

IX. THE HOUSING QUESTION.

I. SURVEY OF THE HOUSING CONDITIONS IN SWEDEN.

Country and Town. The housing question is, of course, generally regarded as a question for the cities, and especially the large cities. This may be right from an actual social-political point of view, but if we look deeper into the matter, we find that the rural districts also have their housing problems, although they are different from those of the cities. Whereas apartment houses predominate in the cities, and the question is one of supply and price, the housing question in the country — where $\frac{2}{3}$ of the families have houses or cottages to themselves and about $\frac{3}{4}$ live in their own homes, or in houses put at the disposal of farm labourers and others free of rent — primarily concerns the character of the houses. As regards the country there is as yet no general and reliable knowledge of the conditions so important for the housing standard, such as floor area and cubic content, if they are draughty, cold, damp, dilapidated, etc., of their equipment and conveniences, »fixtures» of various kinds, the classification of the inmates into members of families, servants, other inmates of different kinds, etc. The indifferent housing conditions of the farm labourers, as is known, are often exposed in the yearly reports of the Medical Officers to the authorities, as well as in the press and otherwise in public discussions. The suppliers of this information, however, primarily present what in their opinion is the most »interesting» case, with the result that the very bad houses are particularly brought to notice, whereas little attention is paid to the average dwellings of the locality, which, however, in virtue of their great numbers, indicate the real character of the housing conditions. Further, there are no comparative data available