

SCHWABE COLL

THE AMERICAN LEGION

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS

1608 K STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

December 20, 1946

Honorable George B. Schwabe
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Schwabe:

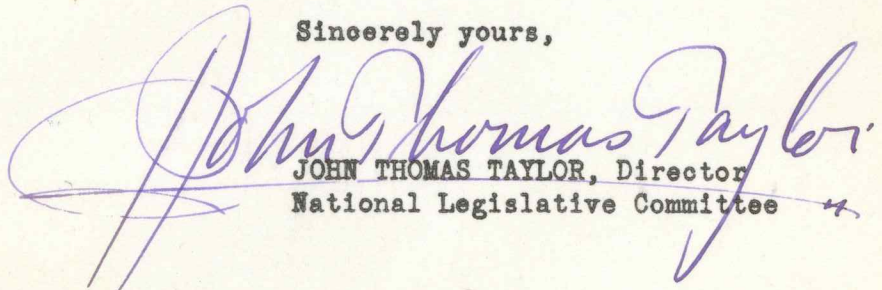
In view of the fact that we have received numerous inquiries from Members of Congress with reference to the policy of The American Legion regarding housing, I am sending you herewith, for your information, a printed copy of "The American Legion Housing Program."

You will note in the foreword of the pamphlet that the program was adopted by our National Executive Committee, which met in Indianapolis, Indiana, last month, and the conclusions reached were based on findings and recommendations of a Special Housing Committee, composed of World War II veterans, which made an extensive national survey of the veterans' housing situation.

Since this program was adopted, several of the recommendations contained therein have been effected by executive order. Such items as may require national legislative action will be presented to Congress by The American Legion in due course.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,


JOHN THOMAS TAYLOR, Director
National Legislative Committee

JTT:HVH

**The
American Legion
HOUSING
PROGRAM**



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THE AMERICAN LEGION

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FOREWORD

The American Legion is plunging all-out into the task of speeding up housing for veterans.

A program, soundly conceived, has been adopted and is presented herewith.

As a matter of background, the 1946 national convention of The American Legion in San Francisco instructed that a committee of World War II veterans be appointed to study the housing problem and seek a solution. This committee was (and is) The American Legion special national committee on veterans' housing. Immediately after the convention this committee commenced surveys of the situation at all levels of national life, and presented its findings to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 22, 1946, at Indianapolis, Ind. The findings of the housing committee are contained in this pamphlet under the heading of PART I.

Basing its decision on the findings of the special housing committee, the National Executive Committee approved a housing program to be pursued by The American Legion. This program is recorded under PART II of this pamphlet.

The American Legion's housing program is broad in its aspects. Some of it requires legislative action which cannot be initiated until the next session of Congress. However, in order that steps may be taken now by Departments, Posts and other organizations of The American Legion to implement the national program, two plans for community action as originated by Posts are described in this pamphlet under the heading of PART III. Dissemination of information on local housing programs was instructed by the National Executive Committee. These are supplemental to the cooperative housing plan drawn up by National Headquarters of The American Legion and outlined in a brochure entitled "Here's How On Vets Housing" distributed in September, 1946.

In order that the membership of The American Legion and other interested citizens can be fully informed on the national housing program adopted by The American Legion at the National Executive Committee meeting November 22-23, 1946, this pamphlet, entitled "The American Legion's National Housing Program," is being given wide circulation.

Donald G. Glascoff
DONALD G. GLASCOFF,
National Adjutant.

PART I

Report

of the

**SPECIAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' HOUSING
THE AMERICAN LEGION**

to

**THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION**

Indianapolis, Indiana, November 22, 1946



THE NATIONAL COMMANDER AND
MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

By action of the Twenty-eighth National Convention of The American Legion at San Francisco, California, a Special National Committee on Veterans Housing was created and was directed to report its findings and recommendations to the November meeting of the National Executive Committee at Indianapolis, Indiana, in November, 1946.

The committee wishes to report that in executing its assigned mission as established by resolution of the National Convention, that the National Commander named the following persons as members of the committee: Richard C. Cadwalader, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, National Vice Commander, chairman; Hayward S. Cleveland, Port Washington, New York; J. D. Sawyer, Middletown, Ohio; Arthur I. Marcus, Greendale, Wisconsin; A. Clark Murdock, Omaha, Nebraska; Dick Vail, Fresno, California; J. Frank McClure, Kansas City, Missouri; and Robert R. Poston, Indianapolis, Indiana, secretary.

Following the appointment of the committee, the United States was divided into seven regions and one member of the committee was assigned to each region, the assignments being as follows: Hayward S. Cleveland—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; J. D. Sawyer—Delaware, West Virginia, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio; Arthur I. Marcus—Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa; A. Clark Murdock—North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana; Dick Vail—Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, California; J. Frank McClure

—New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas; Richard C. Cadwallader—South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana.

National Adjutant Don G. Glascoff by telegram under date of 10 October 1946 requested each Department Commander in the continental limits of the United States to appoint a Special Department Committee on Veterans' Housing to study conditions in each of the Departments, and to correlate the work of any post housing committees that might also be created to study the matter of veterans' housing on the community level.

The seven members of the Special National Committee on Veterans' Housing visited many of the states in the regions assigned to them, attended a great many housing conferences, did much field investigation, and on the morning of Monday, November 4, 1946, they all gathered in Washington, D. C., for the opening of The American Legion Housing Conference in the ballroom of Hotel 2400. This conference opened at 10:00 a. m. on Monday, November 4, 1946, and ended its conferences at 1:00 p. m. on Friday, November 8, 1946. During the week of conferences, the following persons appeared, addressed the conference, and responded to questions or submitted written statements to the committee: Rear Admiral Cotter, USN; Paul H. Griffith, National Commander, The American Legion; James W. Follin, assistant administrator, Federal Public Works Agency; Abner Ferguson, U. S. Savings and Loan League; Robert Veit, Shields & Company; Dillon S. Myer, administrator, FPHA; F. W. Kelsey, assistant administrator for finance, Veterans Administration; R. R. Msgr. John O'Grady, secretary, National Conference of Catholic Charities; Dr. B. M. Boyd, Executive Secretary, Department of Christian Relations of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America; Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel, chairman, Committee on Christian Social Relations of the United Council of Church Women; R. R. Msgr. L. G. Legutte, executive secretary, National Catholic Rural Life Conference; Rabbi Sol A. Fineberg, American Jewish Committee; Mr. Kreutz, National Savings & Loan League; Mr. Ellingson, National Savings & Loan League; W. R. Ogg, American Farm Bureau; Col. Waldron E. Leonard, D. C. Housing Authority; John Ihlder, National Capitol Housing Authority; Col. Paul Lawrence, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Jack Hardy, National commander AMVETS; Harry H. Steidle, Prefabricated Home Mfgs. Institute; Joseph Myerhoff, Home Builders Association; Ernest F. Henry, Home Builders Association; Paul T. Kratzmaier, Efficiency Engineering Co.; Ira Streusand, M. Shapiro & Son, Builders; Russell G. Creviston, Crane Co.; Dorothea Wells, Citizens Council for Community Planning, Inc.; John L. Haynes, Chief Construction Division, Office of Domestic Commerce, U. S. Department of Commerce; H. B. Fletcher, president, Peoples Bank, Cumberland, Maryland; Ramsay Wood, Division of Records and Statistics, Federal Reserve System; Col. F. R. Lyons, War Department; Dr. J. C. Haskens, Assistant, U. S. Surgeon General; H. E. Riley, Bureau of Labor Statistics; R. W. Hudgins, U. S. Department of Agriculture; George West, chairman, Building and Construction Division, U. S. Chamber of Commerce; Leon Chatelain, Washington Board of Trade; Wm. Wilkinson, 5th District Housing Committee, The American Legion, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Ivan Carson, Office of Price Administration; Robert Darrah, secretary, Southern Wholesale Lumber Association; Frank R. Creedon, deputy administrator, CPA; Joseph Kershaw, vice executive, Distributing and Construction Price Branch, OPA; Douglas Whitlock, chairman, Building Products Institute; James W. Rouse, Mortgage Bankers of America; Herbert Rivers

