

TOWARD THE SOLUTION OF THE SQUATTING PROBLEM IN HAITI

by

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

August 16, 1965


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Dear Sir:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I submit herewith this thesis entitled:

Toward the Solution of the Squatting Problem in Haiti.

Respectfully,


Axel Jerome

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Haiti, as the other under-developed countries, has been experiencing rapid migration of resourceless and skillless citizens from its depressed rural and semi-rural areas into its main urban centers. These migrants, as well as the urbanites of very low income, have not been able to meet their housing needs adequately. This inability has led to SQUATTING defined as the surreptitious erection of sub-standard structures, mostly residential, on private- or government-owned land on which the undertakers have no legal rights.

Although SQUATTING has been endangering the physical and social harmony of our urban centers, many see in it the embryo of the solution to the low-income housing problem. This thesis investigates the idea by exploring the ways and means of assisting squatters and potential squatters in creating legally, physically, and socially sound communities well articulated into the urban structures.

In the light of the analysis of the squatting situation in Haiti -- especially in its capital: Port-au-Prince --, and in three other under-developed countries -- namely Mexico, Barbados, and Pakistan -- proposals are made for the establishment of a comprehensive course of action on 1) the administrative and planning aspect, 2) the legal aspect, 3) the land aspect, 4) the public services and social aspect, 5) the design, materials, and building methods aspect, and 6) the financial aspect of the problem. The unsuccessful results of past limited, weak, and sporadic public actions have led to the conclusion that SQUATTING, being what it is -- a multi-faced social problem --, can only be solved by a course of action tackling simultaneously all the aspects of the whole problem.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

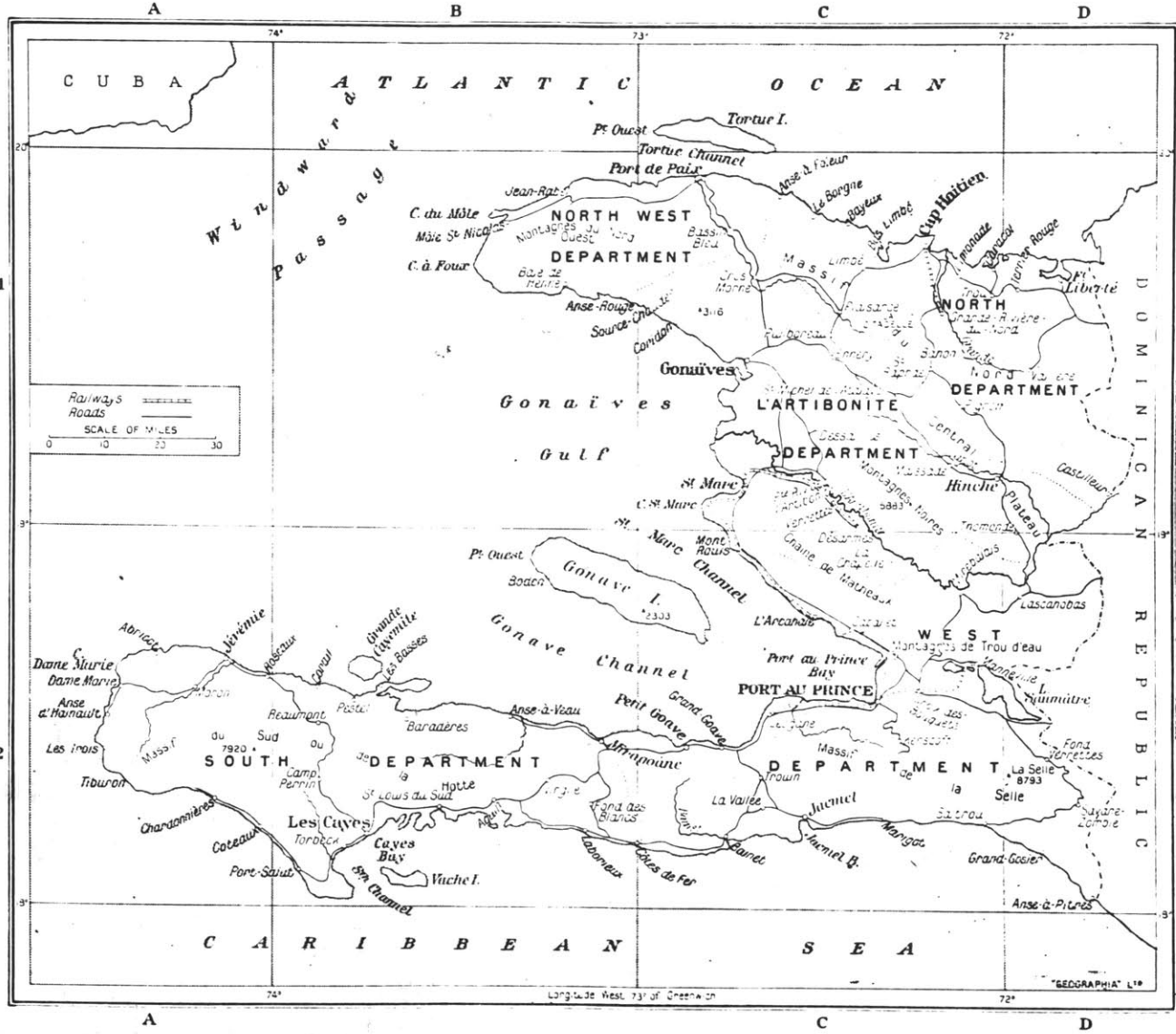
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HAITI

INTRODUCTION

Haiti, the Latin American country of which this thesis purports to study the squatting problem, forms the western portion of the island which Christopher Columbus named Hispaniola when he first saw it on December the 5th. 1492.

Its horseshoelike shape encircling the small island of La Gonave has created the popular image of a monster's mouth widely opened to swallow tiny La Gonave. With a total area of 10,714 square miles, the country has a coastline of 640 miles along which most urban settlements have taken place. Its topography is extraordinarily vigorous with steep mountains emerging abruptly from the ocean and rising as high as 10,000 feet above the Caribbean sea.

The vanishment of the Indian population which Columbus found on the island, vanishment caused by the brutal treatment of the first Spanish settlers as well as by the hypersensitivity of the Indians' health to any sickness found among the Spaniards, created a serious problem for the labor force of the island where agriculture was being developed. To replace the autochthonous Indians, black slaves were brought

from West Africa and their work on the sugar plantations contributed to make of Saint Domingue -- the western part of Hispaniola, now Haiti -- the richest French colony in the 18th. century.

At that time, the settlement pattern consisted, on the one hand, of massive concentration of slaves in camps around the sugar mills in the warm plains and, on the other hand, of some urban agglomerations, near natural harbours, where commerce of all kinds was handled and where the French organized their political and social life.

The dizzy warmth of the Caribbean night was soon to melt the two races into a new racial specimen called the Mulatto. The Mulatto whose father was the French settler -- often the owner of the plantation -- and whose mother was a slave, was always made free at his birth and so was his mother. Most of the time, the Mulatto was sent to France for his education.

The revolutionary winds which were blowing in France at the end of the 18th. century found an easy channel to Saint Domingue through the Mulattoes leaving Paris for their native island after having completed their studies. These ele-

ments became very active in the colonial army and fraternized with the Negroes who had been freed and enrolled in the army as soldiers and officers -- like General Toussaint-Louverture. With the slaves who had fled the plantations and were squatting in the mountains, the Negroes and Mulattoes of the army organized the "Revolution des Noirs de Saint-Domingue" which was going to achieve, after a long fierce scorched-earth war of liberation against Napoleonic France, the abolishment of slavery and the creation, in 1804, of the first Latin American sovereign State : Haiti.

Few States have begun their national existence in less auspicious circumstances. Only in 1825 did France grant conditional recognition to the young Negro nation and, owing greatly to apprehension of repercussions on the North American slavery issue, the United States withheld recognition until 1862. In almost complete physical, linguistic, racial, and diplomatic isolation, the Haitian had to rebuild the country's political and economic life on entirely new basis with very scarce natural and technological resources, in the ashes of the once verdant plantations and prosperous cities.

No wonder that major structural weaknesses were to develop in this re-building. Such weaknesses became spectacu-

larly apparent in the high rate of illiteracy, the constant political unrest, the chronic economic distress, and the physical and social disharmonies -- among which the pathetic contrast between the refined architectural masses of the chateaus and fortifications punctuating the silhouette of the mountains and the appalling shacks of the squatting colonies.

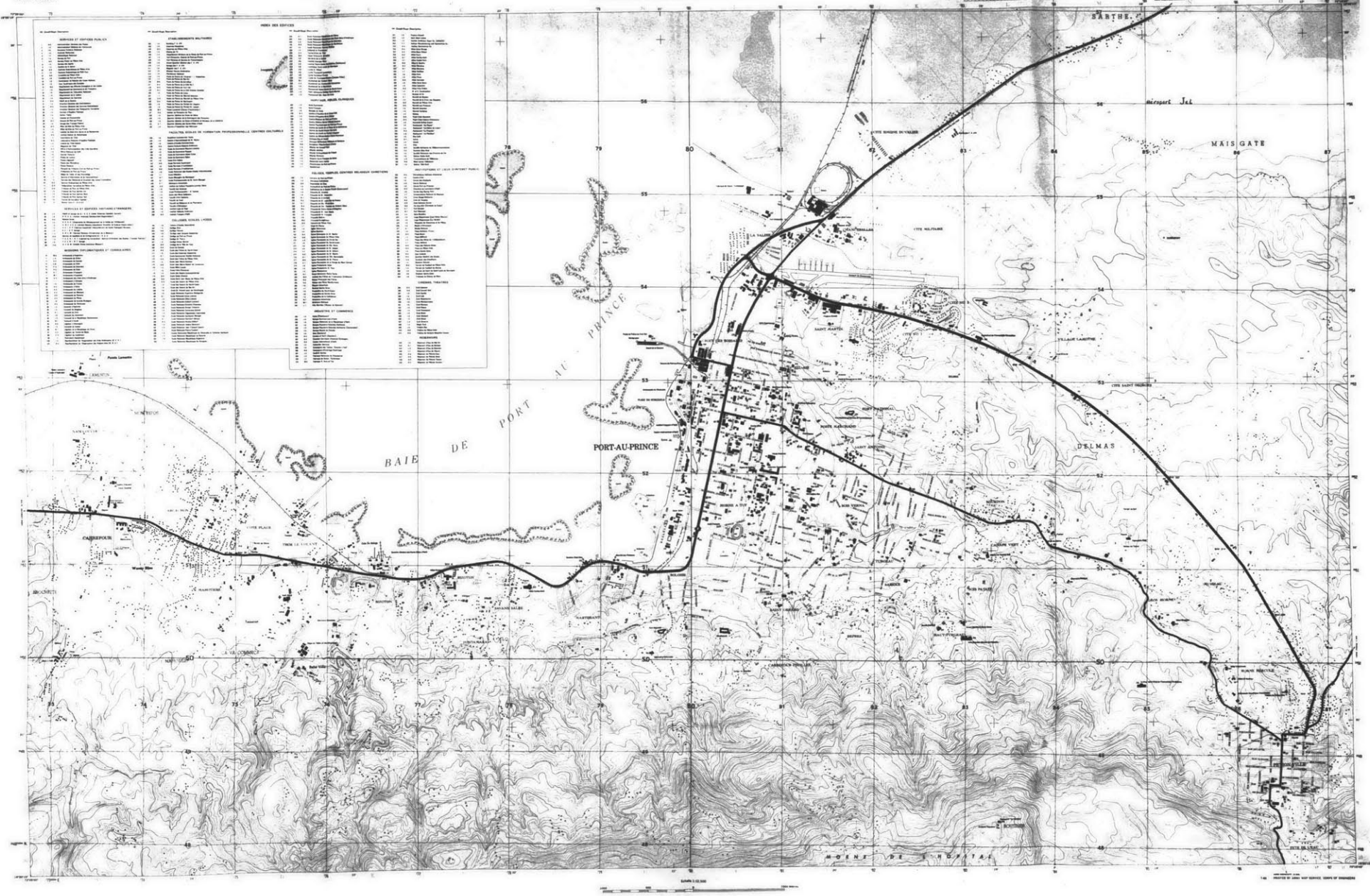
In fact, the settlement pattern of the colony **did** not survive the Independence War for two main reasons. The first and most obvious one was that most structures had been put a-fire. The second reason was that most citizens had chosen to take physical and psychological refuge on the fresh plateaus among fecund fruit-trees and far from anything that could remind them of slavery -- particularly, the extenuating work under a burning sun. Even the army established its strongholds on the most **unexpugnable** mountains, apprehending the return of the French -- what they never did. Very slowly were the coastal cities rebuilt to shelter the governmental institutions, the commercial activities, the schools and hospitals, and the families most active in shaping the political, cultural, and economic structure of the new Nation.

A great number of citizens across the country were given titles of freehold tenure for the land they were occupying,

titles which most of them could not read but which gave them a strong feeling of security and pride. In the countryside, myriads of huts sprang up, built of mud, straw, thatch, and lumber, in the excitement of freedom and land ownership. In the cities, structures, often of great architectural refinement, were being erected by both the private and the public sectors.

The population would appear to have increased at a rapid rate during the succeeding decades. Such increase however has never been adequately registered. The first census was taken in 1918 and found on the national territory 1,131,000 souls. A new one taken in 1950 resulted in a total of 3,112,000 of which 2,800,000 were living in rural areas and 312,000, in urban areas. The United Nations census of 1960 revealed a total population of 3,700,000 of which 3,100,000 were living in rural areas and 600,000, in urban areas.

A close observation of these numbers leads to the conclusion that the centrifugal forces which, after the Independence, were scattering the inhabitants all over the land, have been annihilated by stronger centripetal forces pulling people into the urban centers. As a matter of fact, the urban population has increased by 93 per cent between 1950 and



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1960, whereas the national population as a whole increased by 18 per cent for the same decade. Port-au-Prince, the Capital-City, has been the most important pole of urban growth. Between 1950 and 1960, it has grown from 134,000 inhabitants to 240,000 which represents 40 per cent of the total urban population and an increase of almost 8 per cent a year.

The migration which sustains such urban growth has been caused by the impoverishment of the soil and the subdivision of family farms, by the frequency of natural disasters like tornadoes which spread famine in the rural areas, by the construction and industrial jobs in the largest cities, by the enactment of social legislation favoring urban workers, by the cultural dominance of the city and the necessity for rural families of sending their children to the urban centers for an education when such families can afford it, by the political dominance of the city -- particularly the Capital --, by the employment of peasants -- mostly females -- by urban housewives, and also by the recruitment of ambitious rural men into the army.

Still, the Haitian economy is predominantly agricultural with 80 per cent of the work force engaged in farming. Yet, agricultural production is not sufficient to provide for

the population adequately. Many family farms have been ruined because of archaic agricultural techniques. The peasants who first owned them simply moved onto other lands, most of the time State-owned. And when the soil of this new farm was ruined, they again moved to another piece of State-land. This rural squatting has been responsible for the deterioration of a great many square kilometers of the hinterland.

With few metallic minerals, fuel and power resources, with an extremely small national market, Haiti has not yet been able to intensively develop other forms of industry than those processing agricultural products, although some modest success has been achieved in recent years in the development of the tourist industry, of handicrafts, of the construction industry, and also in the exploitation of bauxite. All these industrial developments have taken place in or around the main urban centers of the coast, always generating new needs for housing, needs which, in most instances, could only be met by the erection of sub-standard dwellings on public or private land.

It remains however that only a minority of the rural migrants who have been pouring into the cities could be employed by any commercial, industrial, or institutional establishment. The majority of them, as well as the majority of

the urbanites deprived of any marketable skill, had to try to make a living out of activities like petty trades, gardening, or as street porters, prostitutes, or thieves. For those members of the urban community, there has been only one alternative as far as housing accommodations are concerned : a shack in a squatting colony.

