to accomplish real slum clearance and the diminution of the social costs to the community that accompany poor housing. The cost of the four projects has been estimated by the director of the Housing Authority to be just under three million dollars (\$2,940,000). The cost of the Champaign projects together is \$1,470,000, and the estimated cost of the Urbana projects is the same; with \$305,000 the cost of the Negro project, and \$1,165,000 the cost of the white project. The Federal subsidy will amount to a maximum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ percent of the total development cost per year for 40 years, or an annual sum of \$105,000 for the 265 units. The rest of the cost, including operating expense, will be covered by the rents paid by the tenants, and this may at times reduce the size of the subsidy, as happened in other cities during the war years when tenants were able to pay higher rents.

The local community is expected to benefit, since the payments made in lieu of taxes will be ten percent of the total shelter rents received. Shelter rent is the net rent paid after costs of utilities are deducted. It is expected that the costs for city and social welfare services for the tenants will diminish. The average rental in the first project will be approximately \$33, the rents ranging from \$22 to \$43, with one isolated instance of \$47.

In Champaign, the first tenants chosen for the housing project for Negroes were selected by a non-political committee of six local citizens (three Negro and three white) appointed by the Housing Authority. In addition to the factors of income and occupancy of substandard quarters for non-veterans, they gave consideration to the length of residence in the community and to the character of the applicant. The tenants were expected to be good risks for the prompt payment of rent and to be cooperative citizens, not trouble-makers. They also had to have the proper size family to fit the apartments. Preference was given to veterans of long residence and families of men killed in service; such families did not have to be living in substandard housing.

The task of selection of tenants was obviously a difficult one, and mistakes were probably made. Many Negroes were disappointed since their incomes were too high for public housing, yet they could find no better privately owned housing because of color restrictions in other areas of the community. There were four eligible applicants for every vacancy in the project.

The Local Need for Slum Clearance

Remembering that the Housing Act emphasizes equally the provision of low-cost housing and the elimination of the poor housing it is intended to replace, we may inquire to what extent slum conditions do exist in our pleasant cities and how they may be remedied.

1. Report of the Regional Planning Commission, 1938

A study in 1938 made by the Regional Planning Commission of Champaign County, under the chairmanship of Professor Karl Lohmann noted the obsolescence of dilapidation of hundreds of houses in Champaign-Urbana (many of which are still occupied), and the inadequacy of building codes and city ordinances to enforce a minimum standard of decency, safety and sanitation.

2. The 1941 Housing Authority Survey

In 1941 the Housing Authority ordered a study of housing conditions for low-income families. Of 3,722 dwellings inspected, 43 percent were substandard. A dwelling was classified as substandard (1) when it lacked sanitary facilities (1,349 were in this category); (2) when in need of major repair (744); and (3) when in a condition so hazardous to health and safety as to be considered unfit for habitation (210).

As a result of this report, the Housing Authority acquired two tracts of land in Champaign, and entered into a cooperation agreement with the city for the erection of 140 units of low-rent housing. However, there were many delays and before the project could be started funds were diverted to war purposes.

During the war, conditions grew worse rather than better. New building virtually stopped and many materials for remodeling were not available. The expansion of Chanute field, the migration from the south of workers in the expanded I. C. yards and other industries, and finally the post-war influx of families of student veterans increased the population from approximately 49,000 in 1940 to 62,000 in 1950, or 37 percent over the decade. Lack of supply of building materials meant overcrowding, use of basements and attics, conversions of sheds, garages, and chicken coops, and the erection of many tar-paper shanties. Trailer camps sprang up, and poorly-built tourist camps were used at high rentals as permanent dwellings. Sanitary conditions were often deplorable.

