

Housing Problem in the Province of Madras.

IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING.

Housing is next in importance only to food and clothing and there can be no civilized life without proper housing facilities. Housing has a vital bearing on the health of the nation and the standard of living of the community in general. Neglect of housing tends to the growth of crowded towns and the development of 'plague spots' in big cities and generally constitutes the starting point for the spread of epidemics like cholera, plague, smallpox, etc. It is no exaggeration to state that the standard of health of the people in the cities and bigger municipalities is to a large extent dependent on the provision of healthy and hygienic houses on up-to-date lines. Under present-day conditions, housing has become one of the major problems that needs to be tackled with all the resources which the State, local bodies, employers and private capitalists can mobilize. Government are alive to the seriousness of the problem and the following pages are intended to show the steps already taken and proposed to be taken by Government to solve this admittedly difficult problem.

SHORTAGE OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION.

The shortage of housing accommodation has assumed the proportions of a major problem everywhere in the post-war era. The problem is naturally more acute in countries which suffered devastation during the last war. In England, for example, it has been estimated that not less than 150,000 houses were destroyed as a result of air-raids. The position in Europe is similar, if not worse. In the United States of America, the Government are striving to put through a scheme of building expansion, but the tempo of progress is not as quick as the people would desire. To quote from a recent article on the subject in the *Economist*, London :

" More and more leaks are appearing in the programme to put an adequate roof over the American head. The lag in construction during the first four months of 1947 indicates that dwelling units started this year may fall short by a quarter to a third of the record of a million units than was predicted a few months ago."

As regards India, the position in this regard is very acute in the cities and bigger towns, though the country has not experienced