and Boris Shishkin, American Federation of Labor; Carl C. Stranlund, Lustrom Corporation; Homer C. King, Office Defense Transportation; Howard A. Kelley, National Association of Housing Officials; Dr. Francis J. Brown, American Council on Education; Mrs. Stanley C. Cook, chairman, Committee on Legislation, National Congress of Parents and Teachers; John B. Woods, director, Forest Resources Appraisal, American Forestry Association; Robert Dougherty, National Lumber Association; H. E. Foreman, Associate General Contractors of America; R. Needham Ball, National Retail Lumber Dealers Association; J. J. Mayton, secretary, National Prefabricated Homes Association; Herbert U. Nelson, National Association of Real Estate Boards; O. O. Bright, manager, Southern Pine Association; Louis Justement, American Institute of Architects; Edward Winfeld, National Public Housing Conference; Lewis T. Brenninger, Home Property Owners Association; Joseph H. Deckman, Home Property Owners Association; Stephen M. Foster, New York Life Insurance Company; Wilson Wyatt, administrator, National Housing Authority; R. J. Thomas, CIO; Raymond M. Foley, Federal Housing Administration; Paul F. Nitze, Department of State.

A stenographic record consisting of 1,407 pages was made of The American Legion Housing Conference in Washington, and is available for the use of any members of the National Executive Committee who may care to peruse it.

The committee appreciated the splendid spirit of assistance and cooperation uniformly evidenced by all of the many persons and organizations whose representatives appeared before the Housing Conference. The committee considers the advice, information, and points of view given to them by the persons appearing before the Housing Conference to be invaluable in their understanding and analysis of the current veterans' housing problem. Without the benefit of the Housing Conference in Washington, the committee would feel it impossible to make satisfactory findings and recommendations to the National Executive Committee.

In response to the request of the Special National Committee on Veterans' Housing issued to the Department Commanders by National Adjutant Don G. Glascoff, 39 Departments as of November 18, 1946, have filed the reports of their Special Department Committees on Veterans' Housing with the National Headquarters of The American Legion, and many American Legion posts throughout the country have filed reports of their local committees on veterans' housing with the National Headquarters of The American Legion. These reports have been most useful to your committee which wishes to express its thanks for this splendid assistance and cooperation.

The committee has earnestly pondered all the advice, testimony and information made available to it through the action of the state departments, the local post committees, The American Legion National Housing Conference, and their personal attendance at conferences and through field investigation. The committee well realizes the enormity of the problem posed by the current housing shortage and the complexity and difficulty inherent in making effective recommendations. However, after considered judgment and in response to the directive contained in the resolution of the Twenty-eighth National Convention, the committee begs leave to present to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion the following findings and recommendations:

FINDINGS

1. STATUS OF VETERANS HOUSING:

It is the finding of this committee that a state of emergency still exists in the problem of veterans' housing. In every section of the country, in almost every town and city, and in many rural areas, veterans are unable to find adequate living quarters for themselves and families. A degeneration in the American way of life is immediately apparent and will have lasting effects unless corrected.

The committee finds that the emergency is the direct result of a chronic housing shortage which has arisen over the period of the last 15 to 20 years. Striking natural gains in population, the depression of the "30's" coupled with the absence of nearly 13½ million men and women during the five war years, and their subsequent sudden return to civil life, have served to aggravate this chronic condition to one of emergency. All of these factors have occurred during a period when home building has, because of economic conditions and the restrictions of war, been at a low ebb.

Reconversion has not met the need of housing because of an initial error in appraising what the prime postwar problem would be. It was not until early this year that it became apparent that housing would take precedence over employment as a problem. The program designed to solve this problem was not concentrated upon in any emergency light. A long-range program designed to treat a chronic condition, rather than an emergency, was planned. It was not until the middle of 1946, after a serious loss of time, that a comprehensive emergency program began to operate. The penetrating eye of this committee has reviewed the stewardship of this program and herewith submits its findings.

Indications seem to point to the fact that the Veterans' Emergency Program will achieve its goal in the number of starts for 1946. These "starts," however, are concentrated in the single dwelling unit field. Goals of rental and low-cost housing "starts," the most needed type by far for the veterans, have been woefully short and completions, generally, have been alarmingly slow. Prices of existing structures and new construction have arisen beyond the veterans' ability to pay.

2. SURPLUS PROPERTY:

The War Assets Administration is a new agency operating under a law and regulations that have been justifiably criticized. Criticism has been directed mainly at the slowness in disposal of critical items.

Red tape and lack of competent personnel have served to confuse an essentially simple problem to the detriment of the Veterans' Housing Program.

If the disposal of surplus building materials and equipment had been expeditiously handled by the federal government, it could have been of material assistance in solving the veterans' housing problem.

3. FEDERAL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY:

The Federal Public Housing Authority has as one of its functions the erection of temporary re-use dwellings. This program is divided into two classifications, relocation of temporary dwellings on college campuses and relocation of temporary dwellings in municipalities.

Both the college portion of the program and the municipality program have been

retarded seriously, with completions woefully short of requirements. Contributing causes seem to be poor contracting procedures and materials shortages.

Maximum rent schedules applied at some colleges to such housing units and trailers have caused hardship.

The costs of providing these units have been unduly high due to delays and has resulted in a decrease in the ultimate number of units provided.

Another function of FPHA is the supervision of permanent public housing and the disposal of permanent war housing.

There has been a general abandonment of criteria for occupancy of present clients of public housing to the detriment of low income veterans eligible for occupancy.

Present high income tenants of public housing are not being evicted to make room for qualified veterans who are forced to buy or rent in a higher market even though they can less afford the expensive readjustment than the present tenants. If this type of condition is permitted to continue it will ultimately defeat the objective of low cost public housing.