Although squatters are found in every urban center of the country, it is in Port-au-Prince, the Capital, that the squatters have presented the greatest problems to the physical and social harmony of the city. This study will therefore focus the greatest attention on the Capital's squatting problems. It will be developed in five stages or chapters. The first chapter will unveil the country's housing problem in general. The second chapter will take the reader into the heart of the squatting colonies of Haiti's Capital, explaining their origins and development, their physical and social characteristics, and the threats and hopes they have generated for the squatters themselves as well as for the urban community as a whole. The third chapter will investigate the squatting situation in Mexico, Barbados, and Pakistan, and evaluate the various courses of action taken by public agencies aiming at the improvement of the squatting situation in those countries. The fourth chapter will take the reader back to Haiti and, in the light

of the previous analyses and investigations, will explore the ways and means of approaching the squatting problem in Haitian cities. The fifth and last chapter will offer the conclusions arrived at after this journey across the most appalling form of urban settlement which mankind has ever experienced.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COUNTRY'S HOUSING PROBLEM IN GENERAL AND IN SUMMARY



Cité de

Type de maison qui logeait les ouvriers à la Saline



AVANT

HOUSING BUILDING AND FINANCING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Since the private sector includes any individual -- or group of individuals -- who takes upon himself to solve his housing problem, it can be said that the vast majority of the houses built on the Haitian territory owe their existence to the endeavours of the private sector. The results of such endeavours have varied according to the economic means of the individuals from chateaus to shacks.

To be able to arrive at a close evaluation of the results, it is necessary to draw some lines between various types of houses built by the private sector. These house-types can be divided, for the purpose of this study, in four broad categories :-

Category A.- It includes any house which can satisfy the needs of a family according to average international standards. The minimum cost of such a house in the climatic and economic conditions prevailing in Haiti can be estimated to be \$ 6,000.00. The house would be mostly out of concrete and would include one living-room, one kitchen, one bathroom, and two bedrooms, of which one could be subdivided so as to accommodate

children of different sex. The house may also include a small maid's quarter.

Category B.- In this category falls any house which can satisfy the needs of a family according to average national standards. The minimum cost of such a house would be \$ 2,500.00. Essentially, it would have three rooms -- a living-room and two bed-rooms. The walls would be of stone- or cement-block-masonry, and the roof would be of steel-sheets nailed on timbers. In the back yard, there would be a second structure, usually in lumber, enclosing the kitchen and the bathroom, both quite rustic in character. Very often, a small sheltered porch is added to the main structure to serve as family-room as is common in the Caribbean climate.

Category C.- It includes any house which can satisfy the needs of a family according to minimum national standards. The minimum cost of such a house can be estimated to be \$ 700.00. The walls are usually of lumber plastered with limestone mortar. The roof is of steel-sheets or more often of thatch. The house has only two small rooms primarily used as bed-rooms and a small sheltered porch for day-life. The cooking is made in a barbecue style somewhere in the back-yard. At a corner of this back-yard is built a rudimentary lumber

bathroom consisting on one side of a latrine pit and on the other side of a shower.

Category D.- In it falls any house, the structural and/or sanitary conditions of which represent imminent dangers for the life of its occupants. Here are the one-room shacks made of temporary materials or scraps. Their straw- or palm-leaves-roofs badly built cannot protect against the tropical rains. They have no windows and their floor is often nothing else than the ground itself somehow levelled. They have no sanitary facilities and no running-piped water. The ground, somewhere in the neighborhood or around the shack, serves as a substitute for the latrine pit when there exist no public pits at close proximity.

Having briefly established this categorization, it is now possible to study the behaviour of the private sector in each of the four categories.

The individuals who would be involved in the construction of a house in category A may be divided into two main groups : 1) those who are able to lay out in cash money the total amount required for the complete construction of their house;

2) those who are not able to lay out in cash money the total amount required for the complete construction of their house, but are potentially able to do so in the long run.

For the first group, the only difficulty may lie in the absence of well organized construction companies. In Haiti, almost all the houses above \$ 6,000.00 are designed by architects. The architect is not only responsible for preparing the plans of the house, but also for presenting a cost-estimate of the construction, and to supervise the works from the foundations to the painting. Since the architect is not legally held responsible for the accuracy of the cost-estimate, this document often offers a total cost which falls below the final and real cost of the construction. There are two main reasons for that. The first one is that the architect has a tendency to offer the lowest possible cost in order to encourage his client to undertake the construction. The second reason is that, at the request of the client, of his relatives and friends, the original plans are very often modified and enlarged during the construction period so that the final cost ends up being higher or much higher than the cost figuring on the original architect's estimate. Therefore, if the client does not have enough fi-

nancial reserves to face the consequences of such increase, he may fall into the second group whose fate is going to be considered now.

For the second group, besides the difficulties faced by the first group in the absence of well organized construction companies, other difficulties arise of a more acute and imminent nature. As the members of this group are able to dispose only of a fraction of the total investment required for the completion of the house, it is necessary for them to explore the ways and means of completing the construction of a home which they can only begin with their present financial resources. Three alternatives may be open to them :-

1.) The first alternative consists of taking a mortgage loan from a bank or a private financier. The amount he can borrow will not exceed one-third of the sum invested in the lot and the construction, prior to the operation. In other words, this individual, having completed the payment of his lot, must begin the construction of his house and carry it up to a point where the value of the lot plus the value of the works completed up to date represent at least two-thirds of the total investment for the finished house and its lot.

When made by a private financier -- as is most of the time the case -- the interest charged will vary between 15 and 24 per cent or more a year. Made by a bank, the interest rate is 12 per cent. The amortization period for the bank-loans seldom exceeds eighteen months whereas this period is not usually limited when the loan is made by a private financier who is happy as long as he collects the interest every month and as long as he holds the title of the property. The Banks where such loans may be available are the Banque Nationale de la Republique d'Haiti, the local branch of the Royal Bank of Canada, and the Banque Populaire Colombo-Haitienne.

The Banque Nationale is empowered to accept deposits, to make discounts and loans, and to perform all general banking operations, including those of a savings institution. Mortgage loans may not exceed the paid-up capital of the Banque (five million gourdes). In virtually all cases, such loans have in the past been on urban property and were taken merely as collateral security for commercial loans instead of for the construction of new houses or the repair of old ones. It must be noted that short term credits as those which may be available at this Bank are too short to be used for such purpose as the construction of a home.

part of the credit facilities of a bank.

The Royal Bank of Canada operates as an independent commercial bank. It makes loans, accepts demand and saving deposits, and performs other banking services. No figures are published on its operations in the country. It is however known that the Royal Bank is very liquid, its total loans being very small relative to deposits. It is also known that this bank has been showing a complete indifference as far as home financing is concerned.

The Banque Populaire Colombo-Haitienne has only been in operation for the last ten years. It is primarily a savings institution and has been making loans to its clients who were in the process of building their own homes. But here the funds are scarce, too scarce to be of any substantial help. Furthermore, since the loans were not insured by the Government, the Banque Populaire has been running into difficulties with clients who, for a reason or another, did not keep up with their payments.

2.) The second alternative consists of arranging for a medium- or long-term credit with a building material store or preferably with several ones. In such cases, the store al-

ways increases substantially the prices of the materials and also charges at least one per cent interest per month on the total value of the materials purchased. Such credits are very popular throughout the country; however, the amount of materials which can be purchased in such conditions is quite limited since these credits are not backed by any mortgage.

3.) The third alternative for the members of this group consists in concentrating the spending of whatever money they can dispose of in cash on the most essential parts of the house so that the family can occupy the place. Then, the money saved on the rent this family was paying in the dwelling from which it moved can be added to the current savings of the family and be utilized for the constructive purpose of carrying out the rest of the works and finishing the house. This alternative, very often combined with the second one, has become, because of the scarcity of funds available for mortgage loans, the most popular among the members of this group.

For the individuals who would be involved in the construction of a house in Category B, the cost of the land emerges as the major problem. As a matter of fact, those individuals, who usually belong to the middle-income group, cannot venture into the hilly suburbs of the upper-income group whe-

re the price of an average lot (80' x 100') is at least \$ 2,500.00, a sum which could equate the cost of the house itself which in this category goes as low as \$ 2,500.00. Secondly, the car-ownership in the middle-income group is still too low for such a residential location out of way of any public transportation line. Thirdly, the life style of the members of this income-group calls for a kind and degree of neighborliness which is not found in the hilly upper-class suburbs.

For the members of this group, the ideal would seem to be the inner suburbs closer to centralized urban services -- bus stations, taxi stands, markets, as well as schools, churches, cinemas and squares. But the most desirable of these inner-suburbs have been built one generation ago with large villas surrounded by spacious yards. Often, when these structures deteriorate, they are torn down, the property is subdivided, and the lots are sold. More often, the aging structure keeps being rented while the front, side, and back yards are subdivided and sold lot by lot. Although in such cases the lots (50' X 80') are twice smaller than those on the hills, their prices stay at the same altitude -- \$ 2,500.00 -- therefore still beyond the reach of most members of this class. Most of the time, these lots will be bought by entrepreneurs who will erect on them multi-family structures which middle-class

families will rent. Such locations are particularly dear to the members of the middle-class whose wives are running some home-trade such as fashion boutiques, beauty parlors.

The only alternatives left to the middle-class families willing to build their own home are the poorly developed inner suburbs like, in the case of Port-au-Prince, Bolosse or the costal satellite town of Carrefour some seven miles west from the Capital's center, or on the flat and flooded land along the highway linking Carrefour to the Capital. In those areas, lots (50' x 100') can be purchased for \$ 800.00 or less. However, members of the middle-class who are very sensitive to social status symbols associated with residential location would prefer to stay away from such areas and stick to rental dwellings in more desirable neighborhoods.

The members of this group who do manage to build their houses do not usually have access to the limited funds available for mortgage loans in the banks. These banks do not feel confident enough in the stability of the income of such individuals. For the same reason, the private financier, when they accept to deal with such individuals, tend to set the interest rate of the mortgage at a too high level. Similarly, the building material stores tend to limit the credits

at a ridiculous height. Therefore, besides the skilled workers who can bring down the cost of their house by the great amount of work they can do themselves in the process of building the structure, only a small proportion of the members of the middle-class can actually build or purchase a new home.

The majority of the individuals who would be involved in the construction of a house in Category C do not own land in the urban areas. They lease a piece of land from owners of large properties in and around the urban areas, or less often, from the Government. Most of the time, they devote a good portion of the lot to farming and chicken raising in order to supplement their income generally very low.

With no title of property, there is no question for them of getting a mortgage loan from a bank or a private financier. When they happen to be illiterate -- which is very often the case -- the complexity of such a financial operation would also go beyond their capacity. The instability of their employment -- which often happens to be chronic -- deprive them of the ability to address themselves to a building material store for a medium- or long-range credit. What they buy from a store, they must pay for it in cash money. Happily, they do not have too much to buy from the stores,

considering the rusticity of the construction. The lumber, the stones, the limestone, and the thatch they need, they can purchase from merchants of the surrounding rural areas. But when corrugated iron sheets are needed for the roof, when planks are needed for the doors and windows, they will be purchased, on a cash basis, from the building material stores.

The members of this group put into the construction of the dwelling a good part of the labor required. However, they often hire a mason and a carpenter whom they help fixing up the walls and the roof. The houses in this category usually do not correspond to the standards required by the electric company for the installation of electricity . When this is the case, the owners often manage at sunset to surreptitiously tap the nearest electric line.

The individuals who would be involved in the construction of houses in Category D are usually squatters. The structures are not built on a delineated lot. They are erected in random on land belonging to absentees or more often to the State. Among the squatters are those who have only recently migrated from other parts of the country and those

urbanites who -- for one reason or another -- have not been able or willing to live in a better place in the city. The later ones who are more at ease in the city may manage to save a fraction of their income and devote such savings to the improvement of their shacks. In several instances, the soil inside the house has been covered with concrete; the straw or the palm leaves of the roof have been replaced by steel sheets; the lumber walls have been consolidated and plastered; eventually, the walls may be painted. In such circumstances, there is only one way for the squatters to pay for the cement, the lumber, the steel sheets, and the painting needed from the building material store : cash money.

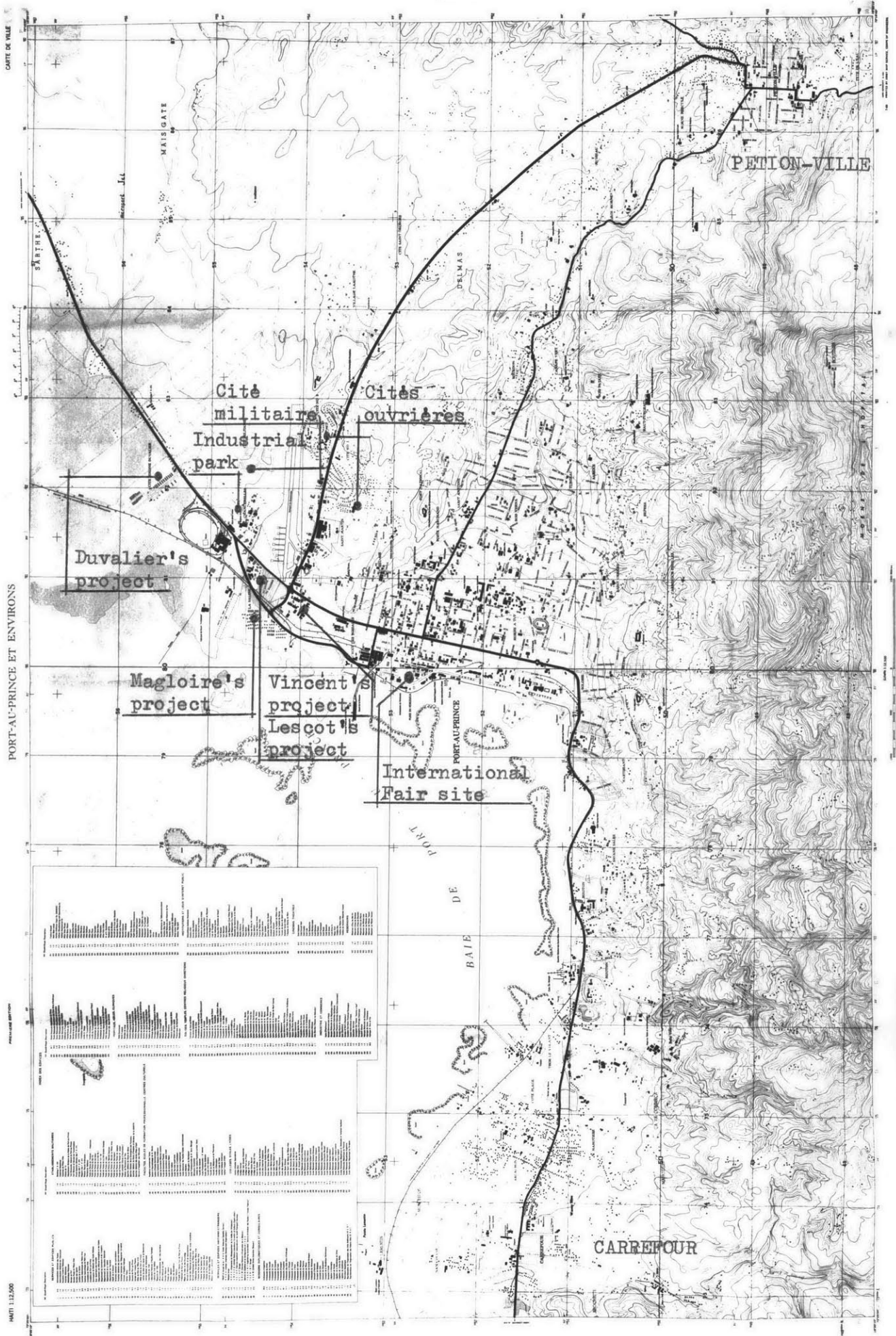
THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

As has been seen in the preceding section of this study, the construction of a decent home appear to be above the economic means of most Haitian families. The national Government has several times in the past shown its awareness of this situation. Aside from its efforts to bring to a higher level the wages and salaries in the private and the public sectors, the Government has undertaken, through its Department of Public Works, the realization of several low-cost housing projects in order to assist the members of the working classes in meeting their crucial housing needs.

In 1933 the Government of President Stenio Vincent started what was going to be a long and frustrating effort toward the improvement of the largest squatting ^{colony} in the country. This colony which will be described in a subsequent part of this study is called La Saline and is situated at immediate proximity of the docks of Port-au-Prince. There, the Department of Public Works erected one-hundred dwelling units which have been named Cite Vincent (see map). Each unit had three rooms, and in the back of each unit was added a small kitchen and a small bathroom. The houses were built with bricks and covered with corrugated iron sheets. Their

floors were paved with concrete. Although the structures were carefully laid out in a gridirion street pattern, the site was invaded by squatters' shacks soon after the completion of the project. The one-hundred new dwellings were rented to low-income families from La Saline and other parts of the city.

