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treatment for a town in need of a new deal until he knows all about his patient, any more than a doctor would."

Limiting the Spread

"Have you anything more to say about Wellington?"

"Well, having thanked God for your hills, you should surely set a limit to your spread. In fact, you should—and probably have—a statutory limit to the growth of your city, otherwise you will strangle yourselves as London did. London is now being gradually disentangled—a slow and terribly costly process."

"Can you tell us anything about Stevenage, near London, which was chosen to be a planned town?"

"As the first chairman of this first New Town Development Corporation, I can say that the idea is to decentralize industry and get the population away from London—in this instance to a 60,000 population town, estimated to take 15 years to build at a cost of around £30,000,000. The Act, however, gave people on the proposed site the right to object if they wished, and naturally some of them did. However, the housing of 50,000 people could not be held up for perhaps some 50 who did not care for the idea, and the scheme is of course now going forward, a great co-operative effort, though delayed by our general present difficulties in England."

"Stevenage, Crawley, Three-Bridges, Harlow, and Hemel Hempstead are London's first four new towns to which people in the overcrowded capital are looking for new opportunities, for happier, healthier living than they ever enjoyed before."

"How is planning going in general?"

"Priority has now been given to the housing of agricultural workers so that we can get food to keep us alive. Then miners have to produce coal for exports to bring in the further food we need—again just to live at all—and they must be properly housed too. And until all these basic difficulties about keeping alive right themselves, we cannot turn our eyes very much to more gracious ways of living."

"Does the scheme apply to the whole of England?"

Consolation—Not Compensation

"Almost every town and city has a programme worked out, but such must be kept elastic. The new Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, makes it possible for the general country-wide scheme to be implemented. The Government has set aside £300,000,000 sterling to buy out building development rights, as compensation for taking over this necessary control itself. But personally I don't much like the word 'compensation' in this connection. I prefer 'consolation' as being truer. But any real planning would have been impossible without some such enactment."

"How did you get a Government bold enough to do this sort of thing?"

"For a generation we have had people working away at these things and hot-gossiping. Architects and planners and others have spent a lot of time speaking, writing, and playing the busybody gadfly; getting hold of public bodies and Government departments, pleading and pressing for an adequate set-up—for better, more farsighted management of our national estate in the interests of us all. It all really began with Robert Owen and came down through Ruskin and

William Morris to Patrick Geddes, Ebenezer Howard and such, and to Sir Patrick Abercrombie, who founded the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and prepared the great plans for London and many other cities. Suddenly the walls of Jericho seemed to fall and we found ourselves not merely allowed, but actively encouraged to do most of the things we had pleaded for for so long."

"So the Government is now pledged to planning?"

"Yes, and our planning Minister is a tireless and determined man, as is Aneurin Bevan, our Minister of Health, who is responsible for all actual state housing. He started life as a miner."

Conflict of Claims

"We can't help wondering what will happen in England with all the conflicting claims for housing, agriculture, industry, defence, and so on. How do you reconcile the different interests?"

"All interests concerned must work together. We are 47,000,000 people and it is realised everywhere, I think, that it is now a choice between hopeless chaos and a properly thought-out and co-ordinated plan, for we have already painfully learned that to go-as-you-please is not to arrive at what is pleasant. We now aim to keep both town and country really distinct, each with its own special characteristics. Our proposed new national parks—a dozen of them—have been selected for their high scenic value. But agriculture will be kept very fully alive within their wide boundaries because otherwise the country would become overgrown and indeed lose half its beauty which in Britain is so largely man-made."

"How do you deal with individuals in the matter of taste in housing and other buildings?"

"Well, there are the Regional and County planning officers. Every single building—even if it be no more than an addition to a garage—is discussed at a monthly meeting of the planning committee which, on its planning officers' advice, decides to accept, to reject or to defer. The grounds for rejection or deferment may be that the proposed building will look wrong in materials, colour or design."

"Do you go so far as to tell a man that he can't do this or that because it's in bad taste?"

"In a way—indirectly—yes. He is 'guided,' and of course helped by being given other and better ideas to consider. It needs some tact, but these better ideas are becoming more and more readily accepted—partly because of the Government's own good example in housing—as with you. You can do a good deal in educating the elders through the young. My last book is called *The Adventures of Building—Being Something About Architecture and Building*, for intelligent young citizens and their backward elders. I faced this question of taste right away. As a rule you find that the people who care most about anything also know most about it. That certainly goes for architecture."

His Own Fault

"Speaking about New Zealand, it might be said that, in the last generation, architecture as an art has come into its own. Yet we still hear the cry, 'I want a practical man.' Houses are generally built without any reference to an architect at all. What have you to say to that?"

"That is partly the architect's own fault. First of all, of course, he must

be practical. But then he often does not take the prominent place he surely should as a leading citizen on whom so much depends. An artist must have an audience and unless the people know enough to demand good architects, why, they will never get it?"