Further, some permanent war housing is being sold by FPHA for WAA at current market prices with sale to present occupants taking precedence over veterans' privilege of purchase.

The FPHA has treated the entire emergency veterans' housing program as a normal transaction, and has adopted a "business as usual attitude."

4. OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION:

Ceiling Prices on Building Materials seemed to be the greatest point of conflict between the factions interested in the housing problem. This matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of private enterprise in the recent action taken by the President of the United States in lifting all ceiling prices on building materials. There are disputed views with regard to whether or not prices will rise, fall or remain at a stable high. The committee feels that the portion of control which was hampering production was wisely dispensed with and to the advantage of the veterans' housing program.

5. RENT CONTROL:

Existing Structures: The principle of rent control is acknowledged to be of necessity in the light of the critical shortage of rental housing even though a very strong public sentiment has been found for a general decontrol and return to the principles of free enterprise and the law of supply and demand. In the main, the administration of rent control by OPA has been the target of justifiable criticism.

Conversions: It is generally found that a deterrent to this program is the dual authority exercised by FHA and OPA in the setting of rental ceilings. The review authority exercised over FHA by OPA seems to be the key point of dissatisfaction.

6. NATIONAL HOUSING AGENCY:

The National Housing Agency has been given the responsibility of administering a program to solve the veterans' housing problem. It has been vested with ample authority to achieve its mission. This agency has not used its powers solely to administer the Veterans' Emergency Program. Valuable time, effort and public funds have been diverted toward passage of legislation and perpetuation of the agency, rather than execution of the vast problem at hand.

7. VETERANS ADMINISTRATION:

This agency enters the housing picture through the home loan guarantee provisions of the GI Bill. Early procedure in handling these guarantees was slow and cumbersome, and appraisal standards were so unrealistic that it was virtually impossible to complete a loan under the guarantee. Remedial legislation was passed in December, 1945, and after several months of adjustments and development of methods, a generally workable system has evolved.

The present appraisal system used in processing GI loans is inequitable and unfair to the veteran. There is no specific formula nor is there an adequate basis established to arrive at fair values on existing homes and farms. There is a great opportunity to victimize the veteran and defeat the aid to him under the GI loan.

While credits are extended freely under the guarantees in most sections there are still areas where this is not true. In even more areas the guarantees are not enabling veterans to purchase homes without substantial down payments at present cost levels.

The RFC Mortgage Company and Veterans Administration have been too slow in providing the necessary deed of trust, mortgage and note forms to provide secondary financing to GI loans. This has interfered with loans by financial institutions to GI's.

The Home Loan Bank System contemplates discounting GI loans for the federal savings and loan associations affiliated with it.*

8. HOARDING:

The committee has repeatedly heard and had substantiated to its satisfaction, accusations of hoarding of building materials by federal agencies, including the armed services. Private industry has all alleged, that had these materials been released promptly, these tremendous stockpiles would have acted as a buffer in a critically short market. Time has served to level this problem to a certain extent. However, it must be noted that some agencies which have been accused of hoarding have failed to publish inventory figures.

9. PRIORITIES FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING:

The lifting of materials controls from October, 1945, to March 26, 1946, resulted in a wave of non-residential building that swept up our small postwar reserves of materials. The condition was aggravated by the prior announcement of control resumption so that token starts were made on a vast number of projects. While CPA has constantly lowered the number of new starts, existing non-residential construction has until very recently been a stiff competitor in the materials market with home building. Enforcement has not been rigorous enough but most current violations are on a small scale. Fear has been expressed that widespread unemployment may result if non-housing construction is not decontrolled at once.

This committee finds that present material supplies are not sufficient to support the demands of both housing and non-housing construction and that on an open market, non-housing construction is in a better competitive position for materials. It further finds no evidence of an impending economic collapse because of present non-housing controls.

* Officers of the Home Loan Bank system advise that this sentence is technically incorrect and should have read: "The Home Loan Bank system contemplates purchase of GI loans for the federal savings and loan associates affiliated with it."

The principal supporters of the black market in building materials have been the constructors of non-residential building. Non-residential building has consistently raided the labor market and paid bonuses and excess ceiling wages.

10. LABOR:

The *general* labor supply for the construction of veterans' houses is alleged by labor representatives to be adequate and to remain adequate unless there is a tremendous upswing in building. However, in various regions of the United States there are various serious shortages of certain skilled journeymen and apprentices.

It is clear from statements of labor representatives and builders alike that the labor engaged in home building is extremely inefficient. This is partially due to the failure of labor groups to bring apprentices into the labor field and the high average age of the present journeymen.

Because labor is in short supply, evidence has been found and substantiated that there is wide-spread pirating of mechanics. Restrictive practices by labor itself have perpetuated this short market of these skilled workers.

Labor is getting on the average about twice as much pay per hour on the job as before the war.

A major portion of the cost of the average housing unit is represented by payments to labor somewhere along the line. Total labor costs have risen tremendously.

Strikes in industry as well as in building trades have been a major factor in retarding home construction.

Future labor supply and training of apprentices will not be sufficient to furnish adequate supply of skilled journeymen for America's housing program.

Unless means are found to settle strikes, increase efficiency of labor, and improve and shorten the training period of apprentices, substantial reductions in the cost of building homes will not be possible.

The recent removal of wage stabilization controls will permit honest and straightforward wage adjustments and make for a better distribution of labor supply.

11. PRIORITIES FOR HOUSING:

"HH" priorities have never been effective because they could be exercised on dealers only. In a limited number of cases certified "HH" priorities have been given and these mostly to large projects. In addition, the NHA and CPA have on occasion given "set-asides" and "AAA" priorities, usually in hardship cases. Recent directives have required holders of "HH" priorities to file them with dealers.

The operation of this system of priorities has been confused, and ineffective, and has been of very little assistance in getting building supplies and equipment to veterans' housing.

The opinion of veterans of World War II seems to be that veterans and non-veterans alike should be permitted to build homes, since present priorities for veterans are of little or no value to them. They merely serve to bring public resentment upon the heads of veterans and the inflationary costs to veterans alone.

12. TRANSPORTATION:

It is the finding of this committee that transportation is in critically short supply. Labor difficulties in the maritime field have been most untimely. Distribution of materials have been hampered by lack of rolling stock and the committee finds that this problem is apt to become more acute before this emergency is resolved. The

committee has also found that all available modes of transportation are not being used to their fullest due mainly to old-line shipping policies between manufacturers and railroad operators.

13. ENFORCEMENT OF CONTROLS:

Since V-J Day, the black market in building materials and other violations of regulations have grown to huge proportions in every part of the United States. The OPA, CPA, FHA, NHA, WAA and other federal agencies have done a miserable job of enforcing the federal laws and regulations. The Administrator-Expediter of the NHA has been especially lax in the administrative enforcement of restrictions. Effective enforcement could undoubtedly have limited the black market to minor size and importance if it had been early applied and consistently followed through. The most alarming aspect of this federal "winking" at the black market is not the effect on the veterans' housing program, but rather upon the attitudes and morals of the millions of citizens affected who have had bred into them a disrespect of the law and its enforcement. The abolition of OPA price ceilings upon building supplies will eliminate the most virulent cause of the black market, but the magnitude of the violations of restrictions in unauthorized commercial and industrial building still exists without any effective action being taken.

