

apprenticeship in private trade, and endeavours are being made to establish similar workshops for other trades. It is hoped also to make continuation schools compulsory for young unskilled workers.

In order that unemployed apprentices may preserve unimpaired their technical skill and moral force for at least three years after they are out of their time, the Continuation School Council started in this present year (1928) short-term classes for theoretical and practical instruction. A point is made to initiate young unemployed apprentices into new labour processes, and those who take up this course are much sought after by employers as particularly qualified workers.

The entire organisation of continuation schools is controlled in the first place by the Continuation School Board, consisting of representatives of the Municipality, of the employers, of the workers, of the School Board, and of the teachers. The Socialists have a majority on this body. The Municipality pays 45 per cent of the cost of continuation schools, and its contribution for the current year will amount to £82,000.

The total expenditure of the Municipality upon education for 1928 is estimated at £2,250,000, which, deducting the cost of trade continuation schools, amounts to £15.10 for each child, or twice as much as in 1913. Experts from every part of the world come to Vienna to study its new educational institutions.

### **Popular Education.**

The Municipality makes small grants to enable necessitous pupils in the high schools and the secondary schools to pursue their studies.

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 public library. It grants subsidies to provide cheap theatrical performances and concerts for the workers. It also maintains several museums, which contain valuable treasures.

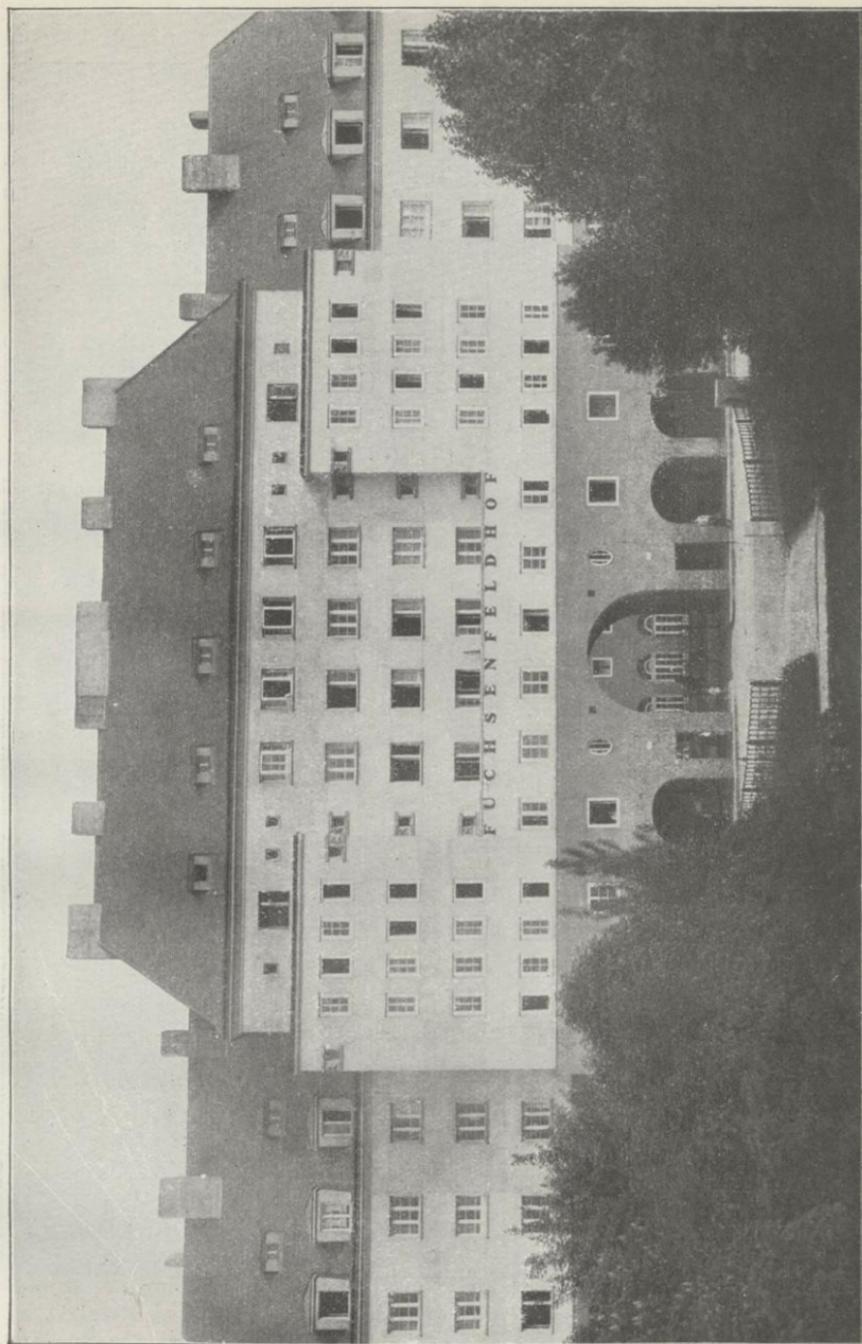
The Municipality also assists art by affording opportunities for the exercise of artistic talent by architects, and in an ever increasing degree to sculptors and painters, in the course of its building activities. The City art prizes exert a stimulating effect.

