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T H E S I S

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REGIONAL PLANNING  
A FORE-RUNNER TO A LARGER  
AND BETTER TOWN-BUILDING  
PROGRAM IN AMERICAN  
CIVILIZATION.

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SUBMITTED BY  
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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

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## REGIONAL PLANNING,-

A Fore-runner to a Larger and Better Town Building  
Program in American Civilization.

Civilization has been largely a matter of cities. Having had the facilities for selecting human contact, cities have brought about companionship, and out of companionship has grown leadership. History has been written largely in terms of cities, for cities are the essence of evolution itself.

Today, certain of our philosophers are telling us that the city must be replaced, or society will break. They say that, while the city worker is becoming more proficient in his own class, he is at the same time becoming more narrow in his thinking and especially in his relations to his community as a whole. The philosophers are pointing to the fact that we need a new type of civilization, and Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska, says this new civilization must be, for the Central States, at least, "A Prairie Civilization".

The philosophers are asking for a rural culture. But, cities have seen the problems before the philosophers saw the answer, and the modern city is forging ahead at a rate previously unknown in city development. It is the purpose of this treatise to show what cities are doing to meet the demands of the present civilization.

Witness the many things the modern city is doing to

the end that ours may be a better civilization, a civilization with more community life and community solidarity, where work and joy are no longer separated, and where beauty abounds as an art in daily living. Cities have realized that ideals of civilization are founded on cultivation of body, mind, and soul; that communities, to grow, must keep their best products, or a large portion of them at least, at home. This friendly competition is making cities grow at a most interesting rate, and they shall continue to grow, especially in the regions immediately surrounding.

As is the case abroad, this country is fast becoming one of urban citizenship. The growth of our cities during the last two generations is astounding, and can mean but one thing, - the city is to become more and more the center of our civilization. This tendency is undeniable, when statistics are studied, and they are in accord with the history of older countries.



(Percent of total Population)  
 Population in cities.  
 1890-1920. (U.S. 14th Census Report)

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<u>Place</u>	1890	1900	1910	1920
Urban Territory, including incor- porated places of all classes.	43%	48.3%	54.7%	59.9%

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There has been a steady increase during the past forty years in the percent of our total population living in cities. The rate has been about five percent per ten years. There is no indication that this rate will lessen during the next generation; on the other hand, there is every reason to believe it will continue, though not necessarily at a fixed rate, until a much larger proportion of our population lives under the administration of incorporated places.

## THE BEGINNING --

## City Planning and its Relation to Regional Planning.

Nearly all of our modern cities of the first class have adopted city plans, which they are carrying out as fast as finances and shifts will permit. At present, one fifth of the population of the United States lives in cities with city plans.

## - City Zoning -

The modern city has discovered that zoning is one of the most important steps in wise city planning. In this modern treatment, certain zones are defined and set aside for the exclusive accomodation of certain classes of use, the number of zones varying according to the size and character of the city. The average modern city is usually divided into six zones:

- I. Residence section, - for houses of one family.
  - II. Residence section, for tenements, apartments, and Hotels.
  - III. Commercial section, for commercial business.
  - IV. Industrial section:
    - A. For ordinary manufacture.
    - B. Nuisances, as laundries, etc.
  - V. Unrestricted Section.
  - VI. Parks and Playgrounds.
- \* - St. Louis Plan by Harlan Bartholomew, City Planner for St. Louis.

1923 was a year of activity in zoning, manifested both in courts and state legislatures, and it is the character of the legislation that made 1923 a year of progress in city planning.

#### PROGRESS IN CITY PLANNING.

Reports from every source indicate a most wholesome progress for city planning. Just two factors are retarding the work, and neither of these is permanently serious, when analyzed. The first is financing the program of rebuilding and rearranging property groups, and the second is judicial decisions unfavorable to zoning.

Per capita costs necessarily increase as cities grow. A statement released last December by the Department of Commerce shows that the growth of a city in population is almost inevitably accompanied by a higher tax rate per capita. Following is a summary of the report; (2)

"According to reports made by the cities of 30,000 and over, the total cost of government in 1922 of these 261 cities amounted to \$2,222,566,519, or \$57.38 per capita. The largest cities, having a population of 500,000 and over, show the highest per capita cost, \$66.88. The next highest per capita \$64.29, is shown for cities with a population of 300,000 to 500,000. The per capita cost of cities from 100,000 to 300,000 amounted to \$48.71. The per capita cost of cities from 50,000 to 100,000 was \$44.94. The cost in

the small cities, having a population of 30,000 to 50,000 shows the lowest per capita, \$44.38.