14. RURAL HOUSING:

Housing of veterans' families on farms is even more critical on a percentage basis of actual need than urban housing. The demand is not as concentrated and, therefore, is not recognized generally to be as serious a problem as urban housing. Returning veterans have chosen the evil of poor urban dwelling accommodations above even worse farm dwellings. The Federal Government has not successfully coped with rural housing problems. Emergency remedial measures should have been taken long ago.

Financing of homes on a farm is intimately connected with the production on the farm and is therefore a substantially different problem from financing urban dwellings.

15. NEW HOUSING:

It is indisputable that there is a large amount of new housing under construction at the present time and that more new housing of all types will probably be provided in each of the years 1946 and 1947 than in any year since 1925. However, the greater portion of this housing will be individual units for sale. Much of it will be of inferior construction and design. Prices for purchase or rental of this new housing will be very high and far beyond the ability of the average veterans or citizens to pay.

16. RENTAL HOUSING:

Rental housing is certainly one of the most vital and important issues confronting the veteran. An overwhelming majority of veterans prefer to rent housing units rather than to purchase. Supply of rental housing for all income groups is seriously short.

Large corporate investors have found it unprofitable to build under present economic conditions. Many small owners of investment properties have found it

more profitable to sell at inflated prices rather than continue to rent under restrictive government controls. Some small investors have found ownership of small investment properties without profit. Other landlords have had excellent return on initial investments in spite of controls. Many owners have converted rental housing to office, commercial, industrial and other non-residential uses, because it was more profitable.

Insufficient assistance has been offered by the National Housing Agency to encourage construction of permanent conventionally-built multiple rental units. Assistance has been late and difficult to obtain. Too much emphasis was placed by NHA on single units for ownership and not enough to securing rental units. Investors will be able to provide a tremendous number of units if they are afforded an opportunity to acquire the materials and to achieve a fair return upon their invested capital.

It was generally agreed by all representatives of government and private groups who appeared before the committee that additional incentives and authorizations must be provided to developers of rental housing. Many state laws and county and city ordinances obstruct investors from developing rental housing.

17. CONVERSIONS:

Many communities have been exceedingly successful with a conversion program. Where such a program has failed, it was found in most cases that the local OPA rent control office held rentals too low. Another obstacle has been that many owners feared to take strangers into the intimate confines of a conversion in their homes since they could not readily get them out if friction occurred.

18. LAND:

With the anticipated building boom, city and suburban, building sites will soon be in short supply. During the war there was very little development of desirable building sites. Those that are available are very high in cost.

Speculation in existing building sites, by greedy and selfish interests, have contributed to increased prices and thereby penalized the veteran.

The action of local housing authorities in freezing land for anticipated public housing use does not contribute to ease this situation.

The Federal Public Housing Authority, as the disposal agency for War Assets Administration, has not performed expeditiously in disposing of land suitable for housing purposes.

Speculators have, at high profits, opened so-called subdivisions just outside city limits where satisfactory transportation, fire protection, utilities and sanitary facilities are not available, thereby creating suburban slums.

There is a critical lack of zoning and city planning. Many subdivisions are subject to building restrictions by covenants which prevent proper utilization of the land for housing.

19. BUILDING CODES AND PERMITS:

Local governments have developed their building codes over a period of many years. A large proportion of them are antiquated and prevent more efficient and lower cost housing.

During the existence of the veterans' emergency housing period, building per-

mits have been issued by most local governments without respect to the HH priorities or CPA permits. In areas where local permits were issued in coordination with the federal priorities system there has been a far greater control over construction and more materials have thereby been channeled into home building.

Many labor unions, suppliers, builders and other special interest groups have consistently fought the modernization of antiquated building codes.

On the other hand the absence of building codes in many smaller communities and in suburban areas has made it possible for unsafe, unsanitary dwellings to be foisted off on veterans and other citizens.

20. UTILITIES:

One of the impending "bottle necks" of veterans' housing is the shortage of land where utilities are installed or are available for immediate use. There are a relatively small number of medium price building lots in the nation that have full utilities supplied, such as gas, water, sewer and electricity.

The expansion of utilities has been hampered by insufficient materials and labor. The National Housing Agency, War Assets Administration and Civilian Production Administration have not given assistance to the utilities companies to acquire the necessary materials for the promotion of utilities expansion.

21. FACTORY BUILT HOUSES:

Factory built houses have so far proven more expensive than conventional built houses and they have not been able to erect as many units as estimated. This high cost has been due to lack of volume and the absence of an integrated erection force.

Component materials that might be used for finishing conventional houses have been unnecessarily stockpiled by such producers.

Factory built houses can help to solve the veterans' housing problem, but they should do so on the basis of their merit and competitive pricing and sales appeal without the aid of government assistance.

The quota of the National Housing Agency for factory built homes has not been met by such industries even though material was channeled, guaranteed markets and other advantages given, set asides made, priority granted and RFC loans made. Such advantages to these new and untried techniques have stymied and discouraged conventional building at the expense of the veteran.

The special encouragement of factory built houses of untried types would tend to direct many critical materials into such housing thereby diverting materials from rental houses and apartments and equipment needed to complete them for occupancy.

Only a limited number of houses of the untried types could be produced during the existence of the veterans' housing emergency due to difficulty of organizing labor and erection forces, time for "tooling-up" and distribution.

22. WAGNER-ELLENDER-TAFT BILL:

The General Housing Bill S 1592 was introduced into the 79th Congress on November 14, 1945. It was an omnibus measure of 110 pages containing 27,000 words under ten titles and many cross-references to other legislation.

The bill is not germane to the veterans' emergency housing situation.

Further, the bill died with the ending of the 79th Congress and in the opinion of this committee, it would be a mistake to reintroduce the measure.

23. LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION:

The actual job of constructing a house and apartment or living accommodation of any type (prefabricated, industrialized or conventional) is something that has to occur on the site. Housing is and should be a community responsibility. The National Housing Agency has attempted to stress the importance of community action and responsibility in the veterans' emergency housing program. It has attempted to secure cooperation from mayors of thousands of cities. Actually to date, about 700 committees have been organized. These committees have been of tremendous assistance. The very existence of the National Housing Agency program has tended to ease the community conscience so as to permit them to shift their rightful responsibility to the shoulders of federal agencies. There are numerous examples of the fact that where the housing problem for veterans is being solved, it is being done through the public-spiritedness and cooperation of the local community.

24. CIVILIAN PRODUCTION ADMINISTRATION:

The Civilian Production Administration is charged with the issuance of priorities and compliance therewith for the construction of non-residential projects. It is unfortunate that controls were relaxed during the short period immediately after the war so as to permit a tremendous amount of commercial, industrial and other non-residential construction to be started. This was caused by a premature announcement of the intended freezes.