3. The Downs Report

At the end of the war the housing shortage was so apparent that the Community Development and Housing Council of Champaign-Urbana was formed by leading citizens of the two towns, under the chairmanship of Mr. Giles Sullivan. At the instance of the Council, the Housing Authority in 1948 ordered a study of housing conditions in the twin cities, made by the Real Estate Research Corporation of Chicago. This study, "Housing Market Analysis in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois," known as the "Downs Report", showed that 71.8 percent of the workers had incomes too low to justify a monthly rental of \$50, or the purchase of a \$6,000 home (P. 45). For such people, the report recommended, in addition to the use of technological improvements to bring down the costs of new housing, (1) the formation of non-profit corporations contemplating a loan of equity money for the down payment on houses through grants by the State Housing Board, and (2) direct government subsidy, as in the public housing projects.

4. Housing Studies Made by the League of Women Voters

In 1947 the League of Women Voters undertook studies of the housing situation. Committees visited the Decatur and Danville low-rent housing projects built during the 1930's, and made two studies of housing for low-income families. The first study, "A Report on Housing Conditions of Low-Income Families in Champaign-Urbans", was made with the cooperation of the social agencies, and dealt with the housing of families known to these organizations. The second study, known as the "Shack Study", was based on investigations of the housing of Negroes made by a group of Negro women.

The League studies, published in 1949, uncovered such bad housing conditions as the following: Out of a random sample of 85 "shacks", less than a third, or only 27, had inside faucets. In 19 shacks water had to be carried from next door, and in one case, had to be carried from a faucet a block away. Only 18 dwellings had inside toilets. In these the pipes frequently froze during the winter. Outdoor privies, often shared with neighbors, were used by the occupants of more than half of these shacks and sometimes required an extra rental of four or five dollars a month. More than one out of ten had no toilet facilities whatsoever, inside or out, not even a neighbor's privy. The rooms were about half the size of ordinary rooms, many with six or seven-foot ceilings. Even disregarding the number of cubic feet considered adequate per person, the study disclosed that 62 percent of the people were living in overcrowded conditions, according to the American Public Health Association standard of one and one-half persons per room. 45 percent were living two or more to a room, and 20 per cent were living three or more to a room. The following is an example of what living is really like when we describe it as overcrowded.

"A family of thirteen was occupying a three-room dwelling, so small that beds necessarily occupied a great deal of the space. In one of the rooms there were two chairs, a double bed, a table and a stove. A double bed and chair nearly filled the second room. The third room served as a kitchen and was so tiny and narrow that a table could not be used in addition to the stove and icebox, since space was needed for passing from the outside and into the adjoining room. Clothes washed by the mother were hung in the rooms on lines attached to the six foot ceiling. The water used, obtained from a faucet outside, was thrown into a yard littered with trash and debris. The privy was perhaps five or six feet from the house."

Sometimes shack colonies, clusters of three to five shacks found on one lot, created further problems of overcrowding. Serious fire hazards were found everywhere. Unpaved streets and lack of sewage disposal and garbage collection created a scene that was not only dreary but a definite hazard to health.

The study of 200 low-income renting families showed that 28.5 percent were paying one-third or more of their incomes for rent, and more than ten percent were paying one-half or more. Yet 70 percent of these families had to provide heat in addition, at an average estimated additional cost of \$19 per month for fuel in winter, a cost heightened by flimsy construction which made the houses almost impossible to keep warm. The social workers providing data for this study noted tensions in family living under makeshift conditions, as well as lowered physical stamina and spread of disease.

5. Urbana Housing Survey

In 1950 the Housing Authority ordered a survey of substandard housing in Urbana conducted by the Real Estate Research Corporation. It was estimated that the area surveyed (containing 1533 dwelling units) included 65 to 75 percent of all the substandard dwelling units in Urbana and all the non-white units. The report showed that 49 percent of all families in substandard units had no inside flush toilet (either shared or used exclusively), and 26 percent had no kitchen sink. This means that privies are used by about 350 families in Urbana.

The rental housing for Negroes was particularly bad. Almost three-quarters, or 72 per cent, was dilapidated. Almost half, or 48 per cent, had no inside flush toilet, and almost one-quarter, or 24 percent, had more than 1.5 persons per room. Thirty-nine percent had no running water, and 61 percent, had no kitchen sink.