"You have made practical experiments yourself in planning?"

"Oh, yes; I not only preach town-planning, but I have built my own little model township in North Wales, Portmerion—a small seagirt resort that seems to be known to quite a few New Zealanders. It has been my special spare-time toy."

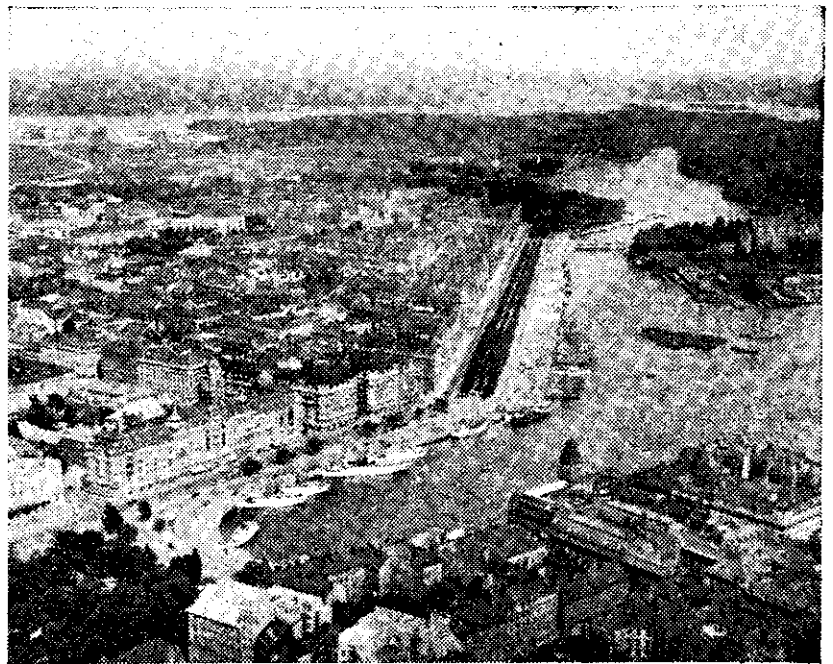
"Our Hutt Valley is the only fertile land within 50 miles or so of Wellington. Now it has been built over. How

minutes of their homes. The only drawback is that they are apt to put up rather dismal-looking little shacks for tool-sheds. Sweden is much tidier. Cultivators there have charming neat little white-painted wooden pavilions with lockers for tools and even furniture for tea-parties."

Scandinavian Tidiness

"How is it that Scandinavian countries are so much tidier than ours are?"

"Well, Stockholm is fortunate in having a brilliant landscape architect and the result is that the public gardens and parks are unbelievably beautiful. You can walk all over the place on paths through parks and belts of green. Even the tramway junctions are bubbling over with flowers. There are no fences and,



"STOCKHOLM, with its parks and belts of green, is unbelievably beautiful"

far would you go with the individual in a case like that—in control, we mean?"

"I can remember in England thousands of precious acres of market gardens and orchards that are now all houses and roads. But the aim of modern planning is to ensure the best possible use of the land, not of course for the sake of the land itself, but of those who live on and by it—which is all of us. Now, in Britain, except under very special and exceptional circumstances, really good food-growing land can never be taken for building."

"Here, of course, housing is more important at the moment than market gardens."

"Maybe, but would it not be wiser—in the long run—rather to spend more money on building on the perhaps more difficult but less fertile sites? You, in Wellington, and other New Zealand cities and towns, will need to set a definite and final limit to your growth. In Australia I found that people had never heard of what we in England mean by 'allotments.' That word to them means house-building sites. To us they are largeish, urban areas set aside for vegetable growing. Almost every town has them and though each house may have its own individual garden, those householders who are keen cultivators can get extra land close by on the allotments if they want to within a few

moreover, no litter; no trees are broken and no flowers stolen. 'How come?' I asked him when I was there last summer. And he replied, 'Well, of course we teach the children in our schools to respect natural beauty and also common property.' Whatever the teaching, the result in actual practice is certainly wonderful—and most refreshing."

"What do you do about hoardings in Britain?"

"We have long had a society (the Society for the Control of Publicity and Advertising—SCAPA) contending with that matter, but until recently hoardings were only more or less inadequately controlled through agitation promoted by it and by people like myself. Now, I am happy to say, that though advertising can still be done within reason on actual business premises, commercial advertising in the countryside is no longer to be allowed."

Later in the day a member of *The Listener* staff guided Mr. and Mrs. Williams-Ellis to a photographer's studio. On the way Mrs. Williams-Ellis handed her husband a small gift. He stopped in the street, took off the string and wrapping from an engagement notebook, and said, "Ah, here we are—just the very thing. 'Be Tidy.'" And he dropped the paper into a street dustbin which bore that exhortation in large yellow letters.