Enforcement of unauthorized non-residential building has been poor, mainly because of lack of personnel and failure of citizens to fulfill their responsibility in reporting illegal non-residential construction activities.

The CPA has attempted to regulate commercial building by setting up a dollar volume for each region. This has been unsatisfactory. The permit program has been honey-combed with loopholes. The standards used have been too loose, difficult to apply and when applied not vigorous enough. There has been a serious lack of adequate control over the use of building materials and equipment for remodeling and repair to existing non-residential construction.

The CPA recently issued a policy providing that the rules of essentiality, usually applied to issuance of "authorities to build," should not apply to an application by a veteran, who wished to construct a non-residential building valued at less than \$10,000. Many veterans have availed themselves of this privilege. This procedure has probably been the source of the general public opinion that many new unessential barrooms, small stores, nightclubs, etc., are being built illegally.

25. EXPORTS OF HOUSING MATERIALS:

The volume of exports of housing materials is extremely small. The United States is dependent to a considerable extent on the importation from other countries for its available supply of many critical building and industrial commodities as well as foodstuffs. The Department of State reported that further curtailment of exports is likely to be detrimental, rather than helpful, to the veterans' emergency housing program because our refusal to sell to other countries the things they badly need, may result in a decrease in the imports of the materials we want, and badly need for our domestic economy. The present export license system administered by the

Department of Commerce is effective in regulating the amounts of building materials leaving the country.

Much of the building materials seen at ports for overseas shipments are the property of the armed forces. This fact has led to the assumption that such property is being exported for use by foreign governments.

26. SLUM CLEARANCE AND LOW INCOME GROUPS:

Slum clearance is not pertinent to emergency veterans' housing. It is an established fact that a percentage of the national population, including veterans, is living in slums or blighted areas. Slum clearance is a long-range project and, if entered into, necessarily requires the destruction of much needed housing units, even though they are of an undesirable nature.

The committee is cognizant of the housing needs in these areas and it is felt that beyond question it is necessary to take into consideration this segment of the population in formulating long term housing needs.

Insurance companies state that they can and will provide housing for certain low income groups if certain legislation is provided.

27. PRODUCTION SUBSIDIES:

Production subsidies appear to have been effective in securing increased production of specific building materials. They have been administered slowly and ineptly. There is no evidence to indicate that they have resulted in a decrease in the cost of building materials to the contractor, or in the final cost of the house to the veteran, or in the rental price paid by a veteran for a housing unit. The producers in industrial groups affected by subsidies upon building materials don't like them, say they don't need them and are clamoring for a free market.

28. FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION:

The Federal Housing Administration was created to insure mortgages.

Since development of the veterans' emergency housing program, FHA has been assigned the responsibility for issuance of HH priorities. FHA has been aggressive in promoting veterans' housing especially in the field of single unit dwellings for sale. Sufficient stress has not been placed on rental units.

In the places where negative attitudes have occurred the main difficulty is a matter of stodgy personnel who are unaware of the veterans' emergency.

There has been too much insistence upon inflexible interpretation and application of rules and regulation.

29. PUBLIC WORKS:

The volume of public works in federal, state and local projects since V-J Day has been very large.

Federal public works construction, particularly that of the War and Navy Departments has not been curtailed to meet the needs of veterans' housing. This extensive building further reflects the apathy of the federal agencies toward the emergency nature of the housing needs.

30. BUILDING MATERIALS:

Failure of the federal administration to act promptly following V-J Day to assure, through necessary special steps (available under the War Powers Acts) a

full flow of building materials through regular and established channels and to institute a stock-piling of materials for housing purposes, is responsible, to a considerable extent, for the current housing shortage. Many plants were shut down, labor forces were disbanded and a general relaxation of wartime controls hit the supply and distribution of building materials very hard. The abandonment of the wartime limitation order, L-41, without the immediate substitution of some effective temporary system of allocation to insure a steady and adequate flow of needed building materials was a critical error in judgment. This represented maladministration because of Congressional warnings. Had a similar order been adopted, the volume of home building and other essential construction during the first postwar year could have substantially increased and possibly all controls over building materials could have been lifted by this time. Failure to do this resulted in the hoarding of building materials, diversions of materials to the black market and, worst of all, the institution of the largest non-essential, non-residential construction program that this country has experienced in a decade. The attempts to recapture the once-abandoned controls have never been successful. The stumbling program of half-way controls has only served to multiply the confusion, to foster evasion of regulations, to stimulate the black market and to defeat the very purposes for which they were designed. They have done little to speed the flow of building materials to the veterans' housing program jobs.

The existence of OPA price ceilings and the NHA priorities system were principal causes for drying up and dislocating the supply of building materials. It is anticipated the elimination of OPA price ceilings will result in higher costs for building materials. However, the adequacy and steadiness of the supply is expected to eventually lower the final selling price of the house to the veteran.

Representatives of government and business alike advised the committee that in the absence of strikes the production of all building items in 1947 would be sufficient to construct at least 1,500,000 new housing units.

31. GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION OF REGULATION:

The construction industry is undoubtedly one of the most vast and complex of the varied enterprises in our nation. It includes thousands of individual contractors, who have a multitude of business relations with labor, suppliers and manufacturers. The administration of regulations by the various agencies of the Federal Government has been very poorly done. The federal agencies doing the job seem to be uniformly overstaffed with second-rate personnel and understaffed with competent personnel. Generally they are attempting to do their work with inadequate and untrained personnel whose ability, experience and grasp of the problem is inferior to that required to do the function assigned. Coordination and cooperation between the federal agencies has been extremely poor. Public squabbles and newspaper battles have unnerved the agencies concerned and the industry groups affected with a consequent deterioration of public confidence and support. There have been constant corrections, amendments and interpretations of orders and regulations which have bred confusion and interfered with the operations of the mills, factories, yards and jobs involved. The administration of the controls has made for complexity, discouragements, bad temper, slow down of operations and, worst of all, has added tremendously to the cost of doing business, which in the final analysis has been reflected in the partial paralysis, incompletions and high cost of housing to the veteran. The

shops, factories and contractors of the nation have been flooded with hundreds of forms, orders, rules and regulations, many of them conflicting and duplicating the work of others. The administration of controls by the government agencies has discouraged the taking of risks and has had a definitely retarding influence on the construction of new living accommodations. The administration of these government agencies has provided an opportunity for political manipulations and the granting of favors, which in some cases has created considerable injustice. There is also some indication that various subversive groups have felt that the administration of these federal agencies offered an opportunity through the existing control measures of regulating and directing the entire national economy toward communistic ends and of breeding a confusion and lack of tolerance which would lead to the same end.

* * * *

The foregoing FINDINGS as presented by the Special National Committee on Veterans' Housing were accepted by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 22, 1946.

