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Vancouver Post-War Housing Committee - Correspondence

FOLDER NO 12-13

~~GOOLIE-VERNER PAPERS~~

Buck, Frank E.

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Vancouver Post-War Housing Committee - Correspondence

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FOLDER NO 12-13

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(INCLUDING PLUMBING)

ANDREW HAGGART
BUILDING INSPECTOR



TELEPHONE: FAIRMONT 2711

VANCOUVER, B. C.

May 18, 1944.

Dear Professor Buck:

With reference to my letter of March 28, I regret to say Mr. Nicolle has so far been unable to set a definite time for his visit to Vancouver and therefore no meeting of the Committee has been arranged.

The enclosed summary prepared by Mr. March, research adviser, covers the James report on Housing. The report is an extensive document of over 250 pages and is in the hands of the Dominion Government. Application for a copy has been made to the King's Printer, which should be here shortly when a meeting of the Post-War Housing Committee will be called.

Yours truly,

A. J. Harrison,

SECRETARY, POSTWAR HOUSING
COMMITTEE.

AJH:YH

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(INCLUDING PLUMBING)

ANDREW HAGGART
BUILDING INSPECTOR



TELEPHONE: FAIRMONT 2711

VANCOUVER, B. C.

20th July, 1943.

Professor F.E. Buck,
2403 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

Re Post-War Housing Committee

Please note the first general meeting of the above Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 14th at 2 P.M. in No. 1 Committee Room, City Hall; a further reminder will be mailed early in September.

For your information I beg to say the Committee at present is composed of the following: Aldermen Buscombe, Corey & Greyell, the Secretary for Zoning Matters and representatives from the following organizations:

Town Planning Commission
Board of School Trustees
" " Park Commissioners
" " Trade
Junior Board of Trade
Vancouver Real Estate Exchange
Architectural Institute of B.C.
Building & Construction Industries Exchange
Trades and Labour Council
Building Trades Council
Housewives League of B.C.
Local Council of Women
Vancouver Council of Social Agencies
Public Affairs Institute of the Y.M.C.A.

AJH/KM.

Yours very truly,

Alfred Stansbury
SECRETARY

City Hall,
December 28th, 1943.

Chairman and Members,
Post-War Housing Committee,
City Hall.

Dear Sirs and Mesdames:

The Standard of Housing Sub-Committee have held one meeting and beg to submit the following report:

The necessary authority to establish such a standard is already included in the City Charter and reads as follows:

"For fixing standards of fitness for human habitation to which all dwellings shall conform; for requiring the owners of dwellings to make the same conform to any of such standards; for prohibiting the use of such dwellings which do not conform to any standard so fixed; for governing and regulating persons in the use and occupancy of dwellings and for appointing inspectors for the enforcement of the By-law."

The Committee is of the opinion that no very definite improvement in existing accommodation can be accomplished until a standard is established by By-law not only for existing dwellings but for new dwellings also. Persons must no longer be permitted to erect sub-standard dwellings that tend to develop slums and create unsatisfactory health and social conditions. Where persons are financially unable to erect satisfactory dwellings for themselves, Government assistance must be forthcoming or provision made by the erection of low rental housing schemes.

The Committee have examined the City of Toronto Standard of Housing By-law and the reports of improvements carried out through the application of this ordinance, but such improvements refer only to certain types of dwellings in blighted areas, this being the purpose for which the Toronto By-law was originally designed.

There are several By-laws relating to the various types of housing accommodation and these are often at variance with one another; a Standard of Housing By-law should synchronize these differences.

The Committee is aware that a Standard of Housing By-law has already been drafted, but in their opinion it is not sufficiently wide in its scope to include all types of housing accommodation since such a standard should apply to single, duplex and apartment dwellings, lodging and rooming houses.

The Committee will, with the approval of the Major Committee endeavour to draft the main principles of a Standard of Housing By-law to embrace all types of dwellings with particular reference to lodging and rooming houses and ordinary rented premises.

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If a proper standard of housing is established, people must be taught to respect the property of the landlord, and not wreck it as some do to-day, and also to keep the premises and the neighborhood clean and tidy; in fact all persons must be stimulated to take a keener and more public interest in the housing accommodation and environment of the whole community.