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.**

### **Rent Protection.**

In Austria the Rent Protection Acts are more drastic 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



Municipal dwellings „Fuchsenfeldhof“. Vienna, District 12



Playground with children's swimming bath in the municipal dwellings  
„Fuchsenfeldhof“, Vienna, District 12

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 value expressed in gold which his house possessed in pre-war times, he receives a rental of only five per cent in paper kronen (1 gold krone = 14,400 paper kronen = 1s. 0d.). This is effected 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, it must be emphasised that half of Viennese houses have changed hands since the war, mostly for speculative purposes and at extremely low prices, often at less than one tenth of the pre-war price. By merely raising the rent to the pre-war level, many house owners would receive the entire purchase price of the house in the shape of one year's rent.

In addition to the basic rent, the tenant has to pay the costs of maintenance and of repairs, which is fixed at the extraordinarily low figure of 1 per cent of the pre-war rent in gold, with the proviso that 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, private enterprise in building has become completely unremunerative. It is true that new 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 dwelling the rent of which was determined by the present cost of construction. For many workers the normal rent would amount to more than their income.

These conditions imposed great obligations upon the Municipality, the fulfilment of which has been rendered all the more difficult inasmuch as prior to the war no municipal housing provisions existed. In the time of the Christian-Social Party, the interests of the landlords were dominant in the Council, and the landlords held nearly half the seats. The first step of the new socialist administration was the creation of a housing department.

### **60,000 Municipal Dwellings.**

The requisition of existing house room could be enforced with success so long as Vienna 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. Nevertheless, between the years 1919 and 1925 the Municipality requisitioned 44,838 dwellings. On the 31st December 1925, the federal law which empowered these requisitions was repealed, and henceforth every house owner could do what he liked with houses that became empty, although he still remained subject to the provisions of the Rent Restriction Act. The law is frequently