PART II

THE HOUSING PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AS ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION ON NOVEMBER 22-23, 1946, BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION SPECIAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' HOUSING.

Recommendations

1. NATIONAL HOUSING AGENCY:

That, the National Housing Agency be abolished.

2. HOUSING EXPEDITER:

That, the Office of Housing Expediter be abolished.

3. EMERGENCY HOUSING BOARD: (see chart attached)

That, an Emergency Housing Board shall be created by Executive Order of the President of the United States to be composed of seven (7) members appointed by the President of the United States. The members shall be veterans of the Second World War who are members of veterans' organizations chartered by Congress. The members should represent the various geographical regions of the United States.

That, the members of board shall elect a Chairman and shall employ a "Coordinator," who shall act as executive officer of the board. The Coordinator shall serve at the pleasure of the board as a full-time paid employee.

That, the board shall meet at periodic intervals upon the call of the Chairman.

That, the members shall be paid \$50 per diem for days of service plus traveling expenses.

That, the purpose of the board is to coordinate and pursue to a speedy conclusion the lagging and now demoralized veterans' housing program. It shall enlist the cooperation of all the various groups which compose the housing industry of the nation.

That, the board through the Coordinator and its full-time staff will confer with and provide liaison between all the federal departments and agencies connected with the housing program. The board will not have any directive authority over any other federal department or agency. It may make recommendations, suggestions, and request action of the President of the United States, Congress or any federal department or agency.

That, the board shall be located in the executive office of the President and be responsible only to the President of the United States.

That, the members of the board will serve at the pleasure of the President. The board will be abolished when the President shall determine that the veterans' housing emergency has terminated.

4. FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION:

a. That, FHA should be empowered by Congress to guarantee 100 per cent loans upon homes to GI's for a period of time to forty (40) years with interest at four per cent per annum for an amount not to exceed \$6,500; no such loan to be made where the sales price of the house in question exceeds \$6,500; or where the current cost of reproduction of such house, less depreciation, is less than the loan requested; or where the house does not meet the minimum requirement for construction established by the FHA. Such loans should be available to veterans who wish to acquire ownership of a unit located in any type of multiple dwelling building or a farm house including necessary out-buildings. FHA shall not guarantee this type of loan in an amount to exceed \$200,000,000.

b. That, Congress authorize FHA to guarantee up to 100 per cent of the cost of construction of new multiple rental housing projects containing not less than eight rental units for a period up to 50 years at three per cent interest for an amount not to exceed \$500,000 to a single individual or corporation; *provided that:*

(1) The individual or corporation to whom such a guarantee is given shall agree to give preference in the rental of such units to veterans of the Second World War; or their widows. They shall agree to reimburse the occupants of such units on a pro rata basis at the end of each fiscal year, all net profits in excess of four per cent; they shall agree to give second preference in rentals to families with children; they shall agree to rent at least 20 per cent of the units to families at not to exceed \$25.00 per month; they shall agree to supply heat and all utilities, mechanical stove and mechanical refrigerator, proper maintenance of the units, garbage and trash removal services, and maintenance of flowers, trees, shrubs and grounds;

(2) FHA shall not guarantee such type of loans in an amount to exceed \$1,000,000,000.

(3) All such projects must meet the minimum requirement standards of FHA.

c. That, FHA should make a study of the feasibility of federal income tax exemption, for five years, upon income derived from the rental of newly-constructed units.

5. RENT CONTROL:

a. That, the Office of Price Administration cease to administer rent controls and that supervision of rent control, whether on old, new or conversion property, shall be vested in the Federal Housing Administration.

b. That, the FHA review present rent control regulations and policies and promptly publish an integrated set of regulations to provide an equitable system of controls.

c. That, the federal rent control shall continue in each county in the United States and the District of Columbia until the governors of the respective states or the commissioners of the District of Columbia shall certify in writing to the commissioner of FHA, under oath, that sufficient rental accommodations are available, in the county, to house all persons desiring to rent *or* until the number of new housing units provided in the county since V-J Day shall equal twenty-five (25%) per cent of the number of persons from the county who served in the armed forces between December 7, 1941, and V-J Day, whichever shall be accomplished first.

d. That, all federal rent control shall cease when 4,000,000 new housing units shall have been erected since V-J Day.

e. That, landlords shall be allowed an immediate ten (10%) per cent rental increase on existing rents and that any landlord or tenant may appeal to the FHA for an equitable adjustment of the rent in accordance with FHA formulas for setting rents.

6. BUILDING CODES:

That, the Federal Housing Administration be requested to draft a modern building code as a model to the local governments of the United States. FHA shall use their best efforts to encourage them to keep their building codes up to date and in the public interest.

7. HOUSING LOW INCOME VETERANS:

That, Congress enact legislation providing for a 20 per cent grant-in-aid to the states, territories and District of Columbia which provide a matching 80 per cent from the states for the purpose of providing rental units to veterans of the Second World War and their widows. It is recommended that Congress appropriate \$50,000,000 for this purpose to be available over a three year period, one-half of this sum to be available for urban housing and one-half for rural housing. The said amount to be apportioned among the several states, territories and District of Columbia on the basis that the number of veterans in service during World War II, from each such state, territory or District of Columbia bears to the total number of veterans. Such sums to be available only upon a signed agreement that:

a. Veterans of the Second World War and their widows will be given preferences.

b. If veterans of the Second World War and their widows and/or widows of World War I are not available, non-veteran families may be permitted to occupy said rental units.

c. No tenant will be permitted to occupy a rental unit when the aggregate weekly income of all persons residing in the unit, from all sources, exclusive of pensions and payments received for services in time of war, are in excess of \$20 per week.

d. In no case may the rentals charged for such units exceed \$20 per month, and the tenants must be furnished heat and all utilities, a stove and refrigerator, garbage and trash removal services and maintenance of grounds.

e. All rental units shall be of the plainest, simplest and most utilitarian type of construction consistent with health and safety.

f. These rental units shall be available to veterans of World War II and their widows and/or widows of veterans of World War I who are indigent or receiving public relief.

g. If more than ten per cent (10%) of the occupants in any such rental housing project ever have an aggregate income in excess of that prescribed above, the state will forthwith proceed to either:

(1) Return immediately to the Treasury of the United States the grant-in-aid made by the Federal Government, or,

(2) Within 30 days advertise and sell said project to the highest bidder for cash at a public auction and return to the Treasury of the United States the proportion of the money realized from such sale as the grant-in-aid bore to the total cost of the project.

That, Congress and the legislatures of the various states (not already having suitable legislation) be requested to enact legislation authorizing the investment of the funds of insurance companies, banks, savings and loan associations, trusts and estates in rental housing projects.

8. PRIORITIES FOR HOUSING:

That, all priorities be abolished except those that have to do with procurement of materials for the national defense.

That, the veterans' preference shall be preserved with respect to housing already started under "HH" priorities.

That, price ceilings on new construction for sale shall be abolished.

