

Clayton many houses were nearing completion, and the work was sufficiently advanced to provide the basis for a considered opinion as to how far the Guilds were likely to prove a success.

The question was approached in a critical spirit, and information was obtained from:

- (a) Unofficial sources: e.g., from guildsmen and others not in official positions; and
- (b) Officials: such as foremen, architects, surveyors, clerks of the works, borough councillors and members of the Borough Housing Committees.

The method adopted was, first of all, to inspect the building operations informally, that is, without introductions to any of the officials or staff. After obtaining information in this manner, I secured introductions to Guild officials on the site and proceeded to cross-examine them with the strictest impartiality. In all cases I found the officials willing to submit themselves to cross-examination and to place at my disposal, without reserve, such facts and figures as were available. The information thus obtained I submitted for verification to other persons not officially connected with the Guild schemes.

#### THE GROWTH OF THE GUILDS.

Before dealing with the building operations now proceeding under Guild contracts, it is necessary first to sketch the rapid growth of the Guild movement and to outline the structure of Guild organisation. There are slight differences in details of organisation and practice in different areas, but the principles are the same throughout. The important thing to bear in mind is that the Guild movement is a natural growth, not an artificially created movement. The first Building Guild was formed by the operatives in Manchester in January, 1920. The Manchester District Committee of the Operatives and Bricklayers' Society, having considered the possibilities of a Guild, unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the scheme and referred it to the Manchester Branch of the Federation of Building Trade Operatives. From a delegate meeting convened by this latter body the first Guild came into existence. The movement spread with unexpected rapidity all through the country, but particularly in Lancashire. London followed close on the heels of Manchester. To-day there are about a hundred Guild Committees in Great Britain. A number of these have reached the stage of being able to submit tenders and commence work. The first intention of the Manchester operatives was to form a North-Western Building Guild, but as applications for affiliation came in from various parts of the country, it was decided to form a National Guild.

London, while not affiliated to the National Guild, declared that its principles and aims were the same. At present a scheme for the setting up of a National Guild is under consideration, and it is expected that very shortly all Building Guild Committees will be affiliated to one National Guild, with properly constituted regional councils, having

full powers to enter into and carry out all contracts, leaving to the National Guild the control of supply, credit, finance, insurance and policy. At the time of inquiry, the Guilds were affiliated either to Manchester or to London. Under the new scheme the London and Manchester Guilds will be termed regional councils. These regional councils will be practically autonomous, and will have representatives on the National Board.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE GUILDS.

In describing Guild structure I will deal with the London Guild, because it is typical of Guild organisation throughout the country. The London Guild operates in Greater London, which is divided into eleven areas corresponding to the district sections of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives. Area committees have been formed in seven of these districts. An area committee consists of representatives selected by every craft union in the local building industry. Each committee elects a chairman and secretary, and agrees to organise the supply of labour for building operations within its own area as and when required. The area committee is not a legal entity for the purpose of entering into contracts. The legal entity is the Guild of Builders (London), Ltd., which is a society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893 and 1913. The Board of Directors of this society consists at present of twelve representatives elected by the Building Trade Unions in Greater London affiliated to the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives. In addition, there are representatives of other functional organisations, i.e., architects, electricians and clerks; each of these groups has one representative. In addition to the above, each local Building Guild Committee elects one member to the board. The Guild of Builders (London, Ltd., by its rules, is competent to become builders, decorators, general contractors, and may function in all branches of supply whether as merchants, manufacturers or transporters. The Board of Directors is responsible for the appointment of a manager and headquarters staff, and for the fixing of their salaries. The general foremen are nominated by the local committees and ratified by the Guild of Builders. Departmental foremen are elected on the job by the different crafts concerned. No one in a managerial position can have a seat on the Board of Directors. Such persons can offer advice, but are not entitled to vote. The managerial department cannot do anything without the sanction of the directors. The manager is responsible, not only to his own staff, but to the whole of the organised Building Trade Operatives in the district. This gives him security without weakening the full democratic control by the workers. The term manager really does not appear in the Guild dictionary. Mr. Malcolm Sparkes, the London secretary and manager, describes his function as "the service of leadership." The structure of the local committees and the central managing