6. The Community Plan

While these studies were going on, the Community Housing and Development Council was also interested in the problem. In 1948 it authorized the development of a comprehensive planning program as a basic step in solving community problems. The Council secured money from public subscriptions, and from ten local taxing bodies, and hired the firm of Swanson Associates to develop a plan. Mr. Enos Phillips was chairman of the Community Plan Committee, and ten citizens' advisory committees were formed. In 1951 the report, entitled "Comprehensive Development Plan for Champaign-Urbana", was published and distributed by the Council under the chairmanship of Mr. C. A. Webber.

With regard to slums and blighted areas, the report had this to say:

"On a national average, slums and blighted areas contribute
45% of the major crimes
50% of the arrests
55% of the juvenile delinquency
35% of the fires
50% of the disease (60% of the T.B. victims)

These same areas require
45% of the city service costs
And these areas provide only
6% of the real property tax revenue"

These tendencies and conditions exist in Champaign-Urbana, as judged from the latest information received from the various local social agencies.

A common mistaken belief is that slums are mainly found in big cities. Actually there are more of them in the smaller communities. The census of 1940 showed that 36% of the dwellings in urban places outside of metropolitan districts were in slums or blighted areas, compared to 26% in the larger metropolitan areas.

The physical symptoms of blighted and slum areas are poor building design and construction, high population density, overcrowding of dwelling units, faulty subdivision of land, poor street pattern, and lack of utilities.

Studies have shown that the 'hidden' costs of maintaining slum areas are far greater than a city can afford, from a strictly dollar and cents angle. Redevelopment in other communities, through either private or public agencies, has raised the assessed valuation of such properties and increased the actual tax returns to the city by as much as 1200%.

Taxpayers in most communities pay the rent on sub-standard and slum structures through the relief payments made to the tenants. In effect, this becomes a double subsidy for perpetuation of slum areas -- once to pay for the rental, and secondly, additional monies to make up the difference between the cost of services to these areas and the tax return made by the areas.

Existing Conditions in Champaign-Urbana

The occurrence of disease and other social problems are positive signs of unhealthy housing and living. Though the so-called 'critical area' is spread on both sides of the tracks, the south and west portions of this will be eliminated by the normal development of commercial-industrial area expansion. Beyond scattered areas elsewhere, there remains the northeast sector, inhabited by mixed racial groups, and, perhaps, the lowest income groups in the Twin Cities. This area is proposed for almost complete rehabilitation in a residential sense so that the ultimate community of 198x will be the standard of the other neighborhoods.

The problem, both present and future, is so great that it will require cooperation of both public and private agencies. Additional public-subsidized housing is possible and desirable under Titles I and III of the Public Housing Act of 1949; private capital investment should be promoted through insurance company and other large-scale loans and through smaller cooperative ventures. Up to the present time, most private capital redevelopment of blighted areas has served only to replace the area with higher income families because of the high rentals necessary for an adequate profit return.

These projects should be integrated into the city's residential pattern so that the difference between public-owned and private housing is imperceptible, and such projects should be free to take land in any area designated for multiple housing. Investigation of the cooperative Holden, Yorkville, and Baltimore Plans is urged. Only effective partnership between private capital and public funds in carrying through planned projects will secure the necessary changes.

The present study of new ordinances for enforcement of building, health and safety codes should be continued, and an adequate comprehensive ordinance adopted. Only with adoption of such legislation will the community have authority to enforce demolition or bring to standard inadequate housing, and prevent future occurrence. "

A map published in the Plan shows a heavy concentration of basic social problems, including delinquency, dependency, public assistance, tuberculosis, and prostitution, within a circle having a three-quarter mile radius where slum housing predominates.

The Attack on Slum Conditions

All these studies have led to a widespread community recognition of the need for improvement of substandard housing. The League of Women Voters invited representatives of the press, the churches and various civic organizations to meetings held in the spring of 1948. Following this, Mr. Willard Hansen reported in a local newspaper a series of illustrated articles based on the League's findings. A Citizens' Committee on Public Housing sent speakers and showed pictures to interested groups. The problem was discussed widely in radio programs. Many groups have expressed themselves in favor of slum clearance; the question is how this can best be accomplished. There should be attacks from three angles-- provision of low-rent housing, elimination of the worst housing conditions, and prevention of new slums.

