

Building and Letting.

It is certainly wise in order to give the suburb a good start, that a certain number of houses should be built of the character it is desired should be maintained, and that they should be let at a rental giving a fair and just return on the capital expenditure. The designs for these houses might be obtained in competition from local architects. As many architects as submit designs worthy of erection should be engaged to erect them on different parts of the suburb. Subsequently, people leasing or buying land (whichever is decided) should be recommended to employ the architect whose design has been erected near their proposed lease. In this way variety will be gained and yet each portion of the suburb will have an individual character.

Leasing the Land.

Whether the land is leased to individuals or to societies, it must be let with building clauses defining the style of the house—not only the cost of it—as it is usually done. In an estate of this kind there might be several co-partnership societies for the development of a different part of the suburb. As can be seen by the plan, there are several distinct portions such as those I have tentatively named, The Shrubbery, The Rosary, Park Avenue, East and West Ways, which could well have a distinctive character in harmony with the rest of the suburb. I am of opinion that by far the best method of development is by the leasing of portions of the estate to co-partnership societies, by which every tenant would have a proprietary interest not only in his own house, but in those of his neighbours.

A society might be formed to develop the whole estate, but as that would involve rather extensive responsibilities it would, I should think, be much easier to arrange for associations to develop various portions. The essential feature of such an association is that a group of intending occupiers take shares to the value of not less than £10, which entitles them to an equal vote with those who take up several shares or advance money on loan. Interest is limited to 6 per cent. Immediately a building is finished a tenant is ready to occupy it, so that there is no loss of interest on outlay.

Every shareholder would have the right to occupy his allotted dwelling for as long as he chooses, provided he keeps it in decent order and pays the rent. Community of interest tends to insure the amenities being preserved and that nothing is done which is objectionable. On the contrary, as each tenant has a financial and proprietary interest in the whole estate, its well-being would be the care of all, and friendly and social intercourse would be fostered. Should a tenant desire to leave, he could do so at any time by relinquishing his tenancy, and either retain his shares or transfer them to the association at their face value. This is a great benefit compared with the ownership of a freehold, which might have to be sold at a loss.

As the profit to the shareholders is limited and the value of their portion of the suburb would increase, money would be available for maintaining the sports ground, children's playground and reserves, and for contributing a fair share to the beautifying of the whole suburb.

Institute of Architects.

Dunedin Branch Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the Dunedin branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects was held last month. The branch chairman (Mr. B. B. Hooper) occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance.

In moving the adoption of the annual report and balance-sheet, the chairman said that in spite of industrial troubles they hoped that architects would now again begin to share in the general prosperity. With certain exceptions architects had been the worst hit through the effects of the war, and they quite deserved a busy time now. With reference to the advertising of the profession as a whole by the institute he felt very strongly that that was the right thing to do, and it was quite time it was done. The student classes had improved greatly, chiefly owing to the returned soldiers taking advantage of the free tuition. The balance-sheet showed that unparalleled economy had been exercised. As President of the New Zealand Institute (Mr. J. L. Salmond) had worthily upheld the credit of the branch, and deserved the thanks of the whole body of members. The report and balance-sheet were adopted.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—Branch chairman, Mr. P. V. Wales; vice-chairman, Mr. L. D. Coombs; hon. secretary and treasurer, Mr. H. Mandeno; committee, Messrs. D. G. Mowat, B. B. Hooper, J. L. Salmond, G. W. Gough, and E. W. Walden; hon. auditor, Mr. H. E. Wilson. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the retiring officers.

Here and There.

In the course of the discussion on the Housing Bill in Parliament Mr. C. J. Parr, of Auckland, suggested that an effort should be made to erect houses tasteful in design, and from that the discussion moved to the question as to who was to supervise the Department. Members urged that a special Department should be created, run by a man with imagination. It should not be managed by the Labour Department, which already had enough to do. Mr. Massey defended the Labour Department, which already had the matter in hand, and he felt confident the present Secretary of Labour would prove capable of doing what was expected of him. He was not going out of New Zealand for his officers.