

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE

RADIO SPEECHES BY JOHN HAY WHITNEY, MRS. SAMUEL I. ROSENMAN AND
JOHN B. BLANDFORD, JR. AT OPENING OF EXHIBITION OF WARTIME HOUSING
AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TUESDAY, APRIL 21, OVER BLUE NETWORK
7:45 - 8:00 P.M. (E.W.T.)

At the preview of the Exhibition of Wartime Housing held at the Museum of Modern Art Tuesday, April 21, the speakers on a nationwide broadcast over the Blue Network were John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum; Mrs. Samuel I. Rosenman, Chairman of the National Committee on the Housing Emergency; and John B. Blandford, Jr., Administrator of the National Housing Agency. This was Mr. Blandford's first public speech since taking office.

The speeches are as follows:

Mr. Whitney

What has housing to do with art, and what has a Museum to do with war? To the second question, let me answer first that the workers, staff, management and trustees of the Museum of Modern Art know that because we are in the war for the survival of freedom, it must follow that free institutions such as ours must join the fight - for their right to exist now, as well as for their survival.

The quick clock tells that this is not the time to detail the Museum's all-out effort to be of service to the nation and its armed forces but we invite you all to work with us if you can, and advise us if you will.

But there is another service that can and must be performed for the millions of American citizens who serve their country by making munitions, bombers, fighter planes, ships and all the implements of war.

From all over the world men fighting for freedom repeat Churchill's cry "give us the tools and we will finish the job." To make these tools of war we need machines. We have the machines. But the machines need men. We have the men. But a man needs a house. And we haven't enough houses to go around in the production centers where they are needed. This inevitably lowers our war production. You remember the old proverb:

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For want of a nail the shoe was lost
For want of a shoe the horse was lost,

and so on, until the kingdom was lost and all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

To put that proverb in modern language, we might say:

Machine Needs Man
Man Needs House

And so to the other question - What has housing to do with art? The Museum is presenting an exhibition of Wartime Housing because we are convinced that ~~through~~ it we can encourage and point the way to housing that is designed according to the finest architectural principles of beauty and use, and built by the most efficient modern mass production methods. Modern design serves the best purpose now, and when we win the victory, well-planned housing can contribute in beauty and usefulness to a happy peace.

Now what can individual citizens or groups of citizens do to speed this fine alliance? We have someone here tonight who is probably better qualified to tell you than anyone else in the country. She is Mrs. Samuel I. Rosenman, Chairman of the National Committee on the Housing Emergency, which is collaborating with the Museum in the exhibition of Wartime Housing. For years, Mrs. Rosenman has worked tirelessly in all corners of this great field. With the coming of war to our nation, this valiant lady has redoubled her efforts. She will tell you of the citizen's opportunity to promote the housing that will help win the war. Mrs. Rosenman.....

Mrs. Rosenman

The National Committee on the Housing Emergency takes pride in collaborating with the Museum of Modern Art in presenting this Wartime Housing exhibition. Our function in the war effort is to help corral public support and cooperation in the production of dwelling units for workers in war industries and in military areas.

Supply of war housing has been impeded by a lack of public appreciation of the dependence of all-out production of materials of war upon an adequate supply of houses. From east to west and north to south assembly lines are steadily forming. To feed the assembly lines with man power there must be homes in which men can live. And yet community upon community fights

against a war housing program. Why?

Not because their citizens are pro-Axis. They are not!

Not because their citizens wilfully wish to slow up the progress of war production. They do not. They fight against war housing because they do not realize its relation to war production.

There must be a willingness on the part of all citizens to recognize the need and to see that it is met. Often people are misled because, personally unfamiliar with the problem, they are ready targets for biased information.

If business-as-usual propagandists were to advise that experimentation with synthetic rubber be held up while the rubber industry makes an attempt to get rubber from Malay, you would be outraged. It is just as outrageous to ask for delays in government war housing construction while we wait for the conventional methods of financing and production.

A great impetus has been given to the war housing program by the formation of a new overall instrumentality of government, the National Housing Agency. The President of the United States has called to administer this agency one who has been trained by education and experience as an administrator. He is an engineer and has had long experience with public problems. He has more recently served as the executive head of the Tennessee Valley Authority and as assistant Director of the Budget. This is one of the rare instances where it was possible to secure a man trained, schooled and experienced in the administration of government for an administrative position of cabinet importance. He has been good enough tonight to come here from Washington to inaugurate this exhibition and to speak with us. Mr. John Blandford, the Administrator of the National Housing Agency.....