Yours very truly,

Laura G. Solman,

CHAIRMAN

AJH:P



BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(INCLUDING PLUMBING)

ANDREW HAGGART
BUILDING INSPECTOR

TELEPHONE: FAIRMONT 2711

VANCOUVER, B. C.

February 26th, 1944.

Professor F. E. Buck,
University of British Columbia,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Professor Buck:

Replying to your letter of February 17th enclosing a resolution you wish to place before the Post-War Housing Committee; as soon as I can obtain certain information from the East I hope to arrange with the Chairman to call a meeting and will advise you accordingly.

Yours truly,

Secretary,
Post-War Housing Committee

AJH:P

a report to the
approach
assessed value, but apparently little can be accomplished under the National Housing Act unless such schemes are primarily undertaken by a Limited Dividend Housing Corporation or an insurance company.



BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(INCLUDING PLUMBING)

TELEPHONE: FAIRMONT 2711

ANDREW HAGGART
BUILDING INSPECTOR

VANCOUVER, B. C.

October 10th, 1944.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I beg to advise a meeting of the Post War Housing Committee will be held on Tuesday, October 17th at 2:30 P. M. in No. 1 Committee Room, City Hall.

A summary of the Committee's activities to date will be presented, also a recommendation from the City of Winnipeg which has been referred to the Committee.

The results of a recent housing survey by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics is available.

Yours truly,

A. J. Harrison,
Secretary

AJH:P

a reference to the approach
assessed value, but apparently little can be accomplished under the National Housing Act unless such schemes are primarily undertaken by a Limited Dividend Housing Corporation or an insurance company.

27th February, 1941.

Dear Fellow Commissioner:

Owing to the large number of items on the agenda at the last two meetings of the Commission, it was not possible to have the enclosed Report read, therefore at the last meeting a resolution directed that the report be typed and sent out to Commission members.

I trust that you will find an opportunity to read the report. A supplementary or second part dealing both with general housing, as discussed at the recent San Francisco Planners' Convention, and also with the problem of "Defence Housing" is just about complete, and will be ready for presentation at a subsequent meeting of the Commission.

An evening paper of yesterday (February 26th) carried a prominent front-page caption over the name of Bruce Hutchison as follows: "Must Find Homes for 200,000 War Workers". In this article Mr. Hutchison gives some startling information. He says, for example, that: "The war boom did not produce new houses, and today vacancies in homes in the country at large are under one per cent (The normal vacancy ratio is five per cent) Up to now on this phase of the war problem it (the Government) does not appear to have moved at all. The whole thing seems to have been overlooked."

As you realize the agencies in Vancouver interested in housing have been very active in attempting to bring this problem before the Federal Government and realize that in allowing housing needs to come very near to a danger point, we are jeopardizing much more than an efficient war effort.

Mr. Hutchison also says: "For it is obvious that factories cannot produce without workers and that workers cannot work without homes."

Further comment is not necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Frank E. Buck,

Representative of the Town Planning Commission on the Civic Housing Committee.

assessed value, but apparently little can be accomplished under the National Housing Act unless such schemes are primarily undertaken by a Limited Dividend Housing Corporation or an insurance company.

October 16th, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members
of the Post War Housing Committee,
City Hall.

Origin

In its annual report for the year 1942 the Town Planning Commission asked the City Council to consider the appointment of a special committee on low cost housing to include interested civic bodies.

Committee Appointed

This Committee comprising Aldermen Buscombe, Corey and Greyell and the Secretary for Zoning Matters was appointed on February 15th, 1942. The Committee met on several occasions and to clarify its position made the following recommendation to Council which was adopted May 17th, 1943:

"That the Special Committee on Low Cost Housing be re-named the Post War Housing Committee, and that it be given authority to add to its membership representatives of such civic bodies or citizens as may be interested in the post-war housing problem, and that the Committee be further authorized to enquire and report from time to time upon what steps are being taken by the Dominion and Provincial Governments and other Canadian Cities with regard to post-war housing schemes and to endeavour to formulate post-war housing plans for the City of Vancouver."

X

"And further the suggestion of the Town Planning Commission that the powers of the Committee be made wide enough to embrace all phases of post-war housing", be concurred in."

Action Delayed

X

As the problem of housing is national in its character the Dominion Government appointed a special committee (Curtis Committee) to examine and report on the whole situation. Subsequently, Vancouver and all large cities have awaited the findings of this group and further action by the Dominion Government. In the meantime the committee was divided into the following sub-committees; only two of these have been able to make any progress. The committees were, Publicity, Finance, New Areas, Construction, Rehabilitation, Standard of Housing. The last two submit the following reports on their work.