In 1942 the Government of President Elie Lescot ordered the construction of another one-hundred-dwelling-unit project in La Saline. This project located on the north side of the Cite Vincent was itself named Cite Lescot. The walls were again built with bricks, but for the roofs, the steel was replaced by red tiles, a roofing material usually used for the most luxurious villas of the country, and which require constant care. The use of red tiles for the roofs could only be explained by the pretentious will of this government to distinguish its project from the aging neighboring one. The units were rented at twenty-five gourdes a month to workers well acquainted with the members of the government. Each unit had the same number of rooms arranged in the same manner as the units of the Cite Vincent. This project was also going to be invaded by squatters' shacks soon after its inauguration. But, in both projects, the sanitary conditions have been kept at an acceptable level through the efforts of the Department of Public Health.



CARTE DE VILLE

PORT-AU-PRINCE ET ENVIRONS

1:25,000

In 1947 the Government of President Dumarsais Estime decided to undertake the realization of an International Fair in the Capital. The site chosen for the Fair was at that time occupied by a number of industrial establishments surrounded by a large squatting colony. It was situated at the south of the Capital's central business district. Using its eminent domain power, the government reclaimed the lots occupied by the factories which were relocated on a new industrial park developed by the government on the north side of the city, near the Cites Vincent and Lescot. As far as the squatting colony of the Fair site was concerned, it was simply bulldozed. Most of the displaced squatters took refuge in La Saline.

In 1950, when General Paul Magloire came to power, the Department of Public Works was once more ordered to face La Saline's chronic housing problem. This time, the Department stepped right in the heart of the colony and cleared a large area where it erected two-hundred dwelling units. Because of the particularly poor soil conditions, the structures had to be as light as possible. This is the main reason why they were built with lumber. They were covered with red Fibro-Cement sheets which are more expensive than the corrugated iron sheets. The floors were made of concrete. Each unit had only two rooms



*Vue aérienne de la nouvelle Cité de la Saline
construite par le Gouvernement du Président Magloire*

plus a small kitchen in the back. Showers and latrines were used in common by several families occupying these units. Since the terrain was only slightly above sea-level and right on the shore, a good drainage was extremely difficult to achieve. For this reason, sanitary conditions in this project have never been satisfactory. Several of the families displaced by the clearing up of the site were relocated in the new dwellings together with other families from other parts of the urban area. The rents did not exceed thirty gourdes a month. But the number of these government-built dwellings represented only one tenth of the total number of structures in this squatting area.

In 1952, the same Government undertook to devote some public funds to assist the workers of the middle-class and those of slightly higher income than the inhabitants of La Saline in the solution of their housing problem. Here again, the Government's efforts took the form of direct investments in a new public housing project. The project was carefully designed by the Department of Public Works to form a twin-neighborhood on both side of the main arterial called Route de Delmas which links Port-au-Prince to Petion-Ville. The twin-neighborhood would have eight-hundred dwelling-units well served by schools, churches, playfields, parks, cinemas, and a civic center.



Vue aérienne de la Cité Magloire No 1

UN OUVRIER BIEN LOGÉ EST UN MEILLEUR OUVRIER



La Cité Magloire No 2 actuellement en construction comprend des types de maisons très confortables qui sont louées à bon marché. Il a fallu la ténacité du Président Magloire pour mettre sur pied ce gigantesque programme de relèvement de notre classe ouvrière

For the construction of this project, the Government signed a contract with an American firm which carried out the works quite rapidly and satisfactorily. The units were joined together either in semi-detached houses or in row-houses. They had, each of them, one living-room, two or three bedrooms, one bathroom, one kitchen and a small covered porch. They were built with cement blocks and covered with fibro-cement sheets. Their floors were made of concrete. Each unit had a front and a back yard which were later used by the occupants to grow bananas and to raise chickens. As the site was quite hilly, the drainage was easy to achieve and the sanitary conditions of this project have been very satisfactory. The project was inaugurated in 1953 and named Cité Ouvrière. It has since then been regarded as a great success in the field of public housing in Haiti.

The dwellings were rented to working-class families at a price varying between forty-five and fifty-five gourdes a month. They were supposed to become the property of the tenant after twenty-five years of uninterrupted fulfilment of rental obligation.

In 1954, following the completion of the Cité Ouvrière, the Magloire regime undertook the erection of another housing project which was to assist the families of the army soldiers

in solving their housing problems. It was named the Cite Militaire. The site chosen for this project was about half a mile north of the Cité Ouvrière, on a dry plateau. The units were grouped in semi-detached houses. They correspond to the same standards as those of the Cité Ouvrière. The only difference was in the roofs which here were cast in reinforced concrete, a much heavier roofing material than the Fibro-cement or the corrugated iron sheets. The units were occupied by soldiers and their families on a simple rental basis.

In 1955, the Magloire Government undertook two other housing projects, one in Gonaives and the other in Cap-Haitien, two important coastal towns in the northern section of the country. These two projects were more in the nature of urban renewal. The major parts of public investments went to street-rebuilding, pulling down of old structures, construction of government offices and army barracks, and construction of cathedrals and schools. In consideration of land values in the central areas where these projects were carried out, the housing units were built in rows of duplex-houses. They had the same standards as those of the Cite Militaire and were also occupied by low-income families on a pure rental basis. Those projects did not exceed one-hundred units each.

In 1961, four years after Francois Duvalier became President of the country, the national government once more turned its attention on the unfortunates of La Saline. On a nice plateau, one-and-a-half mile north of the area where president Magloire had built two-hundred new dwellings, a new project was undertaken to assist the families of La Saline in improving their lot, as far as housing is concerned. The Department of Public Works was ordered to erect two-hundred low-cost dwelling-units on the site. They were built with cement blocks and covered with corrugated steel sheets. Their floors were made of concrete. Each unit had two rooms and a small kitchen in the back. The dwellings were brought together in a serie of one-storey row-houses. Between the rows, showers and latrines were built to be used in common by the families of the neighboring rows. The units were occupied by La Saline families on a pure rental basis. The rents here did not exceed twenty gourdes a month. The plateau was easy to drain and the sanitary conditions are reported to be satisfactory.

No government has ever undertaken any effort to rationally control the development of residential land by private concerns throughout the metropolitan area. Any developer can require the extension of public services -- mainly water

and electricity -- on the land he wishes to develop, provided he was ready to pay for the total cost of such works. No government has ever been interested in subsidizing the development of new residential areas where the middle class and the lower-class families could finally find lots at prices compatible with their economic means and build their on small houses. The governments have rather been interested in building housing projects which could be seen, which could be photographed, which could be inaugurated with pomp, which could be publicized, and which could be used as concrete illustrations of their endeavours, although such endeavours have only succeeded in producing a small fraction of the total number of residential structures put up every year by the low- and very-low-income workers in the urban areas.

Furthermore, these projects have been carried out by the Department of Public Works which does not have the equipment and mainly the personnel necessary to deal successfully with all the social and economic aspects of Housing.

Finally, the public housing projects have been sporadic and not planned in a rational and coherent way so as to form a programme well calibrated to presently and potentially available national resources and well integrated to a larger plan of comprehensive national development.

THE RESULTING SITUATION

As a result of the population explosion in the Haitian cities, as a result of the industrialization growing at a slower rate than the labor force, as a result of the very low income-level of the workers and employees, as a result of the scarcity, in the banking system, of funds for mortgage loans to would-be home builders, and of the very high interest-rate charged by private financiers who handle most of the mortgage transactions across the country, as a result of the absence of Government insurance for mortgage loans made in the private sector, as a result of the paucity of public investment in the housing sector, as a result of incompetently organized public urban services, and finally as a result of the inexistence of a housing programme which only a public agency well staffed and equipped to deal with the multi-faced housing problem can design, there exists today in Haiti a chronic urban housing shortage.

Such result is reflected in the figures published in the 1960 Statistical Yearbook of the United Nations. According to these figures, Haiti had at that time 32,940 "permanent" dwelling units for an urban population of 600,000.

Since the average number of persons per household

-- including domestics -- amounts to 6.5 in the urban areas, the number of persons living in those 32,940 "permanent" houses would be 214,110. That represents about thirty-five per cent of the total urban population.

But, in consideration of the fact that the 600,000 urbanites are living, not only in relatively large cities and towns like Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haitien, Gonaives, Les Cayes, but in small towns where the majority of the houses are thatch-covered and therefore have not been considered in the U.N. estimates as "permanent" houses, it is easy to realize that the percentage of "permanent" houses would have been found higher had the estimates been only concerned with the cities and large towns where the use of thatch as roofing material is less popular.

In Port-au-Prince, a cross-section survey realized recently in connection with this study through the various residential districts and based on the categorization utilized in the previous sections of this chapter for the various types of houses indicates the following results :

- Category A, 15 per cent of the total number of dwellings.
- Category B, 25 per cent.
- Category C, 35 per cent.
- Category D, 25 per cent.

In this survey, only forty per cent of the houses could be classified as "non-permanent" structures because they had one or more non-permanent material such a straw, thatch, palm-leaves, or mud. Almost all the dwellings in Category D and almost half of the dwellings in category C could add up to the total 40 per cent of non-permanent structures.

CHAPTER TWO

HAITI'S SQUATTERS

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SQUATTING IN HAITI

Squatting was originated in Haiti as a rural phenomenon and latter came to impregnate the urban scene. At the beginning of the 18 th. century, when the country was a French colony with a growing Negro population in slavery, many slaves had begun to flee the concentration camps of the sugar plantations and take refuge in the steep mountains to live in freedom and to organize the rebellion which was to lead to the abolishment of slavery in the Colony and to the independence of the country. They were called "Marrons" (run-away slaves).

Life for the Marrons was particularly insecure, for they were constantly rounded up, not only for illegal occupation of private and public land, but also for having deserted the plantations and for trying to undermine the most essential law to the continuous economic success of the colony : the law of slavery. But, with all its dangers, the Marron's life came to be regarded as an ideal for most slaves.

When freedom and national independence came, the majority of the ex-slaves chose to look for an haven in the fresh valleys, plateaus, and mountains where the Marrons had been squatting. There, they could erect their own little huts amidst

generous mango-, banana-, avocado-, orange-, and coffee-trees. These huts were nothing more than a one-room structure made of lumber, mud, and straw.

Some months after the Declaration of Independence, the chief of the victorious rebellion -- Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines -- undertook to bring some legal order to this settlement pattern. He ordered that titles of freehold tenure be distributed to the squatters all over the national territory. And for more than a decade, legal order reigned on the pattern of land ownership throughout the country.

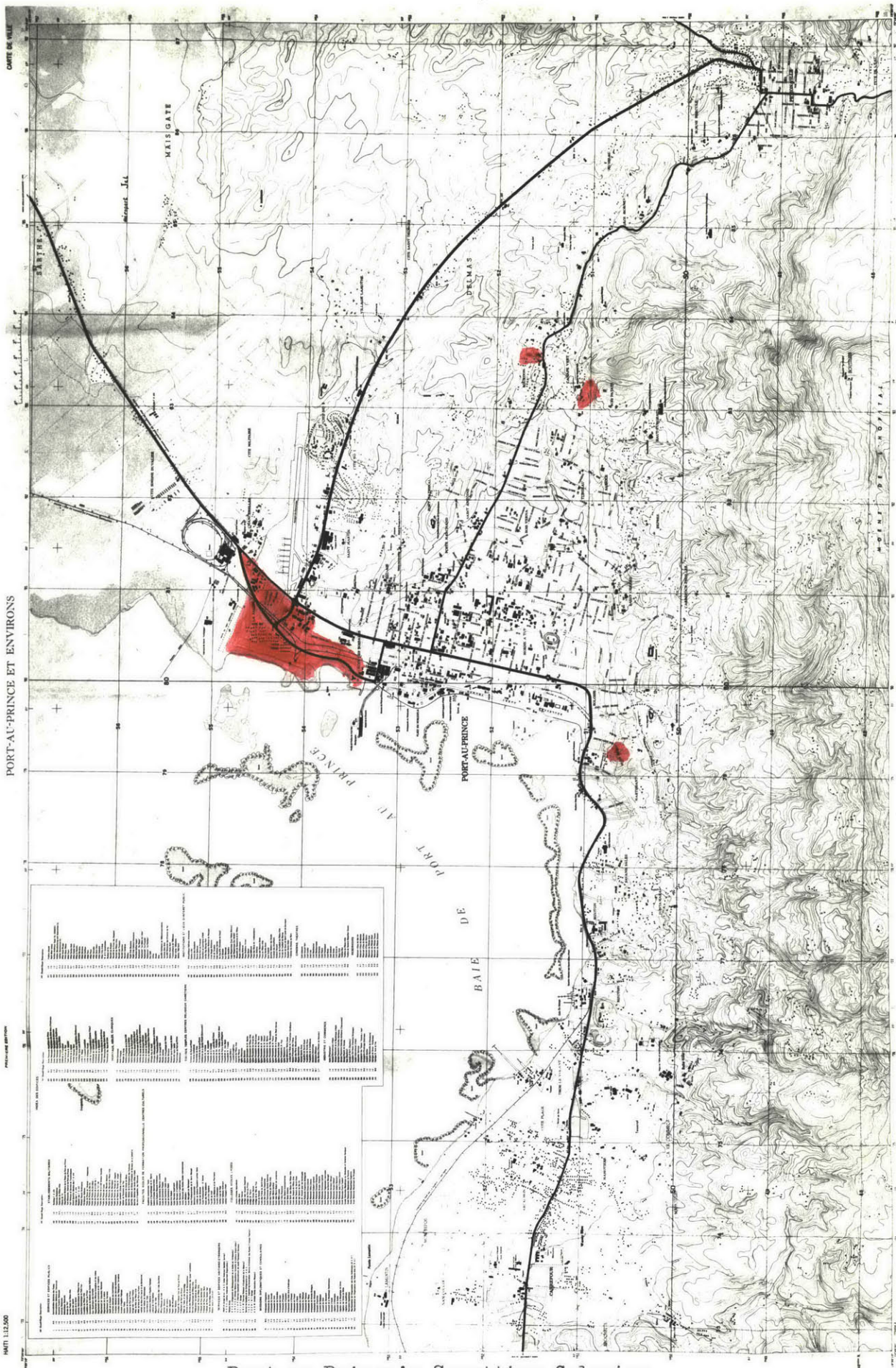
But, the Dessalines' initiative was going to be defeated by the impoverishment of the soil of a great many properties due to erosion and to primitive farming practices, impoverishment which caused the owners to move to any vacant land where the arable soil was still in good conditions, and where there existed no apparent signs of occupancy. There again, the nomads could cut down the trees, erect their huts, and plant their fruit-trees and vegetables. If, as it so often happened, the arable soil around the new hut came to be ruined, the nomads would again move to some other vacant land. Meanwhile, the properties which had been abandoned because of damages caused by poor farming practice may have recovered and been re-occupied by other nomads.

Another form of squatting was also taking place along the coastline, generated by the need for a place on earth of those who had chosen to extract their subsistence from the sea rather than from the impoverishing arable land -- the fishermen. In order to sell as quickly as possible parts of their daily catch to the rest of the population, the fishermen preferred to find an earthy place as near as possible to the cities, towns, and villages which were punctuating the coastline. These squatting colonies which mostly developed, at least in major towns and cities, around the wharves became soon typical of every coastal urban cluster.

These sea-shore squatting colonies were not exclusively occupied by fishermen. Many small merchants from the rural parts of the coast who became active in shipping agricultural products to the main cities and in selling these products in the urban markets had also to share the squatting areas initiated by the fishermen. There, they could stock and often sell their merchandise with the collaboration of their relatives brought from the rural areas of the coast for this purpose.

With the impoverishment of the hinterland already mentioned and the growing number of industrial, commercial, cons-

truction and other jobs in the cities, more and more peasants and inhabitants of villages began to migrate to the urban centers like Cap-Haitien, Gonaives, Saint-Marc, Les Cayes, Jeremie, Jacmel, and mainly Port-au-Prince. As this migration was growing at a higher rate than the employment, a great many migrants found themselves without permanent jobs, or without jobs at all. The income which these migrants could get from temporary jobs or from such activities as very small retail trade could not allow them to afford any other form of housing than squatting. Although some of them have been settling on private empty lots on the fringe of the city, the majority of them have preferred to join the fishermen and the coastal merchants in the central squatting colonies around the docks where more febrile activities were going on. These central colonies have considerably expended since the beginning of this century, mostly on State owned land. In several instances, their extension was encouraged by the fact that arable land taken away by heavy rains from surrounding mountains was deposited on the sea-shore, extending the terrain against the sea. In several ports, and particularly in Port-au-Prince, these squatting colonies came to represent, by their proportions and their physical and social inadequacies, imminent and great dangers to the physical and social harmony of the urban scene, and have been receiving increasing attention from the Haitian Government since 1930.