Mr. Blandford

It is a privilege to be present at the opening of this important exhibition of Wartime Housing at the Museum of Modern Art.

It is a privilege to have an opportunity to speak briefly to such an important audience on the subject of Wartime Housing.

The National Housing Agency is a war-forged instrument of the Federal government. At this time it has the single objective of providing housing for war workers.

NHA must meet this need within a definite framework of law and reality.

The Congress determines the broad policy of war housing and provides the authorizations and appropriations to implement the program.

The War Production Board determines the location of war industries, guides the pattern of labor supply and consequently creates a major part of the need for war housing.

The War Production Board has jurisdiction over the materials and the equipment out of which housing is built.

Because of the identity of interest of the War Production Board and the National Housing Agency, we have recently joined in a statement of objectives. In this statement there is a firm agreement that war housing is absolutely essential to the war program and that materials for this housing must be made available. There is a clear realization that a shortage of housing may cause a shortage of labor and a shortage of production.

I believe it will be helpful tonight to hit the high spots of our present war housing policy.

The necessity of conserving materials requires that war housing be limited to that required to meet the need arising out of the essential in-migration of war workers from beyond the distance of feasible transportation into localities of intensive war production.

The War Production Board endeavors to reduce this in-migration by guiding war contracts into localities where there is a labor supply and housing, by full utilization of local labor, by sub-contracting and by conversion.

The National Housing Agency attempts to reduce the need for new housing by promoting a Home Utilization and War Guest Program, and by encouraging the conversion, repair and improvement of existing dwellings.

Private enterprise is called upon to meet a major part of the need for permanent family units. An increasing part of these units are programmed for rental housing. Administrative regulations with respect to sale price, rents and location attempt to focus this private housing clearly on the need of war workers.

After private enterprise has exhausted its contribution, there remains a large housing need for lower income war workers

and for temporary needs for which public funds are required. Public housing includes a substantial amount of family units of permanent construction and a larger amount of demountable family units, temporary "War apartments" of small housekeeping units, and dormitories for single persons and for persons who may for a time leave their families at home. Stop-gap housing such as trailers is provided only where absolutely essential to provide some type of shelter until standard housing can be built.

For all types of housing, it is intended that every ingenuity be exercised to minimize the use of critical materials and housing is to be so located as to conserve to the maximum rubber and gasoline and materials for utilities and transportation equipment.

With this background and on this platform, the National Housing Agency tackles its job. The National Housing Agency consists of the Administrator's office and three principal divisions - the Federal Home Loan Bank Administration, the Federal Housing Administration and the Federal Public Housing Authority. As we have divided up the job during the war period, the Administrator's office assumes responsibility for programming - for determining the need for war housing. In this field it works closely with the War Production Board, the Federal Works Agency, the Office of Defense Health and Welfare, the Office of Defense Transportation and the National Resources Planning Board.

The responsibility for executing the program is placed squarely upon the three principal divisions of the National Housing Agency. Each of the three divisions has so ordered its house that it is prepared to discharge its accumulated normal peacetime responsibilities with a minimum of attention, and is now able increasingly to concentrate a major part of its resources on war housing.

As we each do our bit we are guided by a present policy of decentralization, or in other terms a democratic policy of widening and increasing participation through a passing down of responsibility. The Administrator's office plans to do the programming job out in the field, out in the communities, in intimate cooperation with local officials, local organizations and labor representatives.

Similarly, the Federal Home Loan Bank Administration is

working with the savings and loans institutions; the Federal Housing Administration is cooperating with lending institutions in the field of mortgage insurance; and the Federal Public Housing Authority is passing its job of site selection, design, contract letting and management out into the regions and down into the communities.

The establishment of National Housing Agency was essentially an action of unification. It was a move designed to close ranks and strengthen the housing sector of the war front. It symbolizes the total approach to war housing. It provides an opportunity for the full mobilization of private and public resources, of banks and savings and loan institutions, of realtors and public housing agencies, of architects, engineers, contractors and workers, of local, state and federal officials to meet the need of housing the in-migrant army of war workers. Time is short, and labor and material must be conserved. We will all do the best job possible. There may be errors of judgment, but not of intent.

When this war is won, when victory is clearly within our reach, we will then face the constructive task of clearing up the ravages of war and take up the stimulating task of rehousing Americans. For this job we will be better equipped because of the experience gained, because we will have learned to work together, because we will have wider horizons and a better feel for the things that are important.