1. Public Housing the First Step

Before people can be removed from uninhabitable structures they must have other housing; hence public housing is usually regarded as the first step towards accomplishing slum clearance. The tenants are expected to come from substandard housing. The vacancies they create should not be filled unless it is possible to bring these former substandard quarters into good repair. Often it is uneconomical to attempt this and the buildings should be torn down.

Privately financed low-cost housing might also provide living quarters for tenants of slum areas, although we have noted that it does not often attract private investment. New building by those who can afford it ordinarily creates vacancies down the line. Private housing developments or cooperatives using long-term financing, or even subsidies from state funds, also ease the housing market in general when population pressures are not too great. A definite program for removing the worst housing, however, needs to be undertaken concurrently with the provision of better housing for the occupants of those places.

2. Elimination of Substandard Housing

We have noted that the cities in agreeing to accept federal funds for low-rent housing have also accepted contractually the responsibility for tearing down or bringing up to standard a number of units equivalent to that provided in the projects. How can this be accomplished?

In the course of normal industrial development many communities have found that substandard dwellings are torn down and could be counted towards the equivalent elimination but this is unlikely to make up for more than the normal deterioration of houses, and does not contribute much toward improving general slum conditions. Unless there is a real drive to eliminate these houses their further deterioration will mean further social costs to the community.

Under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 a local community may undertake slum clearance projects that are in accordance with a community plan. For such projects they may obtain liberal federal funds. These are given on a matching basis, credit for one-third of the cost being granted for local donations of land, improvements or services to the people in the area, such as improved school facilities. The Federal Government supplies two-thirds of the cost of such slum-clearance projects.

Applications for such a grant-in-aid was made in Urbana in 1951, but had to be denied because technicalities were not met in securing prior approval for the proposed project. In 1950 funds to the amount of \$169,890 were set aside for a parking lot proposed by the Champaign Council and Chamber of Commerce, but plans for the project have not progressed.

We may ask by what rights or through what powers the cities may cause private property, even badly deteriorated, to be destroyed.

In such slum-clearance projects as those contemplated in the Housing Act whole blocks of land are usually acquired by the city by right of eminent domain. It is important that the project contemplated should be in accord with a professional plan looking towards the best future for the community. Fortunately, the Community Plan indicates projects such as parks, parking lots, and expansion of school facilities that would fulfill future as well as present needs.

When buildings are not fit for habitation some communities get rid of them by use of the powers of the State Fire Marshall. Section 9 of the Illinois Fire Prevention Statute provides for the inspection of buildings which because of fault construction, age, lack of proper repair, or any other cause, may become liable to cause injury or damage by collapsing or otherwise. Where such a dangerous condition or fire hazard is found to exist, the Department of Public Safety and the local officers charged with the duty of investigating fires shall order the dangerous condition removed or remedied.

Some people contend that slum conditions can be eliminated through the enforcement of existing ordinances on nuisances, health and safety. They believe that all that is necessary is a strong personality on the part of the enforcement officer.

On the other hand, officers themselves have said that the existing ordinances are inadequate. In the first place they are difficult to find. In Urbana they are not codified at all and in Champaign they have not been codified since 1934. The ordinances also create overlapping jurisdictions. For example, the building inspector, the health inspector, and the plumbing inspector might all be involved in the condemnation of privies. There seems to be no clearly defined responsibility for enforcement. Further, the existing ordinances are inadequate in scope, and they are difficult to enforce since they are vaguely defined and lend themselves to long litigation.

What could be done to improve the ordinances? First, they should be gathered into a single code. Second, there should be one officer clearly responsible for enforcement. Third, there should be enforcement without unnecessary delay. Fourth, a definition of minimum standards of occupancy, such as those set forth by the American Public Health Association, should be included in the ordinance.