Port-au-Prince's Squatting Colonies.

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PORT-AU-PRINCE'S
SQUATTING COLONIES

The squatting grain is a very coarse one in Port-au-Prince. Besides three areas in the hilly suburbs of Bourdon, Canape-Vert, and Bolosse (areas not exceeding ten acres each) where the squatters have settled on private land, there exists in the city only one significant squatting area which covers today one-hundred-thirty acres of State owned land at immediate proximity of the docks; this area is named La Saline.

In view of the numerous differences between the squatting colonies in the suburbs and those of La Saline, they will be described here separately. The three suburban colonies, namely Bourg-Chagne in Bourdon, Cite Mapou in Canape-Vert, and Cite Bolosse in Bolosse, are built on hilly sites which allow for easy drainage. For each house, the site has been leveled. This grading has the advantage to provide the squatters with micaceous chalk very useful for masonry works, and has also the advantage to avoid visual overcrowding by preserving the view from each house above the roof of the next one down the hill.

Inside the colonies, there are no streets, but only narrow paths following more or less the contours of the ter-

rain. Some larger paths, climbing the hill along irregular lines, connect the horizontal paths with the streets below or above. Many trees have been salvaged or added by the squatters, and punctuate very nicely the site with their strong shades, their heavy foliage, and their bright flowers.

Generally, the hut is a one-roomed wooden structure covered with thatch or palm leaves, or exceptionally with iron or aluminium sheets, cantilevered one foot to protect the walls. The material used for paneling the hut is lumber often plastered outside with mortar made of micaceous chalk. In most cases, the floor is just the ground itself carefully leveled. Sometimes, it is found covered with concrete. The hut has one single door and in rare cases, a window.

None of the huts has piped-running water. This liquid has to be bucketed from public fountains or more often from the nearest gate-less private property where a water tap can be seen. This water will be utilized for cooking, washing, bathing, in the narrow space left between the huts. Several latrine-pits have been dug by the squatters; there may be found one every five houses or so. But, in certain instances, the unbuilt land in and around the colony serves as a substitute for the latrine-pits.

Between the paths and the front wall of the dwellings, some four or five feet are left which are used by families in their daytime activities. The 150 square feet or so enclosed by the hut are primarily used by the couple and the three or four children for sleeping and as a shelter for family possessions. Although the overall land coverage in these colonies is not relatively very high (60 per cent), the crowding inside the huts is definitely excessive and physically and morally unhealthy.

In these hilly suburbs where there exists no industries, the squatters are just domestics, chauffeurs, gardeners, working for the middle- and upper-income families who prefer to live on the hills, far from the suffocating atmosphere of the central city. In many cases, young girls from the rural areas who came to the city to work as servants live ⁱⁿ the families they are working for. However, when such servants want to create their own families, or simply to have their independence, they move to the nearest squatting colony. Similarly, the soldiers who are provided with single beds in the local barracks manage to build their huts in the colony where they can shelter their families at minimum cost, awaiting the time when they will be transferred to some other place. For this group of domestics, chauffeurs, gardeners, and soldiers, the salaries may be estimated to average \$ 20.00 a month. In these suburban colo-

nies live also other kinds of people, like prostitutes, whose income it is difficult to estimate.

Because of the mobility of the squatters, mobility due to unstability of employment, only 50 per cent of the huts are reported to be owner-occupied. The rest of them are rented by the most permanent and successful squatters to the newcomers in the colony. The rent charged does not usually exceed \$ 4.00 a month. The squatters who build or purchase huts for the purpose of renting them have also been active in the provision of latrine-pits for their tenants. Often, in association with the soldiers living in the colony, they run little grocery-stores, restaurants, and night-clubs of various kinds. They eventually may sell electricity which they manage to surreptitiously tap from the nearest electric line after sun set.

The majority of the squatters are illiterate and only a few of them have in the past felt obliged to send their children to school. It is true that many squatters do not have the income necessary to pay for the shoes, dresses, food, and books which their children need to attend school. Those who are able to pay for those items do not have any reason for not sending their kids to school since the public schools are supported entirely by the National Government, and therefore do not have any territorial limitations.

There exists in these squatting colonies a high degree of neighborliness which explains the fact that, even in the absence of community or civic centers, the community is still a relatively cohesive one. There are many events which bring together the members of each colony from time to time. The two most important of such events are the carnival dances and the funerals.

The carnival dances take place between the beginning of January and the beginning of March. They are followed during the forty days of Lent by the Ra-Ra dances. During these months, every night, for four to six hours, at the rhythm of the drums, the adults and young adults of the colony dance in the open air. The group keeps moving from place to place along the paths of the colony and on Sunday it moves on to the streets of the city. During the other months of the year, dances of the same kind take place within the colonies to celebrate a political or a religious holiday.

Traditionally in Haiti, the death of a person has been the occasion of extravagant or delirious expressions of sorrow. Those expressions have come to be much more temperate in the cities than in the Vodou dominated rural areas. However, in

the squatting colonies, they remain very warm. The crowd gathers around the hut of the dead one night and one day, the men drinking rum and playing cards, the women and their children moaning and crying.

Both the carnival dances and the funerals are very noisy in the colonies and may be heard from miles around, adding a new dimension to the presence of the squatters in the city.

In many respects, the residents of the squatting colonies in the suburbs are not isolated from the rest of the urban community. Very often, strong emotional links surround the domestics, chauffeurs, and gardeners, and the members of the family which they serve. To take one example among many which could express such links, when a maid is getting married, the family with which she works assists her closely and often the ceremonies of the wedding are conducted, not in the hut where the couple is going to live in the nearest squatting colony, but in the family's home.

Another articulation between the squatters and the residents of the neighboring areas in the city is the church.

In spite of their connections with Vodou, the squatters maintain close relations with the Church, particularly the Catholic Church. Many of them come to early mass on Sunday and most of them join the more spectacular ritual ceremonies conducted in the church during the Lent period and in the streets at the occasion of processions.

The squatters also join with the other urbanites in the numerous groupings or rallies occasioned by politics or sports. The government uses to distribute large amount of food and rum in the colonies and to invite the squatters to organize manifestations and dances in the streets when the popularity of the President happens to be collapsing. The two national sports or games are soccer and cock-fighting. Both give to the squatters numerous and excellent opportunities to mix with the other members of the community. Most of the cock-fights take place in or near the colonies, and the knowledge and interest of the squatters for this game give them a feeling of assurance -- not to say of superiority -- vis a vis the other players.

In La Saline, as opposed to the **three** colonies which have just been described, the site is completely flat and only slightly above the sea-level. This creates draining con-

ditions extremely difficult, and consequently sanitary conditions of the most unhealthy nature. The area has practically no trees and its image is dominated by the sea and the myriad of small sail-boats moored to the docks.

The area is divided into several sections by the two major arterial roads and the railroad line which cross it. Inside each section, streets are found only where the Government had undertaken the erection of some dwellings; everywhere else, labyrinthian paths, the width of which varies from four to eight feet, constitute the only access to the shacks. Here, the land coverage is higher than in the suburban colonies; it is estimated to average 70 per cent, resulting in a population density of 120 persons per acre.

Structurally, the shacks are poorer than on the hills. Masonry walls are almost non-existent here because of the absence of micaceous chalk and because of the fact that the soil in the area is very wet and unstable. Lumber and scraps are thus the most popular materials for framing and panelling. For the roofs, palm-leaves are extensively utilized, although they can only offer a partial protection against the Caribbean rain. The floors are often made of sand and sometimes,

because of the moisture of the ground, they are covered with concrete or lumber. The shacks do not differ in dimensions from those in the suburbs, but in La Saline, two or three of them are often attached together in order to save materials and ground. Up until now, no structure has had more than one story.

In the shacks, as well as in the Government built dwellings, there exists no running water. The residents must count for their supply on public fountains in and around the area, and very often they are seen taking water from the decorative fountains in the public parks. Latrine-pits are found around the dwellings built by the Government every one-thousand feet or so. During the raining season, the pits are often flooded and become unusable. Needless to say that this flooding of the latrine-pits create excellent conditions for the spread of diseases. Public latrines cantilevered above the sea have become the only alternative for using the open ground during this season. At the exception of some Government-built units, the shacks receive no electricity, and the surreptitious taping of electric lines is more difficult in this central area than in the suburbs.

The population of La Saline is quite different to that

of the suburban colonies. It has already been shown that La Saline was originated by self-employed fishermen and coastal merchants. The migrants from the hinterland who preferred to take refuge in this area rather than on the hills are usually not permanently employed or employable. They are mostly daily workers, street porters, wharf porters, or eventually thieves. In fact, it can be said that La Saline is primarily inhabited by small contractors of all kinds whose income may vary from \$10.00 to \$ 40.00 a month. There may be found here people with higher incomes, but those are the "permanent" squatters who must stay in the area in order to carry out their legal or illegal business.

Because of the fact that La Saline is surrounded by the ocean on the one hand and by industrial and commercial establishments on the other hand, it is more isolated from the rest of the urban residents than the three suburban colonies and consequently less articulated into the whole social structure of Port-au-Prince. Physically and emotionally, it is turned more toward the sea -- from which the majority of the residents are making a living -- than toward the interior where the city has developed. In La Saline as in the suburban colonies, the drums beat for the carnival and the women cry for the funerals, but the voices of the women and the

drums can only be echoed by closed hangars and warehouses.

The church here is not a strong articulating point as it is in the suburbs. The two main churches used by the residents of La Saline are the Cathedral and Saint Joseph, both situated in commercial and semi-commercial areas near the central business district. But the two national sports are still more helpful here than in the suburbs in creating common interest and contacts between the squatters and the rest of the urban community. More than anything else however the political importance of the colony -- due primarily to the high explosiveness of its situation -- remains the most important factor now articulating La Saline with the other units of Port-au-Prince's social structure.

THREATS AND HOPES GENERATED BY SQUATTING

In Port-au-Prince, as in several other Haitian cities, the development of squatting colonies has in many ways been affecting the physical and social order of the city. In urban areas generally well laid out, the anarchical pattern and the structural deficiencies of the huts of the squatting colonies stand in disheartening contrast with the rest of the city. The sanitary conditions prevailing in these colonies not only have been endangering the life of their residents, but have repeatedly generated epidemics which have affected the health of the whole urban community. Developed through the invasion of private- and government-owned land, squatting has affected the security and the very notion of landownership. By creating within the urban area a kind of sanctuary where rural habits and customs may be preserved, squatting has impeded the ability of the city to transform its in-migrants from the hinterland and to help them adjust to the requirements of a modern life. Squatting has also created a growing financial problem for the municipality which has to increase its budgetary allocations for fire- and police-protection and other services for the colonies where no property taxes can be collected. Squatting finally has been spreading frustration and hatred in the heart of a growing number of citizens to whom

no other alternatives than the squatting colonies are offered in their struggle for a decent place in which to live. This frustration and hatred have caused the political explosiveness, already mentioned, of the squatting colonies.

However, for thousands and thousands of landless citizens who, without skills and resources, have to flee rural areas where life, even at the subsistence level, may have become impossible, and look for a haven in the city, the squatting colonies remain the only substitute for street-sleeping, the only chance for a place in the shadow. The shacks which they have been erecting in the colonies remain -- beyond their structural weaknesses and their ugliness -- the pathetic expression of the creative efforts of men who, in the deepest financial and social distress, can spare enough moral strength and enough of their meagre income to put up a shelter for themselves, their wife, and their children -- and eventually the children of their rural relatives. Too often, the squatter's shack is solely seen as a ^{physical and} legal monstrosity; and too often, the message of faith, the message of hope which it carries are overlooked.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SQUATTING SITUATION OF SOME OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

THE CASE OF MEXICO

In Mexico, because of the overwhelming economic, cultural, and political importance of the nation's Capital, Mexico City has been attracting citizens from all parts of the country at an accelerated rate. The migrating cohorts of low-income citizens first invaded the center, now very old, from which Mexico has developed. There, the residential structures were chopped up into smaller and smaller units so as to accommodate the five hundred thousand souls who were living in the center in 1958 according to the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda.

But the congested and unhealthy "tugurios" of the center were not the only refuge of the low-income families; on the inner and outer fringes of Mexico, myriads of very small houses were springing up on private and public lands. The majority of these suburban homes were originated according to the Instituto by "violent invasion" of the land by the poor. These squatters came to be called "Paracaidistas" or parachutists. In other cases, the structures were originated

The facts revealed in this Case have their source in the items No: 16, 17, 18, 19, and 29 of the bibliography. The concluding criticisms are the author's.

by cloudy transactions between the poor and "landlords" who, very often, did not have any legal rights on the land and therefore must also be considered as squatters.

The houses erected in such conditions were of two types. The worst one consisted of one-room dwellings built of scrap, straw, or mud. They were in minority and were given the name "Jacal". The other type included one-room structures built of limestone or other temporary materials. Two situations then could develop : A) the structure kept growing -- a bedroom, a kitchen, or eventually a bathroom was added; B) the structure kept deteriorating -- the roof was being eaten up by the wind, the door -- when one ever existed -- was taken for some other use, and the walls kept being ruined by the rain. Soon, such a structure would fall in the category of "Jacales".

In 1958, a survey was conducted by the Instituto in the poor suburban quarters of Mexico city. A good number of the houses in the areas were found to be in satisfactory conditions. The survey concentrated on houses in poor or very poor conditions. 120.000 of such houses were inventoried and named Viviendas Proletarias.

With one family per house and an average family size

of 5.3 in the areas, the number of persons living in these sub-standard structures would be 636,000 at that time.

The dwellings lacked the most basic sanitary services. For example, there was one "bathroom" for 298 persons. As there was no drainage in the area, 10 per cent of the families were using septic holes, 40 per cent were using latrine-holes, and 50 per cent were simply using the ground. The houses had no inside piped water and the families had to rely on the neighboring public fountains for their supply.

The land coverage stayed however relatively low. The average size of the lots was found to be 140 square meters of which 60 per cent was covered by the structure. The overall density averaged 98 persons to the hectare. The low ratio of land coverage does not contradict Bernard Frieden's statement that, for these areas, "crowding remains one of the main problems". As a matter of fact, families of an average size of 5.3 were living in one-room houses. The sanitary conditions described above coupled with the crowding inside the houses created ideal conditions for the spread of contagious diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, typhus or tuberculosis.

In the opinion of the Instituto's experts, 57.3 per

cent of the dwellings could be economically repaired, whereas 42.7 per cent were not suitable for repair.

The great majority of these structures have been built in part or in total by the squatters. The cost of the dwellings was thus reduced by the value of the squatters' labor. However, such benefits were lost -- at least in the case of the structures built of permanent materials -- through the very high prices of the building materials which had been bought from very small retailers operating in the area, and in very small quantities at a time.

Furthermore, the techniques employed in the construction of the dwellings did not allow for the economy which less archaic techniques could have allowed for.

Almost all of the dwellings were, at the beginning, owner occupied. The proportion of owner occupied dwellings in the areas has been constantly shrinking. In 1952, an investigation of the Banco Nacional Hipotecario indicated that 70 per cent of the dwellings were owner occupied and 30 per cent tenant occupied. In 1958, 52 per cent were owner occupied and 48 per cent, tenant occupied.

The rents of such dwellings varied from 20 to 75 pesos a month which represent approximately 10 per cent of the family's income which varied between 350 and 773 pesos a month in those areas.

Although many of these dwellings have been built in proximity to the industrial establishments of Mexico's suburbs the relationships between places of work and places of residence were still very poor. The Instituto reports that the time spent daily by the inhabitants of these zones to commute to their work averaged two and a half hours.

In spite of such conditions, these residential areas have been registering considerable growth. The so-called "colonias proletarias" which include the substandard dwellings as well as the adequate ones had in 1952 a total population estimated at 450,000. Three years later, the population had grown to 750,000. And in 1964, it reach 1.5 million.