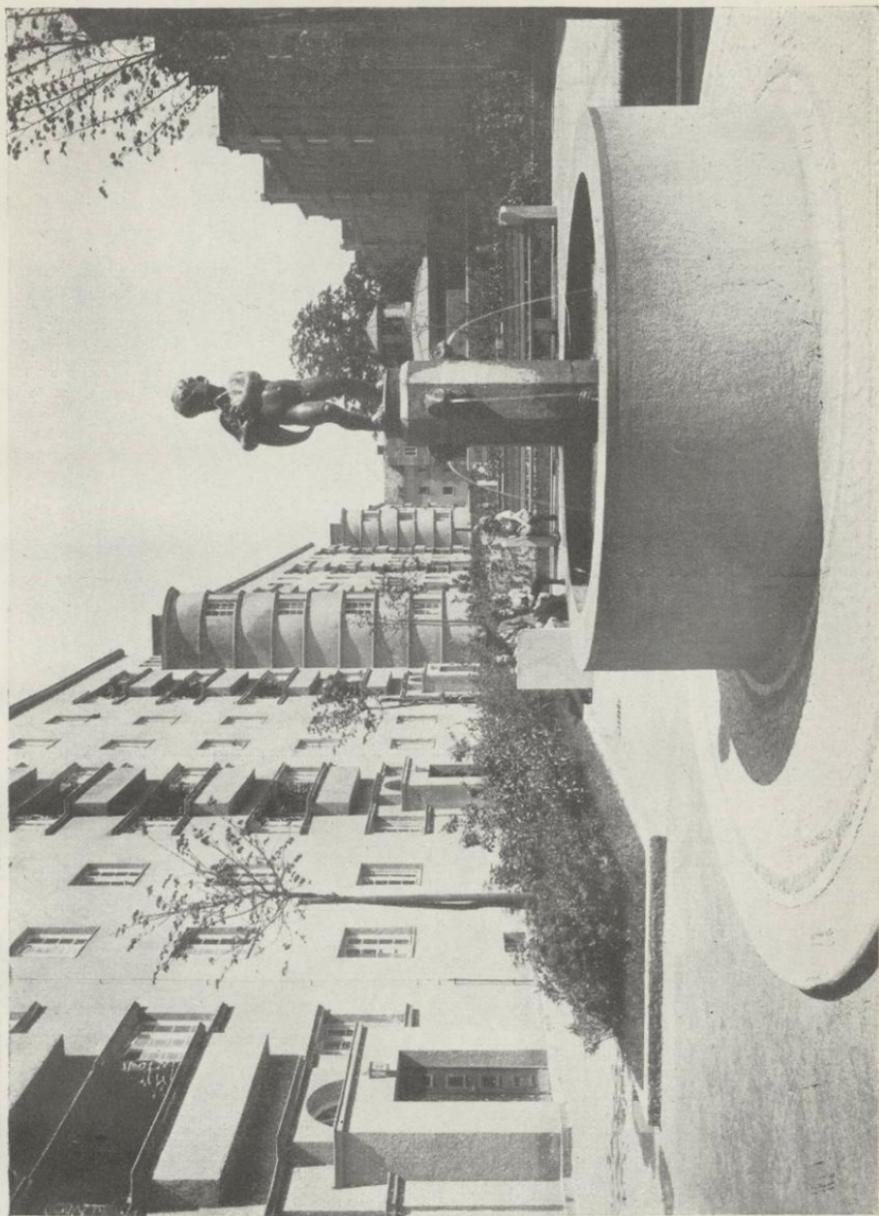
evaded by the payment of a premium by the incoming tenant. Consequently, when their houses fall vacant, house owners do not look for people who really need accommodation, but for tenants who can pay a premium, whilst the number of the houseless grows. During the first half year of 1926, immediately after the compulsory regime was abolished, house owners relet 7,970 dwellings. Of the new tenants, 7,126 were not classified at all by the Housing Department, whilst only 511 were included in the list of urgent cases. Then the Municipality intervened. The results of the requisitioning procedure had not sufficed to relieve the housing famine. A housing tax, payable by all tenants, was proposed as a means of providing the capital necessary for the building of houses by the Municipality. The financial situation, moreover, made it possible for other sources of revenue to be tapped. It was possible for the Municipality, which had already constructed 7,259 dwellings between 1919 and the end of 1923, to announce the construction of 25,000 new dwellings within the succeeding five years. This promise was fulfilled a full year earlier, and the building programme was increased to 30,000 dwellings. In April 1927, a second large building programme, embracing the construction of 30,000 dwellings before 1932, was embarked upon by the Municipality. Rent is fixed, not in accordance with the cost of construction, but only as high as the cost of maintenance and to correspond with the existing rent restriction conditions. Thus the Municipality refrains from collecting any interest upon its building capital. The rent of the new municipal houses amounts to about one eighth of the pre-war rent of similar, but inferior, dwellings and a fifteenth of what would have to be reckoned as normal rent in view of present building costs, if building were to be remunerative for private capital.

It would have been quite useless for the Municipality to grant subsidies to private building societies (with the exception of the garden city associations), 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 small model dwellings ought to be constructed. This is all the more necessary as pre-war Vienna was a paradise of land and housing speculators.