That, any single housing unit in excess of 2,500 square feet of floor space shall require a CPA permit as though it were non-residential construction.

9. FEDERAL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY:

That, the Federal Public Housing Authority be returned to the jurisdiction of the Federal Work Agency.

That, the present permanent war housing, permanent non-farm housing projects and "Greenbelt Towns" be immediately sold, giving preference to veterans of World War II and their surviving widows. Such sales to be at a fair market value established by standard FHA appraisal.

That, sufficient funds and emergency authority be made available to the Corps of Engineers to complete all the temporary FPFA reconversion housing units that were committed as of November 15, 1946, and that emergency measures be instituted for these completions.

That, the Federal Public Housing Authority redefine its tenant income criteria for occupancy in public housing units. That unqualified tenants be evicted at once and that the resulting vacancies be first offered to qualified veterans.

10. CIVILIAN PRODUCTION ADMINISTRATION:

a. That, the Civilian Production Administration shall maintain rigid controls on all non-residential construction until such a time as the Emergency Housing Board shall advise that termination is not detrimental to the emergency housing program.

b. That, all applications for non-residential construction shall be judged and decided by the District Committee. There shall be no appeal from their decision. Personnel of District Committees shall consist of five (5) veterans of World War II. No member shall be an employe of local, state or federal government.

c. That, maximum non-residential building quotas shall be assigned to each district. The quotas shall be set in accordance with the materials supply remaining after the needs for housing have been satisfied. Quotas shall not be transferable between districts.

d. That, the Federal Housing Administration shall furnish to the CPA the housing requirements for building materials based on current statistics compiled by the Department of Commerce. The Civilian Production Administration shall govern its permits for, and coordinate its activities concerning non-residential building with the Federal Housing Administration.

e. That, allocations of raw materials to manufacturers by the Civilian Production Administration shall continue, with regard to building supplies and essential home appliances.

f. That, there shall be no priorities channeling of building materials, supplies or appliances from the manufacturing level to the distributors. Materials and equipment shall be distributed in normal channels.

g. That, these permits should be required for work accomplished by all departments and agencies of the Federal Government, all state and local government and all private individuals and corporations who perform any construction, maintenance, remodeling or repairs of real property other than family residential housing.

11. ENFORCEMENT OF NON-RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION:

That, the Department of Justice should be charged with sole enforcement responsibility for non-residential construction. United States attorneys should be instructed to prosecute all such cases promptly and vigorously.

12. WAR ASSETS ADMINISTRATION:

That, since the War Assets Administration disposal program is nearing completion, it is recommended, that, henceforth its entire stocks of building materials and equipment be sold immediately by means of public auction to the highest bidder without any preferences whatsoever.

13. HOARDING:

a. That, Congress require every federal agency and department to file a statement on the first of February and first of August each year with the Department of Commerce, in the form and manner prescribed by the Department of Commerce. Such statements shall show the amounts of materials, supplies and equipment on hand by locations, for construction, maintenance, repair and operation of real property as of January 1 and July 1.

b. That, Congress establish a central procurement agency of the Federal Government for all supplies, equipment, materials, contracts and services required by any department or agency of the Federal Government for the construction, maintenance, repair or operation of real property.

14. VETERANS ADMINISTRATION:

That, the Veterans Administration immediately adopt an appraisal system for use in evaluating real estate for GI Guaranteed Loans, similar to that being used by FHA. Appraisers that now are approved shall be examined to determine appraisal competency. Continuous spotchecks shall be made as a test for consistency of standards invoked.

15. GUARANTEED MARKET CONTRACTS:

That, no further Federal funds be used for the purpose of providing guaranteed market contracts to manufacturers of prefabricated or industrialized housing.

16. PRODUCTION SUBSIDIES:

That, present incentive payments to the manufacturers of building materials be discontinued.

17. LABOR:

That, Congress is petitioned to enact legislation to require settlement of labor disputes when arbitration has failed, and to restore to the American people the kind of government our comrades died to preserve; and

That, such legislation first require unions and management to arbitrate differences, require unions to operate under charters requiring public statement of all incomes, salaries and expenditures; and

That, unions and management be required by law to be held fully responsible, legally and financially, for all contracts to which they are parties.

18. RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES:

That, Congress enact legislation to: Prohibit practices which impose unreasonable restrictions or conditions on the use of any material, machines or equipment.

19. TRANSPORTATION:

That, The American Legion Transportation Committee study the problem of the box car shortage and recommend remedial measures.

20. DECLINING BALANCE DEPRECIATION:

That, the National Housing Agency and the United States Bureau of Internal Revenue be commended for the development of the "declining balance" method of depreciation on rental housing.

21. AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAM:

That, The American Legion create a permanent "National Committee on Housing" with a paid employe to execute the housing program of The American Legion.

That, the various departments and posts of The American Legion create permanent "Committees on Housing."

That, the department and post committees should be encouraged at their respective levels to take an active interest in legislation, ordinances and programs relating to building codes and permits, city planning, zoning and all elements of local community life and action that make for better homes.

That, each post of The American Legion detail a committee to report on unauthorized non-residential construction.

That, the National Adjutant make available to departments and posts successful plans for action.

In conclusion, the committee wishes to express its thanks to the National Commander and the National Adjutant for their encouragement and effective support. In particular the committee wishes to express its appreciation and commendation to Robert R. Poston and Ralph H. Lavers of the National Headquarters Staff for their hard work, loyalty and careful attention to implementing details and arrangements without which the committee could never have accomplished its assigned task in the 40 days allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD C. CADWALLADER,