PUBLIC ACTIONS

There exist actually two kinds of "colonias proletarias"

a) those which have been brought to legal order -- that is where the legal rights of the occupants as well as the conformity of the lay-out to municipal regulations have been established --

by the Federal District Government under a law passed to that effect on December 30, 1949; b) those which are still immersed in illegality. In 1958, eight years after the passing of that law, a survey conducted by the Instituto revealed that only two per cent of the inhabitants of the legalized colonies were actually squatters. This certainly represented a real progress over the initial conditions. But the colonies which have been legalized represent only a fraction of the total areas which were originated by squatting. According to the Federal District Office of the Regulatory Plan, 15 per cent of the population of the Federal District are still living in illegal colonies, that is almost 900,000 people. It must nevertheless be recognized that the reduction of the percentage of squatters in the legal Colonias Proletarias translates a successful course of public action. This success has been the result of the endeavours of a number of public and semi-public agencies. Among the most important of such agencies are :

- 1.) The INSTITUTO DE SEGURIDAD Y SERVICIOS SOCIALES DE LOS TRABAJADORES DEL ESTADO referred to as the ISSSTE or the Institute of Social Security for Government Employees.

During and after the Mexican Revolution, many institutions with eminently social functions were being created. The first social group to have received the benefits of such ins-

tutions was the group of civil servants. In 1925, the Direccion De Pensiones Civiles Y De Retiro was created and some years later became the ISSSTE. This agency initiated a mortgage system to make loans available to civil servants for housing purposes. The agency's investments in housing were made in two ways :- a) through individual mortgage-credits extending over 15 years at an interest rate of 8 per cent a year; b) through direct investments in rental multifamily buildings; the funds going into such projects would have an amortization period of 25 or 30 years and an interest rate of 6 per cent. By 1958, the ISSSTE's investments came to represent 60 per cent of all public investments in housing in Mexico.

The projects of this agency have been criticized on various grounds. Firstly, their construction and space standards were, in the opinion of the independent observers, too high. Secondly, they have been put under administrative restrictions limiting eligibility for admission to those covered by the Social Security agency -- that is 25 per cent of the total labor force. Thirdly, their communal facilities were too luxurious and abundant as compared to those found elsewhere in the country.

2.) The BANCO NACIONAL URBANO Y DE OBRAS PUBLICAS, S.A. or the National Bank Of Urban And Public Works, S.A.

This bank was created in 1936 to foster the development of public works through credits to the Municipalities, and also to finance the construction of low-cost housing. The bank, however, did not step into the field of housing before 1947. It granted credits to organized social groups and to industrial establishments which wanted to build houses for their workers. The bank has also been very active in conducting research for the improvement of housing conditions in Mexico.

3.) The INSTITUTO MEXICANO DEL SEGURO SOCIAL or the Mexican Institute of Social Security.

Since its creation in 1943, this agency has devoted its activities to the construction and administration of clinics and hospitals for the working class. It was only in 1953 that the agency began to carry out a housing program on a rental basis. The funds invested in this program carry an interest rate of 5 per cent over a period of 50 years.

The projects of this Institute have received the same criticisms addressed to those of the Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado already mentioned. It is reported that the standards adopted by the

Mexican Institute of Social Security are still higher than those of the ISSSTE, therefore making it more difficult for the low-income families most in need of help in their struggle for a decent place in which to live, to benefit from such projects.

4.) The INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LA VIVIENDA or the National Housing Institute, already referred to at the beginning of this chapter and currently called I.N.V.

It was created in 1954 as a governmental instrument designed to solve the housing problem of the urban and rural low-income workers, and also to co-ordinate the programs being carried out by the other agencies involved in public housing. Since its inception, I.N.V. has been dedicating itself to the formation of a first class staff, the preparation of studies for the Colonias Proletarias of the Federal District, the housing problem of the rural areas, and the design of emergency plans for twenty-five other Mexican cities.

With credits subsidized by the National Government, I.N.V. has also built several projects varying in importance from 100 to 1,000 family dwellings, and of much lower standards than those adopted by the other agencies already cited.

The dwellings built by the Instituto are sold to working-class families with instalment plans extending to 15 years.

5.) The DEPARTAMENTO DEL DISTRITO FEDERAL or the Government of the Federal District.

It was already involved in the construction of low-cost housing in the Federal District in the 1930's. After an interruption of twenty years, it renewed its activities in housing, particularly in the Colonias Proletarias around Mexico city. These new dwellings cost between 4,000 and 8,000 pesos and are rented at prices varying between 70 and 100 pesos a month, mainly to low-income families displaced by various public works undertaken throughout the District.

In fact, the majority of the investments of the Federal District in the Colonias Proletarias has gone, not to the construction of new dwellings alone, but to much needed legal operations -- like the redistribution of landownership titles -- and urban services -- like streets, watermains, sewer lines, schools, markets, parks. The success achieved in the legalized Colonias Proletarias are primarily attributable to the actions of this agency.

6.) The FONDO DE OPERACION Y DESCUENTO A LA VIVIENDA referred to as F.O.V.I.

It was established in 1962 to administer the hybrid fund which was provided by, on the one hand, the Mexican Government and, on the other hand, by U.S.A.I.D. and the Inter-American Development Bank. F.O.V.I. was primarily designed to give financial support, through the banking system, to new housing projects connected with the works of the Alliance for Progress in Mexico.

Individuals of modest income could, when they wanted to build their own houses, borrow from the banks which were receiving F.O.V.I. funds at a rate of 9 per cent and an amortization period going from 10 to 15 years. These funds were available only to families earning less than 3,000 pesos a month, and the cost of the houses were limited to 55,000 pesos at the most.

In practice, working class families earning less than 2,000 pesos could not and still cannot afford the construction and space standards required by the banks and thus cannot benefit from the F.O.V.I. program. In 1960, 75 per cent of the Mexican workers were earning less than 2,000 pesos

and therefore could not benefit from the Alliance.

The six main agencies dealing with public housing in Mexico have not all, as it must be clear by now, been directly involved in bringing a solution to the housing problem of those most in need of help -- the squatters. When they were concerned with building large housing projects for the middle class, perhaps they were indirectly helping the poor in that the families which moved to these projects did vacate a good many modest dwellings into which low-income families may have moved from still more modest dwellings which at their turn may have been occupied by poorer families. And this filter-down process may have reach the squatters and improved their lot. But the growth of the middle-class itself may have defeated this process.

The Government of the Federal District seems to have been among these public agencies the one which has, most appropriately, assisted the squatters. It can be argued that the number of new houses offered to the poor workers by this agency has been quite small. But perhaps more important than the houses are the various other realizations of this agency -- restoration of law, of order, of physical and spiritual health in the squatting areas, achieved by giving to almost

all the residents of the 324 legalized Colonias Proletarias the opportunity of either purchasing lots and building their own homes or renting houses in accordance with the law, by laying out streets, sewer lines, watermains, by providing schools, churches, parks, markets, by bringing into the areas electricity and transportation facilities, by offering, with the assistance of I.N.V., technical advices to those in the process of erecting small houses, by the provision, finally, of building materials at minimum prices.

The squatters of Mexico city have proved that they have the willingness and the ability to erect a shelter for themselves and their family with the most modest financial means; they have also proved that, with the security of land-ownership, some technical guidance, and cheaper permanent materials, they are able to erect better structures. For these poor workers, the real problem may not be setting up the structure itself -- although this may be the most important problem for the Mexican politicians and others more concerned with building impressive housing projects, monuments to their names and ambitions. For these poor workers, what is really missing is security of tenure, water, sewers, and sanitary facilities to drain away the germs of diseases, streets, cheaper building materials, technical advices, electricity, and

also some articulations to their communal structure -- schools to which their children can walk and belong, markets where their wives can shop and argue, and plazas where their families can gather and their "Marachis" sing.

THE CASE OF BARBADOS

In Barbados, the housing pattern, as it exists today, relates back to the time when the island was still in slavery, as a British colony devoted to the production of sugar cane. Around each sugar mill, the owner erected a group of cabins to shelter the black slaves brought from Africa to work on the plantations.

Following the abolition of slavery in 1834 and the full emancipation declared in 1838, the Located Labourers Act was passed. Under this act, the cabins would be rented to the colored freedman occupying them and working on the plantation. This rent was not yet collected in the form of cash money, but in days of work.

Under this system, a new problem was soon to arise. When a freedman decided to quit his job on the plantation where he was living for another plantation or in town, he could be evicted from the cabin he was occupying. Similarly, when

The facts revealed in this Case have their source in the items No: 23 and 24 of the bibliography, and particularly in the informations kindly provided by Mr. Luis Redman of the Housing Authority of Barbados. The concluding criticisms are the author's.

an ex-slave died, his family could also be evicted from the plantation.

To prevent such circumstances, the Located Labourers Act was amended so as to allow a freedman to rent or eventually to buy the cabin and the lot he was occupying, whether or not he was working on the plantation where the lot happened to be located. Of course, such transactions were made on a cash basis.

Following the amendment of the Act, a large number of lots were purchased by the colored workers.

As the population of the island grew, new residential spaces were needed. To satisfy the demand, a TENANTRY system was elaborated. Under this system, landowners would subdivide a portion of their land and would rent lots to workers of the island. The lots measured approximately 30' X 50', and the average size of a tenantry was 8 acres. The rents varied according to the tenantry from \$ 0.80 to \$ 3.00 a quarter year per lot.

Having rented a lot in a tenantry, the worker would build his house on it, or more precisely on rockpiles so that

the structure, which did not belong to the land, could be moved away at any time -- for example when the tenant was evicted, or when he wanted to live at closer proximity of his new job, or at greater or lesser proximity of his relatives and in-laws, of his friends and his foes. For being considered as movable personal property, these structures are referred to as "Chattel Houses" and came to be typical of the workers' house in Barbados.

Usually, the Chattel House has two rooms and a total floor area of 180 square feet. In order to be moved intact, the structures had to be light. This is one reason why lumber is the most popular material for such constructions. On lots of 1,500 square feet, the house covers only 12 per cent of the land. Therefore, the overall density, as in the case of the Colonias Proletarias of Mexico, is still low. But here again, the density of the dwelling itself is very high, since the average family size in Barbados is estimated to be 5.8.

Few Chattel Houses have their own water tap -- the cost of such a tap amounting to be \$ 120 (B.W.I.). But the tenantry is usually supplied with public fountains where the families which are unable to afford private water tap can satisfy their needs at any time of the day. The relative high

cost of water can be explained by the absence of surface water on the island where all the water has to come from wells, most of them Government owned.

Many tenantries lack sewers and therefore their Chat-tel Houses keep using latrine-holes. On the very old tenantries, there is one latrine every five houses whereas in the newer ones every lot has its hole. Pollution of underground water by the latrines has been one of the reasons which pushed the Government to adopt very strict zoning regulations on the whole island, in order to protect the areas where the municipal wells are located. The Government is also reported to have taken the necessary steps toward the extension of the sewer-lines to all residential areas.

With the rise in land prices, tenantry-owners found it more profitable to use their land or to sell it for more lucrative purposes. Besides the low level of rents in many tenantries, particularly the older ones, the landlords were required by the Government to improve their streets which were in many cases in poor or very poor conditions. Thus, in several tenantries, legal actions were started by their owners in order to evict the tenants. Near the beaches, tenantries were sold for hotel construction.

PUBLIC ACTIONS

The Government of Barbados found itself faced with the responsibility of purchasing existing tenancies to keep their tenants on them, or more often, of buying undeveloped land, subdividing them and renting the lots to the displaced families or to the new ones.

There were also cases where the Government bought existing tenancies, or part of them, not to keep their tenants on them, but to create space for the construction of schools, clinics, hospitals, and other public buildings.

To better cope with the growing housing problem of the island, the Government created in 1956 a Housing Authority, under the Housing Act passed the year before. The Authority was empowered to :-

- a) acquire land for building;
- b) layout of housing estates;
- c) erect houses and ancillary buildings;
- d) clear slums and redevelop over-crowded areas;
- e) lend money for repair or alteration of existing houses, purchase or erection of houses;
- f) let or lease land and buildings to persons of the working classes.

Since its creation, the Authority has received Government advances of more than \$ 15,000,000 (B.W.I.). Besides for the acquisition of land for the creation of new tenancies as well as for the acquisition of existing ones, for the extension of relevant public services, the money has been used by the Authority for loans to "general workers" earning less than \$ 40 (B.W.I.) a week and to "public officers" for the purchase, construction, alteration, or repair of their houses, whether or not the houses were permanent or Chattel Houses. Furthermore, the Authority directly invested several millions in the construction of new houses -- approximately 2,000 houses -- most of them for rent. A few of them were occupied on a hire-purchase basis.

Then began the nightmare in the form of a neo-squatting. Although in the private tenancies the rents were and still are paid regularly in the great majority of the cases, in the tenancies purchased and administered by the Authority rent payments have become the exception rather than the rule. A great many Chattel Houses were moved to public tenancies where their owners felt miraculously liberated from the obligation of paying rents for the lots ^{they} were occupying. On the lots where houses had been directly built by the young Housing Authority, the scruple was not higher. It is reported that 90 per cent of the tenants of these houses are several months in

arrears with their rents. Similarly, the money spent in loans to "general workers" and "public officers" for the purchase, construction, alteration, or repair of their own houses could not be recovered.

In 1961, the Authority tried to enforce payment on the mortgages and the rents. But, the voters turned the pressures against the members of the Government who were most worried about the 1962 general elections. Those officials return the pressures against the members of the Housing Authority who finally "gave up".

In desperate search for a solution, and hoping that freehold tenure would inspire more responsibility, the Authority decided in 1962 to offer its lots and rental housing for sale to their occupants with only 5 per cent down payment and the arrears funded into a mortgage at 2 per cent interest. The results of this strategy cannot yet be established. But, if the citizens who have borrowed money from the Authority for building, buying, or improving their own homes have not kept up with their obligations, it seems very improbable that the prospective owners who now do not pay their rents agree in the future to pay regularly their mortgages.

Meanwhile , the funds which the Authority had received

in the form of advances from the Government of Barbados or in the form of loans from banks, and which the Authority was first hoping to successfully revolve, are now almost entirely frozen.

As long as the number of Barbadians getting assistance from the Authority for their housing problems or eligible for such assistance, is large enough so as to represent a critical proportion of the voters, there will be very little hope for the members of the Housing Authority to feel free to enforce payments on its mortgages and rents.

For the time being, the best alternative for the Authority would be to minimize its loss per transaction by, on the one hand, making smaller and smaller loans rather than large ones and, on the other hand, concentrating on land development rather than on house building. Since it may be easier to collect small rents of empty lots and payments on small loans than substantial rents of new houses and payments on big loans, the Authority would now have more chances to revolve its funds, and a greater number of families would be assisted.

THE CASE OF PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the squatting problem is alarmingly chronic. Since the partition of India in 1947, there has been a constant flux of Moslems from the Indian territory to the Pakistanees cities. In Karachi, for example, 75 per cent of the population are refugees. This does not mean that such a proportion of the population is actually living in slums or squatting colonies, for a good many refugees have the necessary financial resources to purchase or rent a home. But the fact remains that the majority of the refugees cannot count upon their sole means to solve their housing problem when they reach an urban center in Pakistan. If then the Government does not or cannot provide residential spaces for them, their only alternative left is squatting. In Greater Dacca, for example, there are 130,000 squatters out of a total population of 850,000.

It must however be clear that the refugees constitute only a surplus to the growing number of citizens who have fled the depressed rural areas and kept pouring into the cities.

The facts revealed in this Case have their sources in the items No: 24 and 25 of the bibliography and in the informations kindly given by Mr. Quazi M.A. Akef of East Pakistan

It is reported that in Pakistan the attachment of the peasant to his little farm is remarkably strong. Thus, the farewell of a farmer to his land and his migration to a city must be regarded, in most cases, as a desperate undertaking. As a matter of fact, 94 per cent of the population of East Pakistan is still engaged in agricultural pursuits. Only 6 per cent of the total population is actually living in urban areas.

There are many reasons to explain the migration of rural Pakistanees towards the cities. One of them is the overpopulation of certain rural areas. If the average density of the rural parts of the country is estimated to be 1,000 persons per square mile, in certain areas like Noalchali the density goes as high as 2,500 persons to the square mile. The majority of the non-refugee-squatters are reported to have come from such over-populated rural areas.

A more detailed reason for the migration is that the death of the head of a rural family provokes the division of his farm in as many equal parts as the number of his children

and by Mr. Muhammad H. Khan of the Public Works Department of Dacca. The concluding criticisms are the author's.

happens to be. Since the average family-farm covers only 2.5 acres and since the size of the rural family in Pakistan averages 6, every child would therefore receive a parcel of 0.4 acre.