### **Obstacles to Municipal Building Activity.**

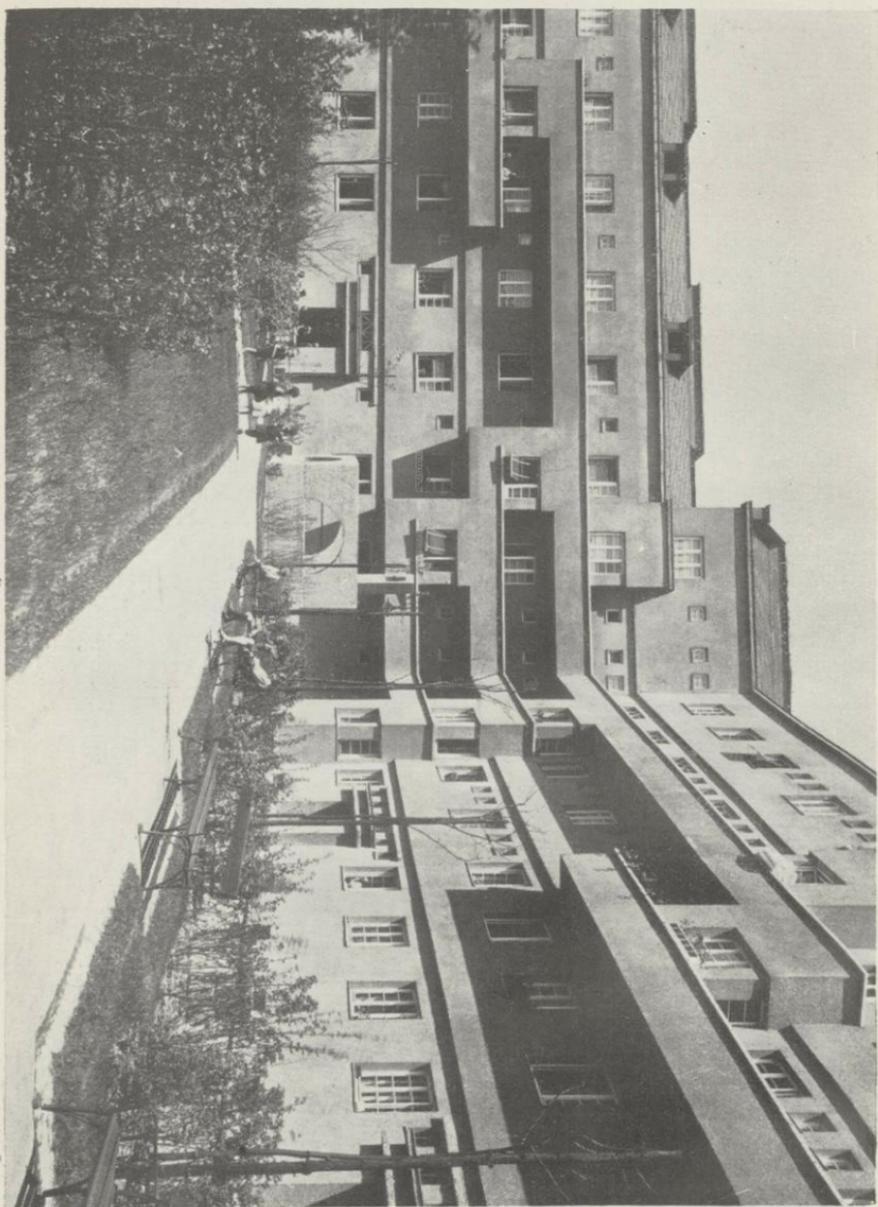
First of all sufficient land had to be acquired. Owing to the hostility of the State government, the Municipality could not take advantage of the modest appropriation clauses contained in Austrian legislation. But another circumstance came to the rescue.

