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PLANNING FOR TOWN **AND COUNTRY**

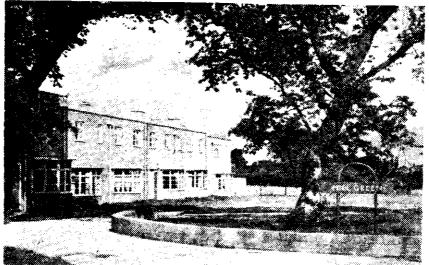
Reconstruction in Post-war Britain

SERIES of talks will presently be given from the YA stations by Charles Cameron, until recently an officer of the British Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Making contact with Mr. Cameron shortly after his arrival in New Zealand, The Listener asked how he thought British experience in physical reconstruction was likely to apply to New Zealand.

"I can't possibly say that after only a few days in the country," replied Mr. Cameron, a shorter edition of David Niven with a pleasant Scottish voice. "But it is quite obvious that both communities are up against a good many of the same problems—in essence if not in precise form. For example, you have to get more houses put up, and that pretty quickly. You have to decide what these houses shall be like-flats, or cottages, or bungalows; temporary or permanent; timber or brick or concrete; prefabricated or otherwise. You have to decide where these new dwellings are to be put-on the outskirts of your present cities, or replacing poorly built areas in those cities, or in smaller towns elsewhere. And if you decide to make the







smaller towns larger you have to take steps to get established in them the industries at which, people will be working in the immediate future. And, in any case, you have to take farming into consideration in all this new building, neither using up good land unnecessarily nor pushing market-gardens and town milk supplies too far away from the people. Besides, your main highways have to be planned from centre to centre so as to give freest and fastest communication from one to the other with-

out either making life too dangerous in the smaller settlements in between, or leaving them high and dry. In short, New Zealand's problems in this field are the same as Britain's. The magnitude of Britain's problem, however, has been aggravated by the war."

"Because—I take it-so many British towns have been blitzed."

"Yes, but more than that. The British people have to convert the greater part of their industry back from war production to peace production; they have

Above: Building materials in a North London housing depot with mass-produced parts ready for transport to a new suburb or city. Left: Charles Cameron, formerly of the British Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Below: A new country housing block

also to convert some of it from war production into new industries altogether. and in certain cases, functioning with different processes on different sites. Besides, as you know, we never really broke the back of clearing up our slums. They have still to be liquidated. German bombs did only some of the preparatory work towards that. For slum clearance really means slum replacement. And that involves not only putting up new and better buildings where the old substandard ones stood, but thinning out a good deal of their old populations and transplanting them into new districts altogether."

Citizens Without Cities

"You mean building new suburbs?"

"Well, partly. But there's a limit to the distance you can keep pushing big cities out into the countryside round about. Take Manchester, for instance. Something like 150,000 people must be rehoused in new suburbs adjacent to the city or further afield in new localities. A White Paper published last April considered that a score or so of altogether new cities might have to be built in various parts of Britain, either in virgin country or around already existing small towns '

"That sounds promising."

"It is. But don't under-estimate the difficulties. For instance, if a big city loses population, particularly from its centre, it may lose status-and revenue. Both these things matter a lot to the ratepayers who remain. And then the small town that has been selected to become a minor city may not, for its part, like the prospect either."

"Well, the problem that's troubling us at this moment, Mr. Cameron, is what people transferred to new towns-or to new suburbs for that matter-are going to live on."

"Oh, there's no question of transferring people in the sense of ordering them out of one place into another. The idea is to provide new houses in new communities for those who at present age without a house, or are living in poor conditions, and to do it inside such wellthought-out long-range plans that the whole British standard of living and way

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