Chairman, Louisiana

A. CLARK MURDOCK, Nebraska

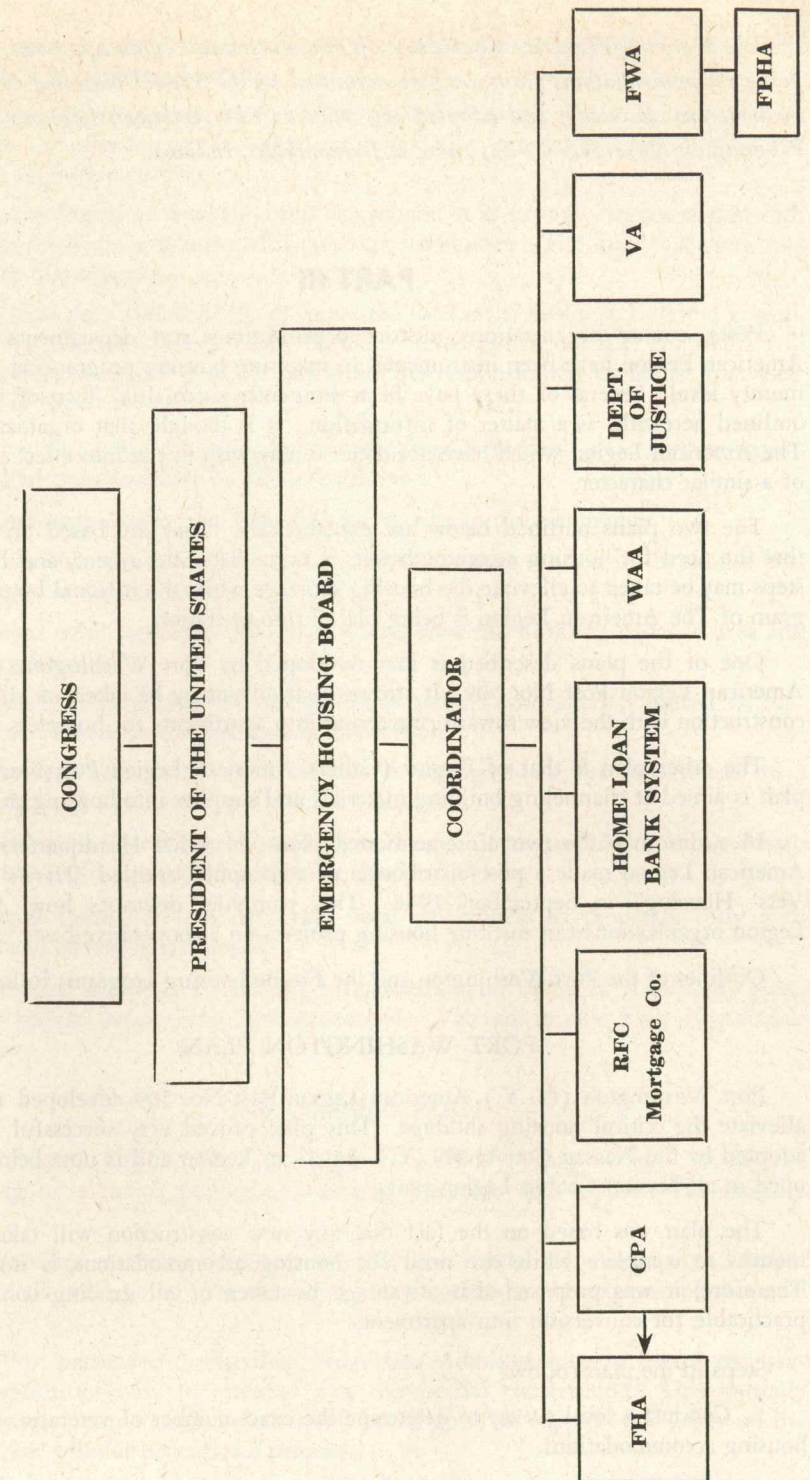
J. D. SAWYER, Ohio

DICK VAIL, California

ARTHUR I. MARCUS, Wisconsin

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SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION PLAN UNDER THE AMERICAN LEGION HOUSING PROGRAM



The National Executive Committee of The American Legion approved the foregoing recommendations from a report submitted by the Special National Committee on Veterans' Housing, and adopted this plan as The American Legion's Housing Program on November 22-23, 1946, at Indianapolis, Indiana.

* * * *

PART III

Posts, county organizations, district organizations and departments of The American Legion have been instrumental in inspiring housing programs at the community level. Several of these have been eminently successful. Two of them are outlined herewith, as a matter of information. It is thought that organizations of The American Legion which have not done so may wish to put into effect programs of a similar character.

The two plans outlined below are expediciencies. They are based on the fact that the need for housing accommodations is immediate and urgent, and that local steps may be taken to alleviate the housing shortage while the national housing program of The American Legion is being placed into operation.

One of the plans described is that developed by Port Washington (N. Y.) American Legion Post No. 509. It stresses that advantage be taken of all existing construction with the view toward conversion into apartments for homeless veterans.

The other plan is that of Fresno (Calif.) American Legion Post No. 4. This plan is aimed at channeling building materials and supplies into housing projects.

In addition to the two aforementioned plans, National Headquarters of The American Legion made a post distribution of a pamphlet entitled "Here's How on Vets' Housing" in September, 1946. This pamphlet describes how American Legion organizations can institute housing projects on a cooperative basis.

Outlines of the Port Washington and the Fresno housing programs follow:

PORT WASHINGTON PLAN

Port Washington (N. Y.) American Legion Post No. 509 developed a plan to alleviate the critical housing shortage. This plan proved very successful and was adopted by the Nassau County (N. Y.) American Legion and is now being developed in all Nassau County Legion posts.

The plan was based on the fact that any new construction will take several months to complete while the need for housing accommodations is immediate. Therefore, it was proposed that advantage be taken of all existing construction practicable for conversion into apartments.

Steps in the plan follow:

1. Conduct a local survey to determine the exact number of veterans who need housing accommodations.

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2. Prepare a central clearing house, preferably at post headquarters, to handle applications of homeless veterans.

3. Break down applications in various groups, showing size of veteran's family, amount he can afford to pay for rental accommodation, present housing situation and any other important matters.

Once the degree of need has been determined, it is strongly suggested that each local post form a Community Headquarters Committee. The Legion should lead the way in this regard.

Each local post should invite all interested local civic, business, fraternal groups, veterans' organizations, Red Cross, builders, union banks officials, etc. This will achieve a very important goal. It will place the responsibility for homes for veterans right in the local community.

As this Community Headquarters Committee is formed, it is further recommended that the committee be set up as follows:

1. Chairman—some local man who is a leader in the community.
2. Two Vice Chairmen—to conduct house to house canvass to determine possible properties for conversion.
3. Legal Sub-Committee—to study zoning laws and building codes in area and make suggestions.
4. Builders Committee—to call on home owners who signify interest in converting for veterans to estimate cost of conversion.
5. Bankers Committee—local bankers to arrange loans for conversions on a basis of showing landlord a profit on his investment.
6. Merchants Committee—to pool "hard to get" items such as kitchen and bath room fixtures and equipment, plumbing, lumber, nails, etc.

Publicity Committee—to encourage local newspapers to cooperate fully with publicity and advertising material.

A complete survey of all existing properties should be made. Landlords given choice of veteran tenants from headquarters file. Veterans in most need should have preference.

THE FRESNO PLAN

The Fresno (Calif.) American Legion Post No. 4 plan, in effect, forces the channeling of a major portion of building materials and supplies into housing projects.

Legionnaires surveying developments in Fresno arrived at the opinion that building materials were going into commercial construction at the expense of veterans' housing.

The Post persuaded the Civilian Production Administration to restrict the issuance of priorities only to essential new commercial construction. This partially plugged up a drain though builders still could go after supplies and labor on the open market without benefit of a priority.

[27]

Next, the Post, by a march on the City Hall, induced the Fresno City Commission to deny any new building permits unless the construction had the sanction of CPA. This action curbed any future unauthorized building, but did not stop legal commercial building or any such construction then in progress.

The Fresno Legionnaires followed up this program by maintaining a close check for observance of the regulations by all parties concerned. Post No. 4 reports the program has proved both practical and effective.

The action of the Fresno Post is within the spirit of federal rules and regulations which call for foremost application of resources to alleviating the critical housing shortage.



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