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, one after another, blocks of valuable building land within the city area at prices representing only a fraction of their pre-war value. 16,430,000 square metres became municipal



Grounds of the municipal dwellings "Lindenhof", Vienna, District 18

Garden in municipal dwellings „Bebelhof“, Vienna, District 12



property in this way between the end of the war and the end of 1927. In the years 1923 to 1927 the Municipality spent over £800,000 in acquiring land. At the end of 1927 the Municipality owned 26.51 per cent of the area of Vienna, and 36.78 per cent if streets and waterworks are included.

A great part of this land cannot, it is true, be utilised for building purposes within a measurable period. Vienna, which was formerly the centre of an Empire of 54 millions and now the capital of a small Republic with 6½ millions of inhabitants, was severely hit by the effects of the war, and is not at the present time growing through the rapid development of industry. The development of new housing estates on the confines of the city is for this reason not an economic proposition. For this reason and because the Municipality is unable to increase its landed property by expropriation measures, the planning of garden cities within the area of Vienna is not at present possible. Some modest beginnings have, however, been made. In the main, however, where dwellings are constructed, they have to take the form of blocks of flats, of a markedly superior character to the results of private enterprise.

### **New Housing Principles.**

The chief aim in view is to build houses and flats which shall be healthy and convenient in every way. The large buildings, which frequently comprise several hundreds of flats, do not give the impression of barracks. They are tastefully designed and form impressive objects for the sightseer, imparting a new architectural beauty to the aspect of the city.

The new dwellings go far to raise the low level of Viennese housing conditions. Of every thousand 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 dwelling constructed by the Municipality. Previously only 62 out of every thousand small flats had a parlour, but three quarters of the municipal flats of the same type have a parlour. For the present only small flats are being built. The largest comprise two large and one small rooms, parlour, kitchen, and water closet. The flats provided for in the present programme cover an area of 40 square metres (bedroom, kitchen, parlour and water closet), and 48 square metres (containing another bedroom). Flats of 20 square metres for single persons, containing 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 are provided with playing rooms for the children, courtyards and gardens. A steam laundry, installed in the larger buildings, with drying apparatus and electrically-driven mangles, enables the washing of a family of four or five to be done within half a day.

Most of the blocks of flats contain shower baths and washing baths, for the use of which small charges are made to cover the cost of maintenance.

Experiments are also made with various types of dwellings. Thus a house has been built with quite a small kitchen equipped with all appliances necessary for a modern household. Another experiment has been made with a house containing built-in furniture. Then there is a block of service flats.

The City Housing Department has been assisted by some of the ablest architects in the country. The execution of the work has been entrusted to contractors, who tender in open competition, the Municipality providing all the building materials. The building operations are continuously supervised by the Building Department.

### **The Effect of Municipal Building.**

At the end of 1927, about 16,000 applicants were registered as preferential in the City Housing Department. This list included 1638 applicants whose present houses are inhabitable or injurious to health, 5,560 who desire separate households, 1,763 who have received notice to quit, and 7,039 who are now overcrowded or live too far from their work.

If economic conditions improve the building programme of the Municipality can be amplified in many ways. It appears reasonable to contemplate a systematic housing policy, accompanied by further extensions of the Rent Restriction Act, over a long period to come. Whereas during the decade which preceded the war, private enterprise only put up half as much houses as there were marriages, the number of dwellings which municipal building now adds to the available house room amounts to 40 per cent of the marriages. The pre-war relationship can therefore be restored with a little effort. The great housing deficit is to be explained by the almost complete cessation of building activity during the war decade and the period immediately after. Whatever form building policy may take, this disparity can only be abolished by extraordinary measures over a long period.

Even if the rent restrictions cannot be maintained, the present housing policy will not be discredited. The Municipality will own valuable buildings, and as the landlord of tens of thousands of dwellings, it will be able to exert a decisive influence upon the house market, which will prove of great importance for the future determination of rents and housing conditions. In any case the great financial sacrifices of the Municipality will be justified. In the five years between 1923 and 1927, it spent £11,250,000 on housing.