In 1956, in an attempt to curb such fragmentation of family-farms, the Government passed a law to the effect that no inherited farm be divided in parcels smaller than 1.7 acre. As a consequence, the sons or daughters who could not inherit parcels of farm of 1.7 acre or more had to arrange so that one or more among them migrate to a city if they could not gather enough money to buy additional farming land. Similar phenomena are known to occur in rural families in more developed societies like French Canada.

In both East and West Pakistan, industrialization did not grow at a rate high enough to provide employment for all the refugees and the "local" migrants who have been arriving in the main cities. A substantial number of these citizens have to rely on small trade or less significant activities for their survival.

It is reported that the refugees, particularly those coming from Calcutta and other large Indian cities are not only more accustomed to urban life but also are in average more skill-

led than the "local" migrants. In Dacca, for example, the refugees represent more than 40 per cent of the skilled and semi-skilled factory-workers. Although the refugees are more employable than the citizens who have migrated into the cities from rural areas within the national territory, they have been given the almost exclusive priority in the few urban public housing projects. That the refugees are regarded with particular compassion is not astonishing -- they have come to the city not strictly for economical reasons but mainly because they consider it as a refuge for their faith. But, the fact remains that the efforts made by the Government of Pakistan to provide shelters for the oppressed have not sufficed to solve the housing problems of the refugees alone. For a great many of them, as well as for the citizens who have migrated from within the national territory, slums and squatting colonies have been the real refuge.

If Moslem families have been migrating from India to Pakistan, it must be reminded also that Hindu families have been migrating from Pakistan to India. Among these Hindu families were those which owned houses, sometimes very large ones, in Karachi, Dacca, and other Pakistanee cities. Those houses, in very many instances, were invaded by squatters. And this gave a new dimension to the squatting problem in Pakistan.

The squatting colonies of the inner and outer suburbs of Karachi are larger than those found in Dacca. But in both cases, the land coverage is always very high. The price of metal in Pakistan makes it practically impossible for the poor to use it as a roofing-material. Also, Thatch is almost exclusively used as roofing material in the poorest residential areas. Scraps, mud, straw, and lumber are used for the walls. Usually the shacks have no window. Many have no operational door. Between the dwellings, the space left for circulation does not exceed five feet in width. The structures are not lined up, which makes the corridors very meandering.

From time to time, the corridors are widened to make space for the latrine-pits. Often, the pits are filled up. But since there exists no roads, the appropriate trucks cannot reach the pits and empty them. In consequence, other pits have to be dug wherever there is some open space left along the corridors.

There is no piped water inside the squatting colonies. Their inhabitants have to rely on neighboring public fountains. And in those fountains, the water runs only two or three hours a day. It is reported that several hours before the water is scheduled to run from the public fountains, they are surrounded

by a multitude awaiting impatiently for the scarce liquid to run.

Several times, due to such sanitary conditions, epidemic diseases, particularly Cholera, have spread death among the children and adults living in these colonies. Philanthropic organizations have been created to take care of the bodies of the victims of such epidemics when the relatives of the victims could not be found.

PUBLIC ACTIONS

The national agency responsible for programming the Government's endeavour in the field of housing is the Physical Planning and Housing Section of the National Planning Division of the President's Secretariat. The Section, also called Sector, is divided into eight Sub-Sectors :- 1) Basic Development; 2) Housing; 3) Community Services and Utilities; 4) Government Offices and Buildings; 5) New Capitals at Islamabad & Dacca 6) Special Areas; 7) Aid to Local Bodies; 8) Private Sector Programme.

Planning works for housing also take place at the local level. The Improvement Trusts have been carrying out intensive works in the control of landuse. A Master Plan for Dacca has

been issued by the Dacca Improvement Trust in an attempt to bring some rationality in the development of this metropolitan area. But the Improvement Trusts are not directly responsible for solving the housing problems.

Such problems are directly dealt with in the Housing and Settlement Section of the Public Works Department of each urban area. As its name indicates, the Section is concerned not only with the provision of new housing, but also with the development of land for residential use. It is however reported that the number of lots developed and put up to sale by the Section is far from being sufficient to satisfy demand. For example, at the beginning of 1964, the Public Works in Dacca developed a suburban area and put 700 lots up to sale. The Department is reported to have received 20,000 applications for these 700 lots.

The public housing units built by the Public Works are, as already mentioned, almost exclusively dedicated to the Refugees who came from India. Although more than 10 per cent of the National Budget goes to housing, only a very limited number of new dwellings has actually been built, as compared to the needs. The majority of the refugees are still to be sheltered. As far as the poor migrants from the rural areas within the

national territory are concerned, their hopes to be even put on a waiting list of any public housing project appear to be very slim. And the constant arrival of new refugees in Dacca and Karachi makes their hopes still slimmer every day.

Most non-refugee-squatters have more and more shifted their hopes to get out of the dreadful colonies from public housing to public lots put up to sale by the Public Works. The fortunate squatters who can afford and are selected to buy such lots on instalment plan, can apply to the Central Government Building Finance Corporation for minimum credits which help them finance the construction of their own homes on their own lots.

Many squatters who have been in the urban areas for several years, have acquired some marketable skills and have become normally employed in industries, are reported to still be trapped in the squatting colonies, although they have the financial means to pay for a lot and a core house under a normal instalment plan. But, particularly in Dacca, they cannot find a lot to buy at reasonable distance of their place of work. Furthermore, many squatters are not employed in industries. They must make their living in "petty trades" within the most active parts of the city. The land owned by the Government on

the outskirts of the metropolitan areas cannot fit the requirements of most squatters unless the urban region is re-structured so as to allow concentration of industrial and commercial activities in several satellites throughout the region.

Another agency dealing with the housing problem is the Industry and Commerce Department. This Department requires industrial establishments of a certain importance to provide dwellings for at least 20 per cent of their workers and employees. Unfortunately, these establishments are reported to have provided housing for their middle-class employees only. The low-income workers, most in need of help to solve their housing problem, were left to themselves.

Finally, the Rehabilitation Commissioners and the Municipalities themselves are also engaged in the efforts to assist the refugees and the squatters in improving their lot. One of the main obstacles to the success of such efforts appears to be the lack of co-ordination and collaboration between the various agencies involved. This was emphasized by Mr. Mohammad Khan of the Housing and Settlement Section of the Public Works Department of Dacca in an interview in Cambridge. Another very high obstacle to the solution of the housing and squatting problems of Pakistan seems to be the financial limitations of the

public agencies. However, as has already been noticed, more than 10 per cent of the national budget has been devoted during the last years to works aiming at improving housing conditions throughout the country. In 1957, MM Charles Abrams and Otto Koenigsberger, U.N. advisers, wrote an interesting report entitled A Housing Program For Pakistan. It may be regretted that, in the report, no recommendation was made concerning the proportion of the total national investments which could go to the housing sector. It is felt that in Pakistan other sectors are also in chronic need of more public investments. The country needs more schools at all levels, more irrigation, more highways and railways, more industries, and more hospitals, to name only those. And for sure, none of them has in the past received enough investment to satisfy the needs, nor are they about to receive sufficient investments. Therefore, compromises must be made in order to arrive at a reasonable balance in the development of the nation as a whole.

The most appalling and dangerous elements in the squatting colonies of Karachi or Dacca are not the thatched roofs. The most appalling and dangerous elements in these squatting colonies are the overflowing latrine-pits spreading cholera

and death among children and adults, the crowds desperately waiting for the water to run from the public fountains, the narrow, dark, and meandering corridors, the meagre bodies of the undressed little boys and girls, the absence of any privacy for family life, and the despair running from the eyes of the unemployed father.

The rupees which the Government of Pakistan can afford to spend for improving housing conditions throughout the country could be best spent, not in the construction of some rows of new and handsome houses for a minority of refugees, but rather in the provision of piped water, of sewer lines, of decent common latrines, of streets, of electric light, of parks, and of schools in the squatting colonies; in the provision of small lots well located near the employment centers, lots which the workers can build their own houses on; in the provision of cheap building materials and technical advices; and also in the provision of training centers for those presently unemployable. Such a program would require less bright architects and less photographers; it would require the collaboration of professional-groups and public agencies; it would require patience and humility; but, with the prevailing economic conditions, it may realistically be seen as the only way out of Pakistan's chronic squatting problem.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPOSED APPROACH TO THE SAQUATTING PROBLEM IN HAITI

Although the various aspects of the housing problem in general and the squatting problem in particular are very intimately bound together and highly interdependent, an effort -- dictated by the need for clarity -- will be made here to present the ways and means of tackling each of the various aspects separately whenever this seems feasible. Proposals will successively be offered for :-

- (1) the administrative and planning aspect;
- (2) the legal aspect;
- (3) the land aspect;
- (4) the public services and social aspect;
- (5) the design, materials, and building methods aspect;
- (6) the financial aspect.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANNING ASPECT

In 1962, the United Nations published the Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Housing and Urban Development, prepared the same year at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the world organization. In this report, it is stated: "The absence of a central body responsible for policy and programmes adversely affects the integration of housing and connected programmes with general national development. Several

countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America still lack such central bodies."

Among the Latin American countries still lacking such central bodies is Haiti. The report further states : "The group of experts considers the following measures to be necessary in connection with the formulation of housing and urban development :

(i) There should be a central housing ministry or administration and appropriate local administrative agencies.

An essential step in achieving a balance within programmes in the field of housing and urban development and their effective integration with national development programmes is the establishment of a central authority or body responsible for formulating housing policy in the broadest sense. This responsibility would include assessment of requirements to facilitate programming decisions; participation with other national programming or planning bodies in policy decisions regarding the investments to be made in housing and urban development, establishment of programmes and their qualitative and geographic break-down; co-ordination and supervision of the activities of implementing bodies and agencies; establishing in connection with the health authorities the technical and other standards to be observed in the implementation of programmes; and evaluation

of practices, organization of research and dissemination of its results."

In view of the inadequacy of the weak and sporadic actions taken in the past by the Haitian Government -- as shown in the previous chapters of this study -- and in the light of the U.N. experts' remarks and recommendations, it is proposed that the country's chief executive undertake the creation of a National Housing Authority to deal with the nation's housing problems.

A wide variety of professionals and technicians will be needed to carry out the work of this agency, a work which is bound to be an "interdisciplinary" one. "Interdisciplinary," wrote Lloyd Rodwin in an article entitled *Mesuring Housing Needs in Underdeveloped Countries*, "because mesuring housing needs obviously involves aesthetics, ethics, physiology, psychology, sociology, politics, economics, statistics -- and some poetic licences."

If all the technicians and professionals needed cannot be found immediately in the country, the Authority can arrange to send nationals to other countries for specialized training and, with the assistance of organizations like the United Na-

tions, have foreign experts coming into the country for a year or more to help in preparing the necessary staff and also to advise on practical matters with the Authority.

Although it would be highly desirable from a cultural and political view point that each municipality throughout the country develops a more independent local government more capable of seeing the local problems in their real proportions and colors, it must alas be recognized that the lack of trained personnel makes it almost impossible at the moment for each municipality in the country to deal independently with all the problems, the solution of which would require the service of well trained technicians of various disciplines. This state of affairs explains the "centrality" accorded to the Housing Authority here and now.

The agency would be responsible for :-

(1) undertaking surveys and analyses of housing conditions and needs in the urban and rural areas of the country, forecasting future needs, and programming the works susceptible of meeting these needs in the short, medium, and long run.

(2) arranging with other components of the Government e.g., the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Public Health,

the Ministry of National Education, and with semi-public and private bodies for the provision and maintenance of utilities, services, and facilities in the residential areas being developed or redeveloped or otherwise improved by the Authority.

(3) acquiring land for low-cost housing purposes as well as for the services indispensable for the satisfactory functioning of the housing projects.

(4) clearing ~~are~~^a the buildings of which are considered below minimum structural and/or sanitary standards, and beyond economical repairs.

(5) erecting and aiding to erect residential structures and others related to them for low-income families.

(6) renting, leasing, or selling land and/or buildings or parts of buildings to low-income families for residential purposes.

(7) buying and re-selling without profit building materials to low-income citizens or groups of citizens building their own homes.

(8) conducting research and experiments in design, cons-

truction techniques, methods, and materials better suited to Haiti's natural, economic, and social climate.

(9) undertaking negotiations aiming at receiving financial and technical assistance from national, international, and foreign agencies and institutions.

As far as squatting -- that is the illegal erection of residential or other structures on land not belonging or rented or leased to the undertaker ^{is concerned} -- the goal of the Authority can be to eradicate and/or prevent squatting by assisting present and potential squatters in solving their housing problem in ways consistent with the laws, the health, and the progressive aspirations of the nation.

It is important that the Authority work in close contact with the National Planning Board so that the programmes of both agencies be consistent with each other. It is the province of the National Planning Board to decide how much development will be encouraged to take place in each region and each city. Such policies are bound to have definite effects on the migration pattern throughout the country and consequently on the housing needs in each region and each city. It is also the province of the Board to decide how much of the limi-

ted available resources should be invested in housing. Such policies are bound to have definite effects on the standards adopted for housing projects. In turn, the works of the Authority can enlighten the Board insofar as knowing the results which dollar to be invested in low-cost housing may produce in various alternative standards, or knowing the advantages and disadvantages inherent in each alternative urban pattern which the development policies of the Board may encourage.

It is also important that the Housing Authority work in close contact with the Public Health, the Public Works, **the Welfare, and the National Education**, Departments. As a matter of fact, the Authority will constantly need technical advices from these Departments in the formulation of its policies and programmes, and most of the works programmed by the Authority will have to be implemented by these Departments, particularly those works envisioned in the programme of eradication and prevention of squatting.

The Authority would have to establish branch-offices in each major region and city of the country so that individual programmes, or sub-programmes, can be prepared for each of them with a close and clear vision of local conditions and needs.

Therefore, the National Housing Authority would be facing the squatting problem by elaborating a national programme consisting of a well co-ordinated group of local sub-programmes, each of them consisting of a well co-ordinated group of community-projects.

The decisions concerning the priority to be accorded to each project of each sub-programme can be based on the following criteria listed in order of importance : (a) the value of the increase in productivity that each dollar spent in a particular community-project can generate among the workers who will occupy the project; (b) the urgency of the squatting situation in each area; (c) the rate of growth of the very-low-income population for each area as projected by the National Planning Board; (d) the functional advantages of each site to be developed or re-developed in relation to places of work, to places of recreation, to transportation facilities, to places of education and worship, and to other residential sections; (e) the size and cost of each project-site; (f) the cost of developing or re-developing each project-site. Of course, the planner should not overlook the political importance of each project in establishing such priorities.

THE LEGAL ASPECT

The first step in the development of a squatting colony is the invasion of the land by citizens who do not have any legal right on this land. Any realistic attempt to solve the squatting problem ought therefore to consider the legal aspect of the problem as the most basic one, for unless Law is safeguarded, any organizational effort is doomed to be a disheartening Sisyphean effort.

The land invaded by the squatters is owned either by a private concern, or by a public body. Several times in the past, government's bulldozers have swept squatters' shacks on government-owned land in Port-au-Prince and other places when such land was needed for a Fair, a public building, or a public housing project. Never squatting colonies erected on private land have been the scene of such operation. This state of affairs has been due to the traditional powerfulness of the national government which usually does not hesitate to ruthlessly use its powers against defenseless citizens in order to realize its will, but generally tends to protect the poor against legitimate actions of private interests with perhaps the cynical hope to repair the political damages caused among the poor by its own ruthless actions.

The hypersensitivity of the Haitian courts to political pressures has considerably weakened the ability of a landowner whose property has been invaded by squatters to take successful legal actions against the invaders, particularly when those are in great number. However, this is not to say that all landowners in the country are constantly apprehending the invasion of their land by squatters. An empty lot which is well fenced and on which the owner keeps a vigilant eye will not generally be invaded. In the eventuality of invasion, legal action can stop it at an embryonic stage, particularly when no strong political influence is militating against the landlord. If property rights are to be safeguarded the Haitian Government must give more independence to the Courts dealing with such matters so that rapid orders can be issued against invaders. These orders need be particularly rapid since it takes only a couple of days for the invaders to fix up a shack and occupy it.

