



THIS SKETCH, which shows the life of the planned town, should be used in conjunction with the detailed map displayed on pages 24 and 25

nation to work upon another set of facts. He must begin with that very elusive thing, the national character. All human beings, of course, want shelter and convenience from their towns. But thereafter an Englishman's wants differ considerably from a Frenchman's or an American's, and a New Zealander's are different again. We do not desire, for example, American skyscrapers along our waterfronts, or huge ornate Latin boulevards, monuments and city centres, or English promenades with piers and pierrots and penny-in-the-slot machines beside our beaches. What we do want, however, we do not know because we have not had it yet. The town planner must do his best at this point to interpret ourselves to ourselves.

Then there is national policy to consider, sometimes almost as elusive a thing as national character. Is industry to be dispersed or concentrated? Is it wanted at all? Will farmers of the future have big cars and cheap petrol with, accordingly, a wide shopping range, or will the smaller country centres revive instead of being swallowed by the larger? Will big public works be required to maintain full employment (and therefore grandiose city improvements really be possible) or will full employment elsewhere leave only a small manual labour force available? Your guess is as good as mine. But the town planner must not guess. He must have interviewed departmental heads and others who know possibilities and work on likelihoods, not assumptions.

Not Too Large, Not Too Small

After that his whole local situation must be set in the wide perspective of general principles. For example, under a certain population a town can be too small for industrial efficiency (i.e. its local market and its "pool" of labour, skill and servicing facilities will be too small), or for municipal efficiency (amenities become too few and too costly), or for cultural efficiency (libraries are too small, choice of films too limited, production of local papers and plays, and visits of touring teams and companies impossible). But over a certain size also towns lose their advantages. Suburbs sprawl out into country, wasting workers' time, money and energy

in daily travel, and becoming mere dormitories without life or character of their own. Crowded traffic routes neutralise the advantages of contiguity. Sheer human mass destroys local democracy, and cultural individuality and initiative. Fresh food comes in too little quality, and too late, from too far. And the cost of living rises with the tenements...

It is also possible for a town to be too approachable as well as not approachable enough. If it lies far off the highways of commerce its people will suffer economically and socially. But if traffic to elsewhere flows continuously through it they will suffer in life and in limb. Similarly a town can be so unified in architecture or so completely zoned in activities as to be mechanical; or, on the other hand, so sprawling and diverse as to be simply a mess. The pleasantest places to live in turn out to be those where city streets follow one style of building (with individual variations), and where trees, parks and tall blocks of flats diversify the suburban sea of houses.

Having considered his settlement against this whole background of national atmosphere, political intentions, natural limits and experience elsewhere, the town planner at last produces his report.

After All This

Or perhaps we should say that the Town Plan now makes itself, for, when all factors have been considered, one line of development—a compromise between all considerations—usually appears inevitable. It must be worked out in detailed particularity, nevertheless—a road to be diverted at this point, a windbreak plantation to be planted here, a new school to go there, with such and such an access to this housing block, and such and such an angle to the winter sun, these sections only in this suburb to be set aside for shops... After that we must leave our town planner, turned salesman, to convince the town council. And leave them, working over decades and as opportunity occurs, gradually to mould their settlement towards the practicable ideal of "a good place to live" which they have accepted.

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