

realized in England where workers' building societies were formed to buy land and build houses for members. Later, workers in other countries followed suit.

In Copenhagen a change in the official view of the right of the municipality to participate in building did not occur until the last decades of the 19th century, when the city was finally permitted to purchase land and construct model workers' dwellings. At the end of the century a number of large farms, lying just beyond the old city limits, were purchased. This step was to have a decisive influence on future development. As the town spread out toward the open fields, the municipality was able to sell land relatively cheaply for idealistic enterprises. This forced down the price of privately owned land. At last a landlord had appeared who was interested in selling cheaply enough to drive a wedge into the old land monopoly.

As land on the outskirts of a large city must often lie unused for a long time before it can earn any increment, municipal land purchases cannot be counted on to give quick returns. But this is of secondary importance. The primary object of such investments is to facilitate an ordered planning of the city's development, which is very difficult to accomplish when the municipality is not a landlord. But as land purchases do not always give a profit in the first instance, it is worth investigating whether it would not be best for the city to retain title, as was earlier done, so that, when the time is ripe, the community can reap the profit of its investments. It is impossible to revert entirely to the medieval practice of leasing land for building purposes when building is financed by loans from credit and mortgage associations. In other words, the municipality must find a way to share in profits through increase in land values without hindering the financing of building. In Copenhagen all these questions were put in the hands of a commission and in 1906, following the recommendations made in its report, the city adopted the practice of selling land with the right of repurchase after 80—90 years, or its reversion to the community. In later years Copenhagen has been selling land on conditions still more favourable to the city. Now, after a period of time long enough for all loans to have been amortized, the buildings, too, revert to the city



*Row of houses in a Workers' Building Society settlement, Copenhagen.*