Moreover, the Courts must not only have the necessary political independence to issue orders but also have the necessary independence and power to enforce such orders. Charles Abrams pointed out the powerlessness of the courts in such matters when he wrote in *Man's Struggle for Shelter*, "In the face of official impuissance and public indifference, there

is emerging a general cynicism about obedience to law, honesty in government, and respect for property rights. Even the courts are powerless to enforce their orders ... Disrespect for law and government has become epidemic in a growing number of countries. The dangers are intensified by the fact that squatters have usually headed into the nation's capitals and other political nerve centers." The same situation is mentioned by the Annual Report of the Singapore Improvement Trust 1958, which states "The land inspectors are intimidated in the execution of their duties and enforcement of instructions become a dangerous process." Unless the Haitian courts are empowered to issue -- without undue pressures -- orders evicting squatters and to execute such orders, there would seem to be no hope of preserving property rights and eradicating squatting since, no matter how much land the Housing Authority may provide for low-income citizens, somebody who ignores that land is provided by the Authority or who does not like the land provided by the Authority will continue to feel somehow free to appropriate any land physically accessible to him.

Nevertheless, eviction of squatters who were already settled before actions are taken by the Housing Authority to provide residential land for low-income workers must not be done prematurely and ruthlessly. In issuing their orders against these citizens, the Courts ought to take into consi-

ration the date by which the Housing Authority expects to make land available to the evicted. It would also be desirable that at the time of the trials the Housing Authority approach the prosecuted and give them the guarantee that land will be made available to them and that they will receive in the form of building materials an amount equivalent to the estimated value of their present shacks. Such guarantees seem necessary to relieve political pressures on the courts and the Housing Authority during this operation.

In order to facilitate the Authority's activities, a number of bills will have to be drafted and passed by the Legislature. Besides the normal annual budget allocations, some special taxes, e.g. taxes on export crops and on residential buildings exceeding a fixed value per dwelling unit, may pour substantial additional sums into the Authority's purse. Legislation may also be necessary to reduce property taxes on houses below a certain value and to reduce registration fees and other levies on new low-cost residential buildings and residential properties below certain dimensions. A recommendation of the Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Housing and Urban Development edited by the United Nations may also be very helpful here; it asks for "legislation that will encourage, by exemption from taxes, construction of housing through the co-operative system and encoura-

ge the establishment of national housing co-operatives that will contribute to the centralization of activities in order to facilitate technical direction." Considering their spirit and the social composition of the Haitian Legislature, it can be augured that such bills will pass the legislative body without difficulty.

The squatting colonies are not only in violation of property rights; they are, or would be in violation of the most basic municipal regulations concerning landuse, subdivision of residential land, and building codes, had such regulations existed in all the municipalities. If such regulations are drafted and given effect of law in the urban areas, the task of the Housing Authority ^{will become easier} vis-a-vis the residential areas which present all the social and physical characteristics of the squatting colonies but cannot be designated as such because some rents may be collected from time to time by the landlord or his deputy. The town planners on the staff of the Housing Authority can, during a certain time, be delegated to work with the various municipal governments on the drafting of such regulations, as well as on the design of municipal development plans.

THE LAND ASPECT

Closely related to the legal aspect of the squatting problem, particularly insofar as the existing squatting colonies are concerned, is the land aspect. Where a lot has been taken over by a small number of squatters, it will be possible to evict them and provide space for them in the community-projects best located in relation to their places of work. Where a lot or a number of abutting lots has been taken over by a large number of squatters the Authority must consider the possibility of acquiring the lot or lots in order to prevent the loss which would be occasioned by the demolition of the structures after the eviction of their occupants. In fact, in a crowded squatting colony, the value of the structures may easily exceed the value of the land.

In the eventuality of the lots being purchased or otherwise acquired by the Housing Authority, redevelopment works must be carefully planned and implemented in order, on the one hand, to take maximum advantage of the existing structures and, on the other hand, to provide services and facilities susceptible of gradually improving the physical and social conditions of the area. To bring in or improve certain public services, it may be necessary to remove certain shacks, hopefully the worst ones, from the redevelopment area. When a community-project is to be

erected on un-developed land, the problem will be much easier to solve in the short run. But in both cases, it will be desirable that the dimensions of the site of^a community-project do not fall too far below or too far above a certain size which will be called the operational size of a community-project and will be defined in the following section of this study dealing with the social aspect.

Beside the size of the community-projects, their location represent an equally important question. As the low-income workers can only afford to spend a very small portion of their very small budgets in transportation, it is essential that the places where they live be at a reasonably short distance from the places where they work. The deficiencies of the existing transportation facilities across the urban areas are partly counterbalanced by the fact that the climate allows for quite long walking distances. It is also important that the community-projects be not too far from the churches, the parks, the play-fields, and the other residential areas. In the section dealing with the social aspect, the importance of intercourses between the various residential areas of different socio-economic ingredients will be brought to light, as well as the importance of elements like churches, play-fields, secondary schools, and parks as articulating points

for the various social forces of the whole urban structure.

Inexorably associated with the location of the community-projects is the value of the land in the areas to be developed as well as those to be redeveloped for such projects. It has already been suggested that every effort should be made in the existing squatting colonies not exceeding a certain size to avoid losses which might be occasioned by the premature demolition of the squatters' shacks. When, however, such colonies are found near the center of the city where land is highly valued, the Housing Authority ought to look closely at the possibility of re-locating the squatters on land the value of which is more compatible with one-story low-cost residential development.

There will be however cases where squatting colonies will have to be redeveloped for their residents even though the value of the land on which they are situated may be quite high. For example, as it has been indicated in a previous chapter, many residents of La Saline are bound by their jobs and their trades to Port-au-Prince's docks. The re-location of such residents would require the construction somewhere along the sea-shore of, not only new residential struc-



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tures, but also of new docks for the squatters' small boats and new market places. And this may prove prohibitive for the Authority's budget. But the other squatters who have nothing or very little to do with the docks can advantageously be re-located on cheaper land. Moreover, in La Saline as in most squatting colonies near the sea, the flat topography and the low altitude of the terrain make floods frequent and drainage expensive. The plateaus on the fringe of the city, around industrial establishments, would have been better suited for the building of low-cost housing as the Cites Ouvrieres have proved. A great portion of La Saline and other central squatting colonies could thus be cleared by the Authority after this agency has purchased or otherwise acquired them, using if necessary the eminent domain power invested in it; then, the Authority could sell these cleared areas to the business sector for commercial and industrial development. The money which the Authority could get from such transactions would largely cover the purchase of un-developed land and the construction of better shelters and services for the re-located workers. And this would prove beneficial for the squatters, for the municipal purse, for the government, and for the business sector; in other words, for the urban community as a whole.

THE PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL ASPECT

Since the squatters are predominantly ^{citizens} from rural and semi-rural areas who, for a variety of reasons already observed, have taken refuge into the urban centers of the country, one of the major responsibilities of a public agency set up to solve the squatting problem is to assist these citizens in the **crucial** and traumatic experience of integrating themselves into the urban community.

Squatting colonies which have grown beyond a certain size can become -- and in many instances, in Port-au-Prince and other Haitian cities, have become -- oases within the urban area, a sanctuary where the habits, the customs, the values, and the myths of rural life are preserved in their pristine freshness. Living in a residential area of this nature and size, a migrant from a rural area may spend decades within the city, grow old and die without ever becoming a real member of the urban community -- an urbanite.

If the community-projects proposed to be undertaken by the National Housing Authority are to be centers of integration to urban life rather than sanctuaries for rural

habits, customs, values, and myths, they must be designed so as to not exceed a certain size which has already been mentioned in this study as 'the operational size' of a community-project.

A community-project will be said to be of operational size if it is large enough to develop its own infra-structure which will constitute an identifiable unit of the whole urban social structure, but small enough to lend itself to easy articulation with the other units of the whole social structure. It would require a great amount of research to establish with precision what should be the dimensions of such a project. A rough estimation could nevertheless locate it in the neighborhood of six-hundred families.

It would seem desirable to have two kinds of community-projects: one designed for a lease-system with common sanitary facilities, and another one designed for a lease-purchase-system with private sanitary facilities.

The first type would shelter the workers who have not yet succeeded in stabilizing their life in the city -- that includes those who have not yet a minimum and stable income through their skills and/or their trades. The second type would shelter the workers who are ~~who are~~ reasonably stabilized and integra-

ted in the city. Their income is substantial and stable enough to let them contemplate seriously the possibility of buying their own lots and building their own homes in the city. When a worker sheltered in a lease-system project is, after some months or some years, found eligible for assistance in a lease-purchase-system project, he will be requested to move to a lease-purchase-system project -- provided of course there is room for him in such a project -- or he may be given the alternative to take entirely upon himself to solve his housing problem. In any case, it will be desirable that he leaves the place he is occupying in the lease-system project in order to make room for newcomers who are absolutely unable to solve their housing problem by themselves by other means than squatting.

Since squatting is primarily due to un-employment, and since un-employment is primarily due to lack of marketable skills, it can be hoped that by giving to the squatters the opportunity of acquiring such skills, un-employment will decrease and subsequently the need for squatting will follow the un-employment rate down the curve.

It has often been argued that the enrollment of new in-migrant into teams engaged in the construction of low-cost housing project would be a good way of making them acquire some

skills while working at the erection of their own houses. As far as the acquisition of marketable skills is concerned, it must be considered that the new in-migrants may not learn too much during the short period in which they will be helping building their houses and the roads serving them since most of these workers have already worked in the construction of houses and roads in the rural and semi-rural areas where they come from. On the other hand, every new in-migrant cannot become a construction worker, for the cities would very soon run short of employment for the growing number of construction workers, if that has not already happened. It appears necessary that the training and re-training programmes, which should be prepared by the Ministry of National Education, be more diversified and take into consideration the skills needed by the industrial establishments-- these which are presently in existence as well as those which are expected by the National Planning Board to come into existence in a near future.

For the small children of the community-projects, the Housing Authority must convince the Ministry of National Education to create primary schools within the project areas. It has already been shown that the parents of the children in the squatting colonies are often too poor to provide their children with the diet, the books, the shoes, and the dresses

they would need in order to attend one of the central public schools across the city. If modest primary schools are provided within the community-projects -- particularly those on a lease-system -- the kids could gather every day for some hours of class even without shoes or shirts. The Welfare Department could be convinced to provide every school-child in the projects with one daily meal. Books could be provided by the Ministry of National Education or by the main bookstores of the country if the Housing Authority undertakes to convince them to participate in such civic tasks.

Aside from educating the children, the local schools would present the advantage of giving to each child in each community-project the opportunity to participate with the other kids of the same project in constructive activities, and this would strengthen the infra-structure of each project at the level of the children and of their parents as well.

At the secondary level, it would appear desirable that the young boys and girls be sent to the centralized inter-district schools. After the emotional security of a child has sufficiently crystallized during his stay in the local primary school of the community-project where he is living, he would gain in being exposed to other pupils of other residential areas

in a centralized high school. Such a high school must be seen as an important articulating point of the urban structure, more important than the stadium, the cock-fight arena, the park, or the church.

Within each community-project, beside the local school, community centers ought to be created -- built by the Authority and staffed by the Ministry of National Education -- where the workers can gather to discuss between themselves or with the officers of the Housing Authority matters concerning the various activities going on in the community, where the adults can receive certain kinds of training, where groups of children and adults of the community can receive groups of children and adults from other parts of the city, where children attending high school and adults attending special schools can come in the evening to study comfortably with adequate electric lights and adequate furniture, and finally where the families can gather to listen to the local band, to dance, to watch television, to weep at the funerals, to celebrate an anniversary or a wedding, or simply to play and chat.

The importance of the articulating points of the infrastructure of a community-project -- such as schools, community centers, playgrounds -- must also be expressed physically. They

must be carefully shaped and located so as to offer easy physical and visual access from every part of the community-project.

Explorators in the field of urban psychology like K. Lynch have demonstrated the unhealthy effects which unclear paths may provoke on individuals experiencing them. The visual and emotional insecurity generated by the disorder of the meandering paths of the existing squatting colonies must yield to clearness which talented designers can help achieving in the community-projects to be undertaken by the Authority. The new roads need not have the standards of arteries built to receive heavy or even normal vehicle traffic; since the low-income workers and their families are not car-owners and very seldom car-users, the roads in the community-projects can be primarily conceived as pedestrian alleys. They must however be wide enough so that they can be used by the sanitary and the fire trucks, that is in the neighborhood of twelve feet. It would be desirable that they be paved, but if the budget of the Authority cannot provide for such work, gravel roads well profiled and well kept will be good enough.

As many dwellings in the community-projects to be developed or re-developed by the Authority may not for the imme-

diate future have the standards required by the Electric Company for connection with its lines, small electric lamps must be provided along the projects' alleys every twenty feet or so, so that the front door of each dwelling receive some light at night. The community centers must have adequate lights so that the students can come and study after sun-set and need not anymore stay under the lamps of the neighboring streets to study as they often do now.

Among the facilities most urgently needed by the squatters are those susceptible of rapidly diminishing the health hazards threatening their life. As Lee Grebler put it in an article published in Housing and Economic Development, a study edited by the School of Architecture and Planning of M.I.T., "Better housing may contribute to advancement of productivity in a general, as yet ill-defined, way by improving health and increasing longevity."

Health hazards in the existing squatting colonies are, as already observed in a previous chapter, primarily caused by lack of clean water and of toilet facilities. Spending money to bring pipes and water-taps into every dwelling may well end up putting the cart before the horses since the water-mains across the city are, alas, too often dry. It appears as an urgent necessity that the Government undertake works which will provide the urbanites with adequate quantity of water for do-

mestic as well as for industrial uses. It must nevertheless be recognized that this state of affairs is partly due to the irresponsibility of many users who never bother to close a tap after having used it, letting the clean water running into the ditches and sewers. To minimize waste of money and to make it possible for public agents to easily inspect the water-taps so as to make sure that water is not wasted, it is proposed that, in the lease-system projects, a tap be placed outside the dwellings every twenty feet or so -- like the electric lamps along the alleys -- so that every family can easily fill its buckets when the water is scheduled to run, instead of going to fight in the mobs surrounding the public fountains.

For the latrine-pits to be operational all year round it is necessary that the area be adequately sewered, particularly in the flat terrains like La Saline which are frequently flooded. To avoid the damages caused by the floods, and also to reach higher sanitary standards without too important outlay of public funds, a simple system can be employed in the lease-system projects. It consists of a row of holes made upon a buried concrete trunk. The holes are separated by thin panels and roofed. On one side of the row, there is a water tank designed to discharge from time to time enough wa-

ter to carry away all wastes from the trunk and depose them in a septic tank on the other side of the row. When filled up, the septic tank will be emptied by a sanitary truck. Rows of showers can also be created in the same fashion. There may be one latrine and one shower for every two dwellings. Both the latrines and the showers must be easily accessible from the back door of each house in these community-projects.

THE DESIGN, MATERIALS, AND BUILDING METHODS ASPECT

Jose Luis Sert wrote in Housing and Economic Development, a report edited by the School of Architecture and Planning of M.I.T., "The conception of a tropical house is a roof on some kind of house that is as cheap as possible to protect you from the sun and rain. It is like a sunshade and it is a parasol. The designer who can build the cheapest and the lightest type of parasol to do with what one likes -- he would be the best man to advance building in a tropical country because that solves the problem of roofing houses. The most difficult thing to do in a house is the roof. The walls can be made with any kind of particular material. If the walls stand and the roof stands, you have a house. If the roof collapses you have no house." A glimpse at any squatting colony or at the photograph of any squatting colony -- as the one reproduced on page 14 -- would convince the reader of the truth contained in Dean Sert's statement. It would therefore seem that the best way for the Housing Authority to help the squatters is to provide them with roofs, with roofs which can satisfactorily protect them against the tropical sun and rain.

