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EDITORIAL.

MEMORANDUM ON HOUSING.

No thinking person can doubt that the Housing question is one of the most important factors of sociology and a problem most difficult of solution.

Since the Armistice the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Borough Councils and other bodies have erected a very large number of flats and houses for the weekly wage-earners. They were badly needed and we rejoice that so much has been accomplished. The supply, however, is but a drop in the ocean in comparison with the unsatisfied needs of our great population. Whenever Social workers get together to discuss reforms, whatever their differences of opinion may be, they are all certain to be agreed upon one point, namely, that the basis of all such reforms is—and always must be—*good housing*, which presupposes a generous minimum standard of comfort and convenience. Without it there will inevitably be a low standard of health and morality, and industrial unrest will continue.

With this in view, the Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations appointed a Housing Sub-Committee to enquire fully into the matter and to report. After weeks of hard work and exhaustive enquiry of every source of authoritative information, they have produced a pamphlet with the above title. Although it does not claim to be a comprehensive survey of the whole situation, it is a most valuable contribution to the present great fundamental need of Society. We cannot attempt to do full justice to this excellent and instructive Memorandum in so brief a space; but as all Nurses are fully aware of the close connection between housing and health, especially District and School Nurses, we wish to bring it to their notice.

The Memorandum comprises two "Parts" and a clear concise Summary. Part I gives a "Statement of Problem" and refers to the provision of houses in the past—both in urban

and rural districts. In reference to the former, very useful comments are made on "Cast-off Houses of the Middle Classes" which—not being adapted usually for the use of several families—constitute very bad living conditions. Brief explanation is made of the different methods of producing houses, such as:—(a) Building by Private Enterprise; (b) by Building Societies; (c) by Public Utility Societies; (d) by Housing Trusts; (e) Municipal Housing. The economic aspect of the present position and the comparative cost of building come under review, not to mention things of such vital importance as morals, health, and the legal aspect—(laws affecting Housing). Part II deals with proposals for remedial action by the method of placing on record the proposal itself, and then giving an impartial criticism.

Summary of the Present Position:—(1) The Housing shortage existed before the war. (2) It has been accentuated by economic and social forces consequent upon the war, and is now more serious than it has ever been before. (3) Deficient Housing inflicts unwarrantable injury upon the community, and involves enormous waste of public moneys. (4) Ignorance in regard to the future legal position of landlords and tenants has led to inevitable hardship and friction. (5) Uncertainty in regard to a future Housing policy has helped in a large measure to destroy the confidence of prospective builders. (6) The inability of the lowest wage-earner to pay an economic rent has discouraged the investment in house property, and is largely responsible for the present deadlock. (7) The difficulty of labour and the cost and supply of materials in the building industry make it unlikely that a rapid increase or improvement in housing accommodation will follow immediately upon legislation. (8) Attention is drawn to the distinction between the middle-class house and the house for the small wage-earner. It may reasonably be hoped that the normal channels of supply and the efforts of the private builder will automatically meet the needs of the former. In the last few years

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)