The Housing Department strives to procure extra capital in other ways. When the Requisitions Act was in force, superfluous house room could be claimed by the authorities. The Department could waive its claim on payment of a fine sufficient to provide for an equal area of new dwelling space in the municipal buildings. It was thus a kind of luxury tax which the Housing Department imposed. It brought in about a quarter of a million pounds, to which must be added that a large number of small flats, as equi-



Library in municipal dwellings „Sandleitn“. Vienna, District 16



Nursery in municipal dwellings „Quarinplatz“. Vienna, District 10



A corner of the garden suburb, „Freihof“. Vienna, District 21



Garden suburb houses. Vienna, District 21

valent for superfluous house room in luxurious houses, became available.

### Repair of Old Houses.

The maintenance of rent protection requires the Municipality to keep an eye on 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. Its decisions have great weight in the administration of the Rent Acts. In order to facilitate the repair of houses which had fallen into great neglect during the war without imposing too heavy a burden on the tenants, the Municipal Savings Bank has granted loans to tenants at a moderate rate of interest, amounting to £1,250,000 during five years in respect of 7,257 houses. When house owners persist in refusing to repair their property, the authorities intervene. The Municipality attends to the most urgent work itself and covers its outlay by a legal charge.

### Garden Suburbs.

As was to be expected, the Garden Suburb Movement receives special encouragement from the Municipality. This movement arose out of the interest 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. Of the 8.7 millions of square metres utilised in 1927 as allotments, 4.2 millions belonged to the Municipality. The rent charged is extremely low. For the 25,000 allotment holders there is a special department at the Town Hall, which grants materials on credit, awards prizes and so forth.

Much greater importance has been attained by the Garden Suburb Movement. Owing their existence chiefly to municipal support, a number of garden suburbs have sprung up, comprising at the end of December 1927 3,694 houses either finished or nearing completion, to which must be added the 265 houses of the three garden suburbs built by the Municipality in 1923. The land built on is exclusively municipal land, let on lease until 1960. The ground rent amounts to 3½ per cent. of one sixth of the pre-war value of the land. On the determination of the lease, the houses will lapse to the Municipality, which, however, will grant certain compensation to the lessees. 15 per cent. of building costs must be furnished by the settler in kind, or compounded for a cash payment. The advance granted by the Municipality is secured by an 8 per cent. mortgage on completion of the house. The amount actually to be collected will only be that covered by the yield of the house, and any deficit existing at the end of the lease will be written off. Apart from meeting the costs of maintenance, the tenant is liable to pay only a trifling sum towards the costs of construction.

At the end of 1927 the Municipality assigned about 1,600,000 square metres of land for the garden suburbs constructed with its assistance. The planning and entire architectural scheme of the suburbs are subject to the approval of the Garden Suburb Department. The sale of alcohol is prohibited in establishments within the garden suburbs. Municipal advances for this purpose, including the cost of the three municipal garden suburbs amounted to £1,000,000 at the end of 1927.

Since the year 1927 these garden cities have been laid out by the Municipality itself, and when completed, the houses and gardens are transferred as a gift to the settlement associations, and a rent is levied in respect of each house sufficient to cover costs of maintenance only. 450 of such houses were built in 1927.

### **Encouragement of Private Building.**

By the side of all the above activities, private building enterprise has, of course, been encouraged, but with very little success. New buildings are exempt from taxation for thirty years. 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 five years at 5% 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 small capital can buy a house which may be enlarged in due course.

The Municipality has also granted a loan of some £200,000 to the "Gesiba," in order that 190 houses may be built. Applicants must find a quarter of the costs of construction. The balance of the loan is repayable in 15 years at 4 per cent. The land is leased by the Municipality at a low ground rent until the year 2000.

## **Technical and Economic Questions.**

### **The Streets.**

The formidable tasks which confronted the Town Hall in the sphere of housing have in no way impaired the vigorous treatment of other questions. In order to keep constantly up to date with technical progress, the Municipality sends its engineers abroad. The technical problems clamouring for solution were all the more urgent because Vienna was in many respects a backward municipality before the war, whilst the subsequent period of neglect made drastic reform necessary. Thus a gigantic labour had to be performed to bring order into the streets, which was far more difficult than elsewhere by reason of the hilly character of the town. The paving, cleaning and lighting of the streets had to be reorganised. New and comparatively untried systems have been