If it is assumed that the Authority could be in a finan-

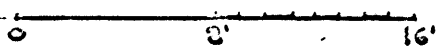
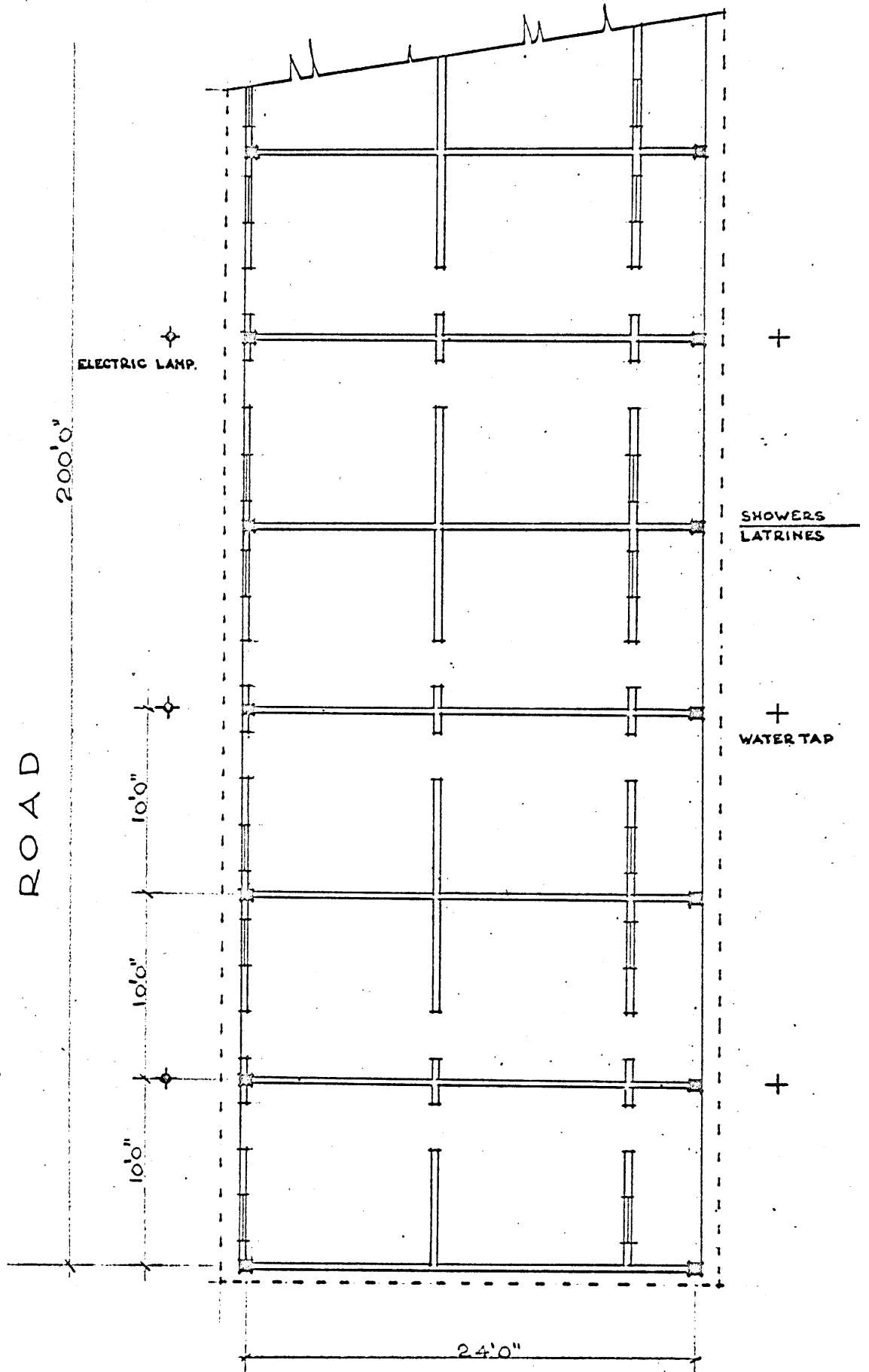
cial position to provide such roofs, the problem remains : what kind of roof to provide and in what manner to provide them? The best kind of roofs is certainly, as J.L. Sert puts it, "the cheapest and the lightest". And the cheapest and lightest rain-proof roofs traditionally used in Haiti consist of corrugated steel or aluminium sheets nailed on a light wooden super-structure. The production of bauxite in several parts of the country will result in a constant lowering of the price of aluminium and will affect favorably the use of more corrugated aluminium sheets for low-income housing. Considering Mr. Sert statement, "if the roof collapses, you have no house", if the Authority provides roofs, it should provide them in such a manner so that they do not collapse. But if the roofs are put to rest upon walls made by the squatters or ex-squatters with "any kind of particular material" as J.L. Sert puts it, their chances to collapse under strong winds and rains appear quite high. To prevent such disasters, the Housing Authority would be well inspired in providing the roofs well fixed on solid pillars, so that they remain independent of the quality of the walls made of any particular material by the families themselves. And the house would ultimately correspond to Dean Sert's conception of a tropical house as "a roof on some kind of house".

For more stability and more economy of materials and land, it is proposed that the roofs be provided in rows of say 24 x 240 feet. Each of these roof-units would shelter 24 dwellings of 10 x 24 feet in the lease-system community-projects. Put together in rows, the structures would not only offer more resistance to the rain and wind, but they would spare one 24 feet wall to each family which would be building its home under these roofs. At the same time, the useless space ordinarily left between the shacks in the colonies would largely be spared. The 10 x 24 foot dwellings can be partitioned so as to create two 10'x 10' rooms, of which one would open on the alleys, plus one 4 x 10 foot verandah in the back for cooking and washing. From the verandah, the members of the family will have easy access to the latrines and the showers. The 20 x 24 foot dwellings can be partitioned so as to offer, under one of the two 10 foot spans, the same two 10'x 10' rooms plus a bathroom created by closing one half of the verandah. Under the second 10 foot span, there would be a 10'x 20' room which will be the living-room on which the two bed-rooms will open -- and which could eventually be subdivided to provide a third bed-room --, plus a kitchen created by closing one half of the remaining verandah.

The partitions would be entirely built by the families

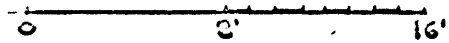
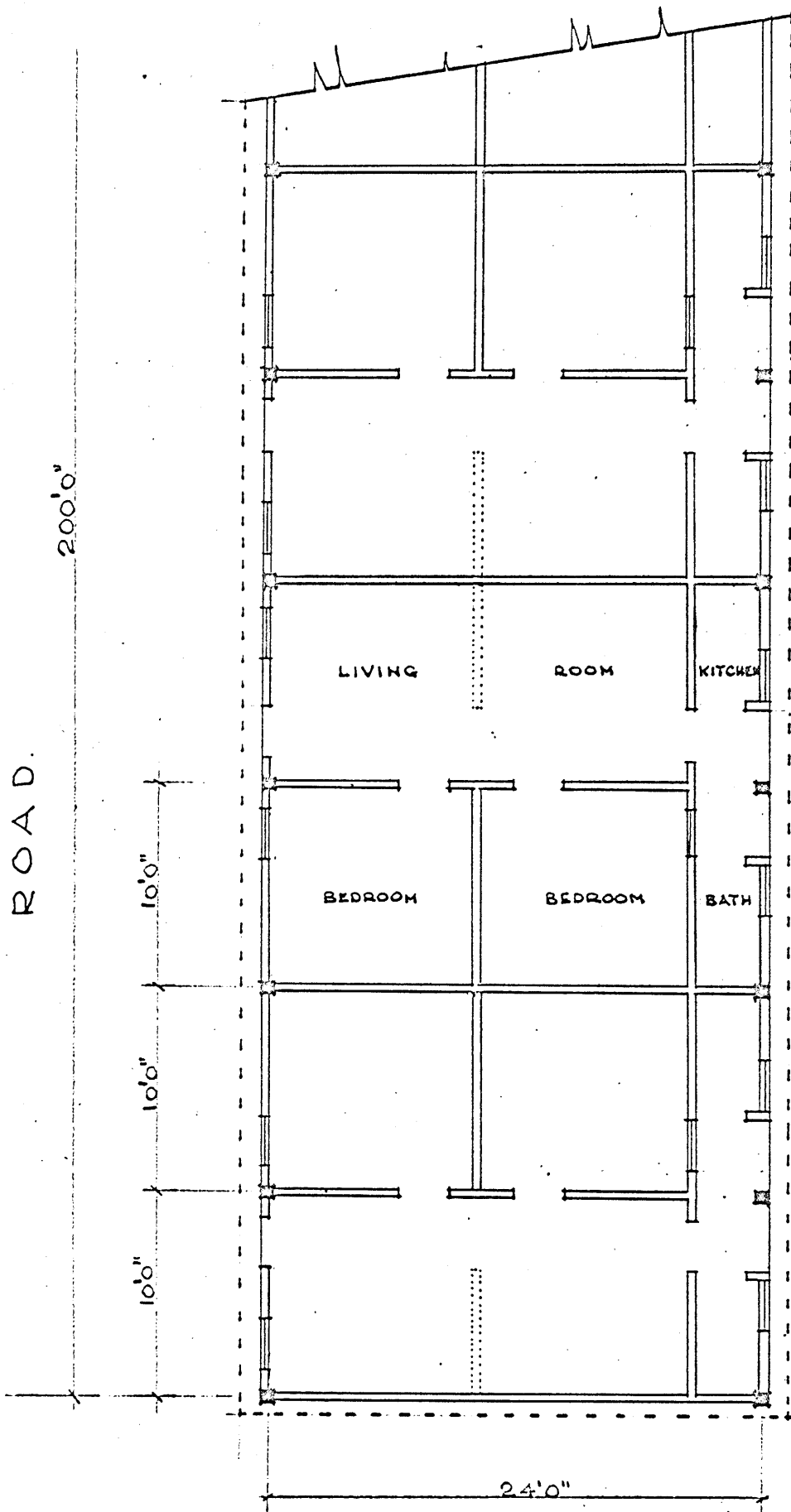
TYPE OF DWELLINGS

LEASE-SYSTEM



TYPE OF DWELLINGS

LEASE-PURCHASE-SYSTEM



to occupy each of the rows of a community-project, united in a building-co-operative. This co-operative would receive technical advice from the Authority as well as building materials at the lowest possible prices. The materials which will be used for partitions must be local ones and cheap ones, such as lumber, stabilized soil blocks, and lime. In the immediate future, it should not be expected that the partitions be very different from what they are now in the squatting colonies for reasons associated with the low-income of the families -- particularly those in the lease-system projects -- and with the limited budget of Housing Authority. Pre-fabricated elements such as doors and windows can also be provided by the Authority to the co-operatives at the lowest possible prices. In fact, the moneys which the squatters used to invest in their primitive roofs may now be expected to be mainly spent in better partitions and walls.

An element of the dwellings which has been too often overlooked -- perhaps because it is not visible enough from outside --, and which is very important insofar as health hazards are concerned, is the floor. It has been noticed in a previous chapter of this study that in a great many shacks the floor is nothing else than the ground itself which has been more or less leveled. There, every night, the members of the

family just lie down and sleep with or without mats. Sleeping on the wet ground can be assumed to be a disastrous experience for the health of the squatters. The provision of concrete floors inside the dwellings appears as an urgent necessity if health conditions are to be improved in the community-projects. The ground area to be sheltered by the proposed roof-units can be covered with a layer of concrete so as to isolate the sleepers from the microbes and the moisture of the ground. At the same time, these layers of concrete would provide a unified footing for all the partitions to be built by the families of the community-projects. Even though the budget of the Housing Authority could not yet provide for roofs, it would appear urgently necessary to provide at least the concrete floors (24' x 240') which, when funds become available in the Authority's budget, will be covered with the proposed corrugated aluminium roofs. The presence of these strips of concrete on the project-sites would, by itself, represent a strong incentive for the newcomers to build their shacks on them rather than on the wet and unstable ground, even in the absence of any public control. Besides isolating the sleepers from the ground, these concrete strips would also generate order in the building pattern, an order which is sadly lacking in the existing squatting colonies.

The National Housing Authority has also to develop

comprehensive research in construction technology if the cost of housing units is to be brought to a lower level more compatible with the particularly low income of most Haitian families, and if the quality of the average Haitian house is to be up graded. Professor Frieden's statement in his study entitled A Program For Housing And Urban Development In Mexico would hold true for Haiti: " If good technical advice were available to the people who build their own homes in the colonias proletarias the reductions in cost could be translated at once into substantial improvements in housing quality and space for many thousands of families each year." In such research, the Housing Authority can count on the voluntary participation of the most talented architects and engineers of the nation as well as on the students of the various departments of the University of Haiti. Much may also be expected to come from organizations and institutions of more advanced countries interested in helping the less privileged nations in their endeavours to improve their economic and social conditions.

THE FINANCIAL ASPECT

In an article entitled Possibilities Of International Financing Of Housing, appearing in Housing and Economic Development, a report already cited, Professor Leo Grebler wrote: "Housing development for lower income groups in underdeveloped countries in most cases will not meet the economic and financial tests necessary for self-liquidating loans or private equity investments, even with government guarantees. The physical facilities often will be unsuitable as security for long-term, self-liquidating loans, although they may represent a gradual or even substantial improvement over available accommodations. Rent or ownership expenses usually will be too high for wide segments of the population if they are to include interest and principal payments on self-liquidating loans or to return adequate profits to equity investors. In view of the non-self-liquidating character of much of the housing essential to the advancement of productivity in underdeveloped countries, it would seem futile to search for "sound" banking or mortgage insurance devices that would provide for magic financial formulae." Professor Gebler's statement holds particularly true for Haiti where workers still receive such low and unstable incomes as those already mentioned. To be realistic, it must be recognized that the bulk of the funds necessary

for the squatting operation will have to come from the National Government in the form of annual budget allocations. These allocation will not go only to the Housing Authority to carry out its numerous duties, but also to the various Ministries -- Public Works, Public Health, National Education, Welfare -- which will be called upon for this particular operation. It has already been observed that the creation, by the Government, of special taxes on crops exports and dwelling-units above a given standard could make more funds available every year for this programme. Grants from private and semi-public bodies throughout the country, as well as from foreign and international institutions and organizations could also pour additional funds in the Authority's purse. The Authority must also be expected to draw some revenues from the projects it will undertake. On the project based on the lease-system, particularly in those where, beside public and sanitary facilities, both floor and roof are provided, each family can be required to pay a monthly rent equivalent to one-tenth of its total monthly income; another tenth can be spent by each family for the partitions and the furniture of its home. In the projects based on the lease-purchase-system, the same proportion of the family's total income will represent a more important and stable source of revenue for the Authority, and this increment

will help cover the cost of the land and the super-structure which will be kept, after twenty-five years of lawful occupancy, as the family's own property.

If 5 per cent of the annual budget of the National Government goes to housing, this would represent 10 million gourdes. Other sources like grants and rents may be expected to add 2 million gourdes. Of course, the squatting operation is only one part of the whole public housing operation which will also include housing for the lower-middle and the middle class families. It will not be easy to say what portion of the administrative expenses of the Housing Authority will actually be devoted to the squatting operation since it will be one of several operations simultaneously carried out by the Authority's personnel. If it is guessed that one-third of the housing budget will go to the squatting operation, only 4 million gourdes will be yearly available for this operation, at least in the immediate future. Of those 4 million, one-third can be expected to be spent on the residential structures proposed in the preceding section, that is about 1.3 million a year. These structures can be estimated to cost 50 gourdes per square meter to the Authority, that is 1,300 gourdes for the units in the lease-system projects, and 2,600 gourdes for the units in the lease-purchase-system projects. Therefore,

the budget would allow for the provision of 500 units in the lease-system projects, and 250 units in the lease-purchase-system projects, every year. (Focussed on La Saline, this operation would eradicate squatting there within three years.)

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This study has proposed an approach which, by its comprehensive and yet modest nature, may lead future public actions in Haiti toward more success against squatting.

The approach has been conceived as a continuous process aiming at eradicating and preventing squatting which itself is and will remain a continuous process in Haiti as long as the agricultural base on which the vast majority of the citizens are still making a living keeps being damaged by erosion and maltreatment, as long as the rate of increase of new jobs does not keep pace with the rate of increase of the labor force, as long as the average worker's income does not reach a decent level, as long as the labor force stays unskilled to such an extent, as long as tuberculosis and other illnesses continue to affect so much the health of the families and the productivity of the workers, as long as the children of the poor families still are not given the opportunity of going to school, as long as public transportation stays unorganized across the growing cities, as long as the prices of urban land are kept above the means of the average worker, as long as the use and development of urban land remains out of strict public control, as long as building materials and techniques are not up-graded, as long as building materials are kept at prohibitive prices, as long as the Courts are not completely independent from political pressures, and as

long as the Government is not equipped with the legal and technical instruments necessary to handle the squatting problem in its actual complexity.

The author has no illusion insofar as the scarcity of available resources for such an operation is concerned. And it is exactly because the resources are scarce that they ought to be used more responsibly than they have been in the past. The scarcity of resources should not be a pretext for tackling only one of the numerous aspects of the squatting problem, for the results of such a limited action on the whole situation may ultimately be worthless and the invested resources, wasted.

There is no easy solution to this problem. The solution proposed here is a difficult one; it will take great amounts of work from a wide variety of technicians; it will require great support from the politicians, the squatters, and the urban population as a whole; it will absorb a reasonably substantial portion of the Government's as well as the squatters' budgets; it will take time; but is there any other way out?

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