

The problem has become more acute owing to the substantial increase in the marriage-rate as disclosed by the following official statistics:—

MARRIAGE RATES, 1929–1936.

Year ended 31st December.	Number of Marriages solemnized.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.
1929	10,967	7·78
1930	11,075	7·77
1931	9,817	6·79
1932	9,896	6·80
1933	10,510	7·16
1934	11,256	7·62
1935	12,187	8·20
1936	13,808	9·25

This marked increase is but another result of improved conditions and increased purchasing-power. All these newly married people want houses, and the majority prefer a dwelling for themselves instead of sharing a house with others or beginning their married life in an apartment or a flat.

There are many people who, by reason of the circumstances in which they earn their livelihood, or of their family responsibilities, or for some other good cause, are unable to finance the purchase of a section and the erection of a dwelling, even with the aid of extended financial accommodation, and to this class the responsibilities of ownership of properties would be burdensome, and the provision of houses for rental purposes at a figure in keeping with the resources of the people is the only solution.

In the meantime and pending the completion of the housing survey, the Government has indicated that the housing problem is one of extreme national importance calling for prompt attention, not only in the interests of our people of to-day, but with a view to providing for the future.

The Government therefore decided to utilize the provisions of the Housing Act, 1919, for the purpose of undertaking the erection of houses on a comprehensive scale for renting purposes. The houses are not being built for sale, and tenants will be assured of permanency of occupation so long as their obligations as tenants, both in regard to the payment of rent and the care of the properties, are faithfully fulfilled.

4. *Organization.*—In order to expedite the building of new houses for rental purposes and to give effect to its declared policy, the Government decided in September, 1936, to set up a new housing organization under the control of Mr. J. A. Lee, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary. The appointment of Mr. A. Tyndall as Director of Housing Construction followed, and a commencement was then made with the setting-up of an organization to undertake the direct construction of houses.

The responsibility of the Board of Management and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the control and administration of the scheme for the erection of dwellings was defined by the Minister of Finance, who in terms of subsection (2) of section 24 of the State Advances Corporation Act, 1936, gave directions to the Board of Management, which may briefly be enumerated as follows:—

- (1) The Government will determine the number of houses to be erected and where they will be located, and will accept full responsibility for plans and specifications.
- (2) The administration of the erection of houses will be under the control of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary.
- (3) Contracts for the erection and operation of joinery-factories, for the purchase or lease of land, for the erection of houses and such other buildings or works as may be required will be entered into by the Corporation as directed by the Minister of Finance.