

cost of continuation schools, and its contribution for 1925 is estimated at 22.5 milliards kronen (£67,500). The balance is met by the employers.

Cost of Education.

The total expenditure of the Municipality upon education for 1925 is estimated at 584 milliards (£1,752,000). Deducting the cost of industrial continuation schools, this amounts to an annual expenditure on behalf of every scholar of 4.2 millions kronen (£12 12s.), nearly twice as much as in 1913. Experts from every part of the world come to Vienna to study its new educational institutions.

The Municipality makes small grants to enable necessitous pupils in the high schools and the secondary schools to study music and other arts.

Vienna possesses many excellent voluntary organisations for the promotion of popular education, and their activities are encouraged by grants of money. The Municipality also maintains a large popular library. It grants subsidies to provide cheap theatrical performances and concerts for the workers. The Municipality maintains several museums, which contain valuable treasures.

The Municipality also encourages art by affording opportunities for the exercise of artistic talent by architects, and in an ever increasing degree to sculptors and painters, in the course of its building activities. The City art prizes likewise exert a stimulating effect.

The Municipality encourages sports, not only by assigning City playing fields for this purpose, but also by grants of money to sports associations of all kinds.

HOUSING.

In Austria the rent protection Acts are more severe than in any other State. Not only do they afford a wide measure of protection against notices to quit, but they prescribe a way of fixing rent which amounts to an expropriation of the house owner. He is put on the same footing as the owner of State bonds of the pre-war and war-time periods. For the gold value which his house possessed in pre-war times, he receives only five per cent. interest in paper kronen (1 gold crown equals 14,400 paper kronen). This is brought about by fixing the basic rent at one half of the pre-war rent, but payable in paper kronen. On the other hand, the pre-war mortgages have depreciated in value to the same extent. In addition to the basic rent, the tenant has to pay the costs of upkeep and of repairs, which is fixed at 1 per cent. of the pre-war rent in gold. It is therefore extremely low, but in urgent cases the house owner may apply to a rent court for any increase that may be required.

As a result of these circumstances, houses fall into a bad state of repair when the owners or tenants thereof manifest ill-will and thus prevent the enforcement of the law. Furthermore, private building has become wholly unremunerative, especially as the bank rate is abnormally high in addition.

It is true that newly-built houses are not subject to the rent restrictions. But as low rents are taken into consideration when fixing the wages or salary of an ordinary person, the latter would be quite unable to take a flat of which the rent was determined by the present cost of construction. For many workers the normal rent would amount to more than their incomes.

A Housing Department.

These conditions have imposed great obligations upon the Municipality, the fulfilment of which has been all the more difficult inasmuch as before the war no municipal housing provisions existed. In the Christian-Social Party era the interests of the landlords were dominant in the Municipal Council, and the landlords held nearly half the seats. The first step of the new Socialist administration was the creation of a Housing Department.

The requisition of existing house room could be enforced with success so long as Vienna itself controlled the situation. But since 1923 a State law has been operative which leaves the door wide open for evasions. It was calculated by the anti-Socialist majority in Parliament that if the Housing Department of the Municipality proved unable to satisfy the most urgent demands for houses, the growing house famine would lead to the abrogation of rent protection. In fact the number of requisitions of house room in Vienna fell from 9,692 in the year 1922 to 6,014 in the year 1923, and only reached 5,000 in 1924. Then the Municipality intervened. A housing tax, payable by all tenants, was proposed as a means of providing the capital for the building of houses by the Municipality. It was possible for the Municipality, which had already constructed 5,006 houses by the end of 1923, to announce a five-years' housing programme embracing the construction of 25,000 new dwellings, the rent for which would be fixed to correspond with the existing rent restriction conditions. The rent of new municipal houses amounts to about one-eighth of the pre-war rent in similar (although inferior) houses, and a twenty-fifth part of a normal rent calculated on the basis of existing building conditions, assuming the interest on borrowed capital to equal the present bank rate of 13 per cent., but without taking the value of the land into account. In addition to rent, businesses have to pay a contribution towards the costs of the housing programme, which amounts to 2.4 millions (£7 4s.) per square metre in the case of open shops, and one half of this rate for workshops and warehouses. It is payable in 40 instalments within ten years, and therefore represents only a very light burden.

Municipal Housing Programme.

It would have been quite useless for the Municipality to grant subsidies to private building co-operative societies as there was absolutely no private money available for this purpose, and the Municipality would have had to provide for the entire costs. It preferred to build itself, and at the same time to show how to construct model small dwellings. This is all the more necessary in Vienna, which before the war was the paradise of land and housing speculators.

First of all land had to be acquired. On account of the hostility of the State government, the Municipality could not make use of the modest appropriate clauses contained in Austrian legislation. But another circumstance came to the rescue. The Rent Restriction Act and the increment value tax combined to render unremunerative the property which land speculators had acquired in pre-war times. The Municipality was thus able to acquire the most valuable building land in the City area at prices representing only a fraction of its pre-war value. 7,330,000 square metres became public property between the Revolution and the end of 1924.