Rehabilitation Committee

This committee met on several occasions and considered the problems of housing rehabilitation from many angles. Discussions were held with the Corporation Counsel regarding the powers of the City to enter this particular field and as already mentioned, certain Charter Amendments were found to be necessary. Some study was given to two city blocks as an example, and such details obtained as to occupancy, ownership, and assessed value, but apparently little can be accomplished under the National Housing Act unless such schemes are primarily undertaken by a Limited Dividend Housing Corporation or an insurance company.

Com adopted
a report and
approved

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Standard of
Housing
Committee

This committee met on two or three occasions and a draft of the first section of a suggested by-law has been outlined. The members feel that if a proper standard of housing can be established it will be the most important step towards the establishment of proper housing accommodation.

Respectfully submitted,

A. J. Harrison,
Secretary.

That the com. endorse the proposal that a

resolution be forwarded to the Fed. Gov. with favorable attitude
and the suggestion that in view of the Fed. Gov. favorable attitude
towards it helps in promoting housing by private citizens
the Gov. again refer the matter of public housing projects
involvement by limited Gov. and Dominion Housing Board
and also develop it to all Dominion Cities for such
cities or municipalities to obtain through planning boards
Housing Committee & other int. citizens opinion on
provisions in the desirability of making provision
for City & Town. Anticipates to also separately a priority
involvement however project now so desirability
needed to care for working citizens of several
salary levels.

Further that the resolution on approval
by the Board be drafted in consultation with the
Corp. Council and then submitted to the City
organizations here represented for suggestions on
comments.
Moved by F. E. Duck.
Seconded by

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(INCLUDING PLUMBING)

ANDREW HAGGART
BUILDING INSPECTOR



TELEPHONE FAIRMONT 2711

VANCOUVER, B. C.

March 23rd, 1944

Professor F. E. Buck,
2403 W. 37th Ave.,
City.

Dear Professor Buck:

As you are no doubt aware the three major committees on reconstruction, namely the James Committee, the Firestone Committee and the Parliamentary Committee headed by Mr. Turgeon, have all reported to the Government and we are anxiously awaiting details of their recommendations concerning post-war housing. Something of their scope is already known but it is thought advisable to delay calling the committee together until we have definite information.

In the meantime Mr. F. W. Nicolls, Director of Housing has promised to speak to the committee and display his housing films towards the end of April.

Because of the delay in obtaining details of the Government's proposals we have not organized certain of the sub-committees, but this will be done as soon as feasible.

Yours truly,

A. J. Harrison,
Secretary, Post-War Housing
Committee

AJH:P

February 12th, 1945.

Mr. A. J. Harrison, Secretary
Post-War Housing Committee,
City Hall,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Sorry I shall not be at the Housing Committee meeting called for tomorrow at 2 o'clock. This time conflicts with my lectures at the University. I regret missing the opportunity of meeting Air Vice-Marshal L. F. Stevenson.

This particular meeting is a special one I take it. I do hope, however, that at an early date a regular meeting of our committee will be called. There are several important matters which its members should consider.

May I take this opportunity of voicing my personal satisfaction that, arising out of some of our work, and more particularly perhaps as a result of our last meeting, the most important amendment to the City Charter dealing with the expropriatory powers of the Council has been included in the list of Charter amendments soon to be considered in the Provincial House.

This amendment is basic to sound city management. Without it we could do little to deal with the problem of our blighted and Slum areas which at the present time make such an extravagant demand on city finances, to say nothing of their demoralizing effect on the health and morals of many worthy citizens.

My best wishes for a helpful meeting.

Yours sincerely,

F.

T. E. BUCK

July 26, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Post War Housing Committee.

Dear Fellow Members:

The duties of the Post War Housing Committee as outlined by the City Council are in part as follows---

"To add to it's membership representatives of such civic bodies or citizens as may be interested in the Post War Housing problem---to enquire and report from time to time upon what steps are being taken by the Dominion and Provincial Governments and other Canadian cities with regard to Post War Housing schemes and to endeavour to formulate Post War Housing plans for the City of Vancouver."

