

The Housing Question

as to whether — and to what extent — farm labourers and others who live in dwellings supplied by their employers are worse off as regards housing conditions than the peasants, owners of their own homes, tenants, cottagers, and other less well-to-do people, who have settled their own housing question.

In the absence of more detailed accounts regarding housing conditions, we shall have to be content with the more summary evidence of the official censuses of dwellings, especially that taken during the years 1912—14, which covered no less than 108 rural communes. This census proves that there is considerably more overcrowding in the country than in the cities. This, however, can hardly be ascribed to the fact that urban houses contain more rooms. Of the districts included in the census of 1912—14, the country communes had, it is true, somewhat more of the larger and less of the smallest dwellings (single kitchens, single rooms etc.) than the cities, but in respect of the types of houses which are decisive for the main part of the population (1 or 2 rooms and a kitchen), the comparative figures practically agreed, being for both country and towns about 40 % and 25 % respectively. The overcrowding in the country may therefore largely be attributed to the well-known fact that the households are generally larger in the country than in the cities.

As regards the types of houses in different parts of the country, the investigation of 1912—1914 showed that in the east, west and north of Sweden, flats of one room and a kitchen predominate in the country as well as in the towns, whereas in the southern parts of the country flats consisting of two rooms and a kitchen are more common.

House Types. If we consider the towns and town-like municipalities exclusively, we find that housing conditions are influenced primarily by the prevailing style of building. The average number of inhabitants per house expresses briefly and in concentrated form the predominant style of building.

It is clear that, although the varying methods of estimation and differing opinions as to what constitutes the fundamental principle »house», lessen the comparative value of the figures, building conditions in the Swedish towns differ from those obtaining in, for instance, England, Holland, and Belgium, where the houses in the