Some housing is bad because of poor building or poor land use, but some is bad because of general deterioration, such as leaking roofs, broken windows, plumbing in bad repair, and overcrowding. Where the deterioration is not too extensive such defects could be remedied. Areas in such condition are called "blighted areas". They are regarded as potential if not actual slums. Two cities, Baltimore and St. Louis, have attempted to improve the tenancy in their blighted areas by the adoption of ordinances on minimum standards of occupancy.

Dwellings are subject to inspection, and when they do not come up to these minimum standards of health and decency the owners are required to put them in repair or to tear them down. The administrative advantage of such an ordinance is that it brings together many scattered regulations, makes one officer responsible for their enforcement and provides machinery for their just administration. The advantage to the community is that it encourages owners to take measure to prevent obsolescence and preserve property values. In St. Louis a revolving fund is set up to be used for repairs by owners who will be charged in tax form when they borrow against this fund.

The Community Housing and Development Council recommends the adoption of an adequate and comprehensive ordinance, and the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the Citizens Housing Committee, the Interchurchmen's Council, and the Council of Social Agencies have all gone on record as favoring such an ordinance including minimum standards of occupancy.

As early as May 2, 1950, preparation of slum clearance ordinances was ordered by the Champaign City Council. The majority of the Councilmen polled by the League of Women Voters before the election of April, 1951 also expressed approval of such an ordinance.

The legal problems involved in writing an ordinance on minimum standards of occupancy go back to the State Constitution. The Cities and Villages Act of 1882 with later amendments limits the kinds of legislation that may be passed by the local municipalities. These general powers are set up by this Act (Ch. 24, Sec. 23)

- (1) The power to prescribe the manner of construction of all buildings. This applies to new buildings and is not retroactive.
- (2) The power to define, prevent, and abate nuisances. Many places have taken full advantage of this provision to the extent of dealing with specific situations or events as nuisances in addition to enacting general nuisance ordinances.
- (3) The power to set up fire limits within which wooden buildings shall not be placed, erected or repaired without permission, and whenever such buildings have deteriorated or been damaged to fifty percent of their value to direct that such buildings be torn down or removed, and to prescribe the manner of ascertaining whether the specified damage has occurred.
- (4) The power to regulate fire hazards such as chimney pipes and flues, and if they are in unsafe condition to cause them to be removed or put in safe condition.
- (5) The power to acquire real property necessary for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of slum areas.
- (6) The power to exercise the right of eminent domain and carry on condemnation proceedings for the acquisition of property useful for municipal purposes.

The Cities and Villages Act also empowers the municipalities to regulate health in the following ways:

- (1) To do all acts and make all regulations which may be necessary or expedient for the promotion of health or the suppression of disease.
- (2) To provide for and maintain a board of health.
- (3) To have jurisdiction in and over all places within one-half mile of the corporate limits for the purpose of enforcing health and quarantine ordinances and regulations.
- (4) To compel the owner of any privy, sewer, or other unwholesome or nauseous place to cleanse, abate or remove the same.

The Community Zoning Enabling Act, contained in the Cities and Villages Act (Ch. 24, Sec. 73), includes in its objectives the securing of adequate light, pure air, and safety from fire and other dangers; the conservation of the taxable value of land and buildings throughout the municipality, and the promotion of public health, safety, comfort, morals and welfare. It empowers the municipality to acquire by purchase, condemnation or otherwise, any building or structure which does not conform to the standards fixed by the corporate authorities, and all land which is necessary or appropriate for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of any area blighted by substandard buildings or structures, to remove or demolish all substandard buildings so acquired, to hold and use any remaining property for public purposes, and to sell, lease, or exchange such property as is not required for public purposes, subject to the provisions of the city zoning ordinances.

With these powers, it would be possible to enact a strong local ordinance for slum clearance. One such model ordinance has been suggested by Thomas A. Mathews in the "Illinois Municipal Review", May, 1936. Some question has been raised as to the legality of an ordinance defining minimum standards of occupancy but authoritative legal opinion has been given us that this would be constitutional.

