

The decision as to what the final function of the committees shall be will probably not be reached without more experimentation. The suggestion has come frequently that they be formalized into County Welfare Boards. Two committees have broadened out on their own initiative into this form already, and one of the two is looking toward the employ-

ment of a social worker. Since there are no other committees acting as clearing houses for all types of social work and social education in the counties, it seems fairly certain that more and more will be required of them until they evolve into some form or a number of forms which will be valuable to their respective communities.

## CITY PLANNING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE

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MUCH of the confusion in the use of the word "community" arises from the fact that it can be, and is, applied to such widely different types of populated districts. The suggestion I have to offer concerns the city elementary school district. Why should we not—for the purpose of study and promotion—give to this area of common educational service the specific name of "neighborhood community"? There are of course many existing urban school districts exhibiting little of what most of us think of as "community life." School districts are not neighborhoods in the sense, employed by Cooley, of being the home of primary groups, or cultural areas with local sentiments and traditions as defined by Park. On the other hand, one does find here and there school districts which exhibit both of these characteristics and which are entitled literally to be called "neighborhood communities," a label which I propose for the following hypothesis.

The physical conditions which favor the development of an urban neighborhood community are present when we have a district of the following description: It has a population of 5,000 or 6,000 people and 800 or 1,000 children of elementary school age. In single-family-per-lot sections such a population requires an area

of about 160 acres which in the form of a square is one-half mile on a side. In apartment house areas the size shrinks in proportion to population density. This in broad outlines is a description of the physical environment that is best adapted, in my opinion, for the growing of an urban neighborhood community. Obviously, no district precisely fits this formula and the pertinent question is to be asked: Of what use then is the theoretical description? In the first place there is a demand in the real estate market for developments exhibiting what are called "community" features. More than ever before, families which have gained a quick prosperity are discarding old houses and buying new ones. They seek homes which are not only beautiful in themselves but which also have attractive surroundings, good schools, public playgrounds and convenient shops. Residential districts of that character do not grow wild. They have to be planned and cultivated. From the nature of the case they have to be of large size and it requires a city planner to design them properly. But the planner who is called upon to lay out a community has to have some sort of pattern to serve as a basis for his own plan. The neighborhood unit scheme was evolved to meet that need. Whole neighborhoods, towns and even

cities are now being planned and built to order—from the ground up.

There is also another practical use for a neighborhood formula. The automobile is working a great change in our city maps. To accommodate the ever growing stream of cars the engineers, in practically all our large cities, are building boulevards, parkways and super-highways. These wide, deep channels are cutting up residential sections into irregularly-shaped islands around which raging streams of traffic will soon flow. Should we not take some steps to formulate the size and the contents of these residential islands? If we permit highway specialization in the interest of the motorist, why should we not insist upon equal municipal care and forethought in the interest of the pedestrian and the resident?

The neighborhood-unit scheme proposes a remedy for precisely this emergency. It provides a protected residential cell within which the principal destinations of normal families—schools, playgrounds and local shops—can all be reached without crossing a single main highway. It would seem as if the time should not be far off when that principle of residential protection would be the slogan and the demand of every association devoted to the interests of the home and a safe neighborhood life.

The principle of a special and individual street system which the neighborhood-unit illustrates is exemplified in Forest Hills Gardens. The provision of planned open spaces is to be found in Sunnyside Gardens, New York, in Mariemont near Cincinnati and in many other similar projects. In the Hampstead Garden Suburb, in the outskirts of London, there is a delightful group of neighborhood institutions around a central square. As to conspicuous boundaries, Forest Hills Gardens, which is somewhat triangular

in shape, has quite visible limits on two sides, and its citizens have taken steps to demarcate the remaining, irregular edge by means of brick markers or monuments. The neighborhood unit formula is to be regarded then as a composite of planning principles which either have been carried out or have been indicated as desirable in existing real estate developments.

#### THE NEIGHBORHOOD-UNIT SCHEME AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

There are several ways in which this scheme may have significance for community organization. In the first place it illustrates a method of producing homogeneity. When the real estate plan is dangled before the public, automatically it draws together a group of people of similar living standards and similar economic ability to realize them. McKenzie has pointed out that the segregation of a city population "along racial, economic, social and vocational lines" is a normal process and one which is constantly at work. Already cooperation in housing schemes is being taken up by various occupational groups. There are also signs of racial and religious ventures in the same direction. The use of a neighborhood formula in suburban building and slum rebuilding schemes is going to promote this grouping process. Whether we favor the tendency or not, a situation is arising that will require a fresh study and revaluation of this fundamental social phenomenon.

The second way in which the neighborhood planning prescription has a community significance relates to the formation of primary groups. The function of face-to-face relations in the development of character and personality has already been so fully treated by Cooley, Thomas, Ellwood and others that

it needs no emphasis here. Face-to-face neighborhood life is created and exists for a time in every large real estate development carried out in a city suburbs. Community consciousness is stimulated by the emergence of a number of common needs. Street lights, postal facilities, a school, sidewalks, a number of such necessities are lacking and the only way they can be obtained is by concerted effort. The settlers form an association. Every property owner is brought into it. They get acquainted at the meetings, and through the activity of committees. Once associated for mutual protection and support, they further associate for social and cultural purposes. The face-to-face fabric is constituted.

But when those early needs are all met and there are no further occasions for active coöperation, when the city population spreads out to the settlement and erases its boundaries, and filaments of business with all their blighting effects begin to penetrate the district,—then the local community features begin gradually to disappear and are all wiped out. The neighborhood-unit scheme on the other hand supplies remedies for many of these defects. In the first place, its common

open spaces and definite residential character supply a basic need of association that is permanent. Its special street system and main highway boundaries give it a conspicuous and lasting unitary character which, McKenzie has pointed out, constitutes the physical basis which is favorable for the existence of neighborhood sentiment. The local shopping districts being exactly adapted to population needs can be and are sometimes confined by covenants in deeds and by municipal zoning to the areas where they were first located.

Once the neighborhood-unit scheme is adopted, it becomes possible to approach from a new angle a number of vital questions in the field of community organization. For one example: The neighborhood community, as tentatively described in this scheme, does not center upon a business district. The traditional idea of a local community is one with a business district. I assume that the welfare districts which have been delimited by the St. Louis Community Council are mainly of the business-centered type. The first provides a basis for strong local community association: the second only for specialized organizations.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY MOVEMENT

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**I**N 1919 the great cry of the day was "community organization." This cry became a sort of slogan and it came to mean a number of things, many of them undesirable, including methods for manipulating the community so as to make foreigners as uncomfortable as possible, and closing the public mind so as to make the development of new ideas as difficult as possible. During the reconstruction

period it seemed to me, as it does now, that the real problem was primarily that of adult education; trying to get men and women to face the problems in the new world as they had been thrown into relief by the war. The war had revealed not merely problems; it had uncovered "forces" and "dangers" as well. Our American communities were afraid of the unsuspected energies hidden under their

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