We have held a few meetings mainly for the purpose of hearing reports and the Secretary has continued to supply us with all the available information emanating from Ottawa, but beyond this we have accomplished practically nothing.

With the return of members of the armed forces to civil life certain aspects of the Post War period have in a sense moved forward into the present situation, and the problem of housing these men and their families should, in my opinion, receive our serious consideration. Although the Post War Housing Committee represents a cross section of the community it is understood a new committee has been appointed to look into this particular problem. It seems unfortunate that an attempt should be made to deal separately with any phase of the Housing problem and such action can only lead to confusion.

With the development of Housing schemes both in Montreal and Toronto and considering the press reports that Housing Legislation will be brought down almost immediately, I feel that we should meet as soon as possible to discuss the whole situation or disband, since to date we have served no useful purpose.

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If you feel as I do in this matter will you kindly advise the Chairman accordingly.

Yours truly,

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June 18th, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Post War Housing Committee,

Dear Sirs:

My association with the Council of Social Agencies has given me a clear insight into housing conditions in Vancouver and as a member of the Post War Housing Committee I feel the latter organization should take a leading part in an endeavour to advance what might be termed "Post War Housing Legislation" in such a manner that it can be applied to the present crisis particularly in relation to low-cost housing.

As you are aware it has been stated in the House of Commons by Mr. Ilsley that the Government is prepared to lend the sum of \$2,000,000.00 to a group in Montreal for the purpose of erecting a low-rental housing scheme and is prepared to assist other cities in a similar manner.

Housing conditions for persons in the low income brackets are just as acute in Vancouver as in any Eastern city and the enclosed copy of the National Housing Registry's report for May gives interesting details of local problems particularly in regard to those gallant men who volunteered for overseas service and are now returning to civil life.

I would ask therefore with the Chairman's permission that a meeting of the Post War Housing Committee be called for Tuesday, June 27th, at 2 P. M. in order that we may discuss the question of obtaining Federal assistance at the present time along the lines already given in the City of Montreal.

Yours very truly,

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VANCOUVER
COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES ON THE
POST WAR HOUSING COMMITTEE

enc 1. Letter sent to the H
This is the document which will
show a record of the work
done by the Council of Social Agencies
in the Post War Housing Committee

POST-WAR HOUSING COMMITTEE

Alderman Buscombe (Chairman)
Alderman Corey
Alderman Greyell
Medical Health Officer
Building Inspector
Secretary, Zoning Matters

Board of School Trustees	John Henderson	789 W. Pender St.
Bd. of Park Commissioners	Mrs. J.T. Rolston, M.L.A.	4963 Marguerite St.
Town Planning Commission	Prof. F. E. Buck J. C. McPherson	2403 W. 37th Ave. 418 Howe St.
Board of Trade	W.B.A. Botham G. Walker	5611 Highbury St. 509 Richards
Jr. Board of Trade	S. Neil c/o Jr. Bd. of Trade	815 W. Hastings
Vancouver Real Estate Exchange Ltd.	W. C. Atherton	3496 Cambie St.
Building & Construction Industries Exchange	R. J. Lecky	342 W. Pender St.
Architectural Institute of B. C.	W. F. Gardiner	Vancouver Block, 736 Granville St.
Trades & Labour Council	H. W. Watts	531 Beatty St.
Building Trades Council	J. Stevenson	531 Beatty St.
Local Council of Women	Mrs. J. A. Clark	223 E. 13th Ave.
Public Affairs Institute of the Y.M.C.A.	W. Mandale <i>96 ymca</i>	1409 Beach Ave.
Vancouver Council of Social Agencies	Mrs. Gordon Selman	5612 Laburnum St.
Downtown Merchants Assoc.	Mr. A.T.R. Campbell	#1408, 675 W. Hastings
James Committee	Mr. C. B. K. Van Norman	Stock Exchange Bldg.

M 7106

1553 Beach Avenue
Vancouver.
Jan. 26. '43

Dear Professor Buck.

I gladly agreed to act as "questioner" after your address on Housing next Sunday evening. I confess I don't quite know what the "questioner" is expected to do. But my hope would be to help you to emphasize special points.

It would be a great assistance to me if you could tell me beforehand of any matters in your address which you would particularly like stressed, - or any topics which you may not have time to dwell upon. But please don't bother to write if you think a few words before the meeting would answer the purpose equally well.

Yours very sincerely
S. J. Horvick