3. Prevention of New Slum Conditions

An ordinance on minimum standards of occupancy serves to retard deterioration in blighted areas. Proper building codes and zoning ordinances serve to prevent new slum conditions. The building codes of both cities are relatively good. Although they are not based on the most recent code of the Building Officials Conference of America they prevent the erection of new buildings with obvious fire hazards or lack of sanitation. Unfortunately in some areas buildings go up or are converted for use as dwellings without the issuance of a permit, as in the case of the converted sheds and tar-paper shanties. There is inadequate enforcement of the building codes because the offices of the building inspectors are understaffed and neighbors are unwilling to make complaints. In the absence of routine inspection or complaints from others many violations, particularly in the poorer neighborhoods, go undetected. Public opinion, unfortunately, has not supported enforcement.

In 1950 both Champaign and Urbana adopted new zoning ordinances as recommended by the community plan. Provisions in these ordinances help to prevent slums by restricting the number of buildings that can be placed on a lot, by providing for air and light, by keeping multiple-family dwellings out of single-family neighborhoods, and by keeping family, business, and industrial neighborhoods separate.

County zoning has been strongly urged in the community plan as a means of preventing shack-type housing developments, junk yards, or nuisance-creating industries adjacent to good housing. It would also prevent raw sewage from flowing into drainage ditches, and would make possible a better pattern for adequate drainage facilities.

4. Other Problems of Slum Clearance

The writing and enforcement of ordinances, however, would not solve the problem of slum clearance without attention to some other serious considerations. First, adequate facilities are lacking in some parts of the community. Some privies exist because there is either no sanitary sewer or it is overloaded. Map of some old sewers have been lost. Lack of paving means that heavy garbage collection trucks cannot approach certain parts of the slum areas. The people living in these neighborhoods should become more articulate about their needs, but the local government officials must also feel the pressure of the whole community, since the whole community benefits when conditions for the spread of disease are removed.

Second, some offices are understaffed. There has been no public health director, for instance, since 1949. There cannot be enforcement without enforcing officials.

Third, there is general reluctance to make complaints and follow cases in court. This comes partly from lack of knowledge of the law and partly from unwillingness to take as personal a part in the duties of citizenship as this requires.

Fourth, many people, believing that tax funds should not be used for such purposes, are unwilling to have the local community take part in public programs of housing and slum clearance. An understanding of the real costs of slum housing may change this attitude. The program has been supported by both major political parties, and by such economy-minded Senators as Mr. Taft and Mr. Douglas.

Fifth, two considerations result in serious overcrowding as well as occupancy of substandard quarters. The high costs of building and consequent high rentals, particularly without rent controls, create an economic problem. Restrictions against Negro occupancy outside of certain neighborhoods create an even more serious social problem because many Negroes who could afford better homes cannot have them because of segregation. Overcrowding is particularly prevalent among Negroes.

CONCLUSIONS

This, then, is the situation in Champaign-Urbana in late 1951. We have slums and blighted areas comparable with those in big cities, in which there is a concentration of social and health problems affecting the whole community. The cost to the taxpayer of maintaining these slums is more than he can afford. The people of the community recognize the need for improving conditions; the question is by what means this can be done. We make these recommendations:

- (1) Support should be given to public housing projects, as a method of meeting the problems of families now living in substandard dwellings.

- (2) Federally subsidized programs of slum clearance should be undertaken.
- (3) Efforts should be made to adopt a local ordinance defining minimum standards of housing occupancy, making one officer responsible for its enforcement, and providing efficient administrative machinery.
- (4) All local regulations that would reclaim slum housing should be rigorously enforced.
- (5) Public utilities, water, sewers, and street paving, should be made available in every section of the municipalities.
- (6) Since housing and health problems are closely related, every effort should be made to secure the appointment of a well-qualified public health director.
- (7) County zoning as a means of preventing slum conditions in fringe areas should be supported.
- (8) Sound measures utilizing private capital that would reduce the cost of housing for low-income families should be supported.
- (9) Expansion of living areas for Negroes should be encouraged.
- (10) Since many slum conditions exist because of public indifference, we must take seriously our individual responsibility as citizens, not only to support these measures, but where we are aware of violations of existing ordinances, to make complaints and follow them through.