The aim in view is to construct houses and flats which shall be healthy and convenient in every way. The huge blocks of flats already constructed are tastefully designed and form impressive objects for the sight-seer. They go far to raise the low level of Vienna housing conditions. Of every 1,000 flats built in Vienna before the war, 953 had no water supply and 921 no water closet on the premises, but both these conveniences exist in every building constructed by the Municipality. Previously only 62 out of 1,000 small flats had a parlour, but three quarters of the municipal flats of the same type have parlours.

For the present only small flats are being built. The largest comprise two large and one small rooms, parlour, kitchen and water closet. The usual type provided for in the 1925 programme are flats with an area of 35 square metres (bedroom, kitchen, parlour, and water closet), and 43 square metres (containing another bedroom). Flats of 20 square metres (bedroom, parlour, and water closet) are also being built. The height of the rooms is 2.8 metres (8½ feet). The large blocks of flats contain playing rooms, courtyards and gardens. A steam laundry with drying apparatus and electrically-driven mangles enables the washing of a family of four or five to be done within five hours.

The City Building Department has been assisted by some of the ablest architects in the country. The execution of the work has been entrusted to private builders, the Municipality providing all the building materials. The operations are continuously supervised by the Building Department.

The 1924 programme comprised 5,745 dwellings, and the 1925 programme comprises 10,000 dwellings. The large programme of 25,000 dwellings may therefore be completed within less than five years.

In January, 1925, there was a waiting list of 22,000 names. This list includes 2,800 applicants whose present dwellings are uninhabitable or injurious to health, 3,400 applicants who desire separate households, 3,800 who have received notice to quit, and 12,000 who are now overcrowded.

The hope is entertained that as the building programme continues, all those now on the waiting list and new-comers in urgent cases will shortly receive consideration, and the rest of the applicants will be able to obtain a dwelling within a reasonable time.

Municipal Housing Finance.

If economic conditions improve, the building activities of the Municipality can be considerably extended. It appears reasonable to contemplate a systematic housing policy, accompanied by further extensions of the Rent Restriction Act over a long period to come. This, however, only applies to Vienna, as housing programmes are in their initial stages in other towns, owing to the lack of resources and the opposition of the Christian-Social provincial governments. Even if rent restriction cannot be maintained, the present housing policy will not be discredited. The Municipality will own valuable buildings, and as the landlord of ten thousand flats, it will be able to influence the housing market in a decisive fashion, which will prove of great importance for the future determination of rents and housing conditions. In any case the financial sacrifices of the Municipality will be justified. Up to the end of 1924 it had spent more than 800 milliards (£2,400,000) for building purposes, and it has provided for an expenditure of 911.2 milliards (£2,733,600) for the year 1925.

The Housing Department endeavours to provide additional capital in other ways. The Requisition Act enables superfluous house room to be claimed by the authorities. The Housing Department may waive its claim if an amount is paid for this house room which is sufficient to provide for an equal area of new dwelling space in the municipal buildings. This may be regarded as a luxury tax, and it yielded about 10 milliards (£30,000) in the year 1924.

The maintenance of rent protection requires the Municipality to keep an eye upon existing houses. It is the first court of appeal in all disputes (with the exception of notices to quit) arising out of the Rent Restriction Act. The arbitration offices of the municipal authorities in the 21 districts of Vienna are kept extremely busy.

The Municipality has arranged for five-year term loans, to be granted out of a fund at the rate of interest charged by the National

Bank, to enable small houses to be put into repair. 1,441 houses were repaired in the year 1924, with the assistance of such loans amounting to 59 milliards (£177,000). For the year 1925 a total of 100 milliards (£300,000) at 11 per cent. is available.

When house owners persist in refusing to repair their property, the authorities intervene. The Municipality attends itself to the most urgent work and covers its outlay by a mortgage.

New buildings are not subject to the Requisition Act, and are free of taxation for thirty years. New storeys may also be added to old buildings.

Garden Suburbs.

To promote the housing of persons with modest means the Municipality grants loans to an association known as the "Gesiba," which builds garden suburbs. The "Gesiba" builds skeleton houses for persons who undertake to provide one-fourth of the building costs, and to repay the loan within 5 years at 5 per cent. interest. These skeleton houses contain a small number of rooms, but are so constructed that they can be expanded later on without any difficulty. The smallest type of house involves a total outlay of £180, so that anybody with a little capital can buy a house which may be enlarged in due course.

The Garden Suburb Movement receives special encouragement from the Municipality. It arose out of the interests in allotments created by the food shortage during the war. The Municipality gave great encouragement to allotments in the lean years which followed the war. Four and half millions of square metres of municipal land are to-day devoted to allotments. The rent charged is nominal. There are 32,000 allotment holders whose interests are looked after by a special department at the Town Hall.

The Garden Suburb Movement has attained even greater importance. A number of garden suburbs have sprung up, owing their chief support to the Municipality. 1,248 houses were ready by the 1st November, 1924, and 1,000 houses are now under construction.

The land built upon is mostly municipal land, which has a building lease until 1960. On the expiration of the lease the houses lapse to the Municipality, which, however, will grant certain compensation to the lessees. It is provided that 40 per cent. of the labour of construction must be furnished by the settler. The advance given by the Municipality is secured by an 8 per cent. mortgage on completion of the house. The situation and arrangement of the garden suburbs are settled by a special department of the Municipality. Only temperance restaurants are permitted within the garden suburb areas. The loans granted for garden suburbs amounted to £600,000 at the end of 1924.