"Comparable statistics are shown for 199 of the principal cities, and in these the per capita cost has increased from \$34.68 in 1918 to \$58.07 in 1922.

"An analysis of the costs of the city governments shows that the per capita cost for maintenance and operation of general departments was the principal item and amounted to \$33.15, consisting of \$2.94 for general government, \$6.66 for protection to person and property, \$3.25 for health and sanitation, \$2.87 for highways, \$2.08 for charities and corrections, \$12.50 for schools, \$0.41 for libraries, \$1.09 for recreation, and \$1.34 for miscellaneous purposes; for maintenance and operation of public service enterprises, such as water-works, electric light plants, markets, and similar enterprises, the per capita was \$2.75; for interest on debt, \$5.52 per capita; and the per capita cost of permanent improvements was \$15.95, including \$3.30 for public service enterprises."

In the April issue of *The American City* appears a concise summary on city tax levies that is worthy of consideration. (3)--

"Property Valuations and Tax Levies - a ten-year comparison for the United States, showing the total assessed valuation of all property subject to general property taxes,

and the total levies of general property taxes for 1922 in comparison with 1912. The basis of assessment has changed in some of the states during the ten-year period, and accounts in part for the large per cent of increase shown.

"The general property tax is the common designation of the direct tax upon real property and upon other property which is apportioned and levied by substantially the methods employed in apportioning and levying taxes upon privately owned real property. The report gives the total levies of general property taxes, as thus defined, for the state governments, counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, townships, drainage districts, and all other civil divisions having the power to levy taxes.

"The totals and averages for the entire United States are as follows:

Assessed Valuation of Property.			
	Total for U.S.	Average per Person.	
1922	\$124,616,675,000	\$1,146.16	
1912	69,452,936,000	715.48	

  

Levies of General Property Taxes.			
	Total for U.S.	Average per Person	Average Rate Per \$100 of Assessed Valuation.
1922	\$3,502,941,000	\$32.22	\$2.81
1912	1,349,841,000	13.91	1.94.

"The increase in assessed valuation in the ten-year period was 79 per cent; and the increase in total taxes levied

during the same period was 160 per cent; but the average rate per \$100 of assessed valuation increased only 45 per cent."

Through information of this nature, cities are teaching its citizens that the rate per One Hundred Dollars of assessed valuation has not increased unreasonably.

Regarding unreasonable judicial decisions, Mr. Frank B. Williams, in a Review of City Planning Events for 1923, states, (4)

"There have been many judicial decisions during the year which have generally been regarded as unfavorable to zoning; but it may be doubted whether they are actually so to anything like the extent supposed. Almost without exception, these decisions, when analyzed, will be found to hold certain clauses of specific ordinances to be unreasonable, or to have been passed without proper state enabling acts; and in this the student of zoning law is often forced to agree with the courts. There are also, in some of the opinions, statements criticising or condemning zoning in principle. These statements are almost invariably dicta not necessary to the decision of the point at issue, to which judges in later controversies, especially in other states, will not feel themselves bound to give great weight. And it is especially noteworthy that well-drawn ordinances, exercising the drastic police power of the state reasonably and with moderation, when founded upon sufficient state enabling acts, have invariably been upheld. In this con-

nection it is encouraging to note that most of the zoning acts passed during the year have been modeled on the standard enabling act prepared by the Department of Commerce at Washington. "

City planning is permanent, and one reads and hears only promising reports on its progress.

#### REGIONAL PLANNING -

##### An Outgrowth of City Planning.

The most potential legislation of 1923 deals with a broader phase known as regional planning, in which areas about certain closely populated outlying districts of larger cities benefit from legislation covering certain improvements. Such laws, especially with still more recent design, known as county planning, permit counties and groups of municipalities to create regional planning commissions, "with power to make plans of the region, which, if adopted by a city planning commission, shall be binding to the same extent as a plan of the city commission, - that is, may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the council and the head of the department concerned; and, if adopted by a county, may be reversed only by the unanimous vote of the county commissioners!" (Ohio Legislation)

#### REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

One of the most perplexing problems connected with regional zoning is the administration of the areas. In

order to avoid conflicts between local zoning regulations, an authority with power must act for the region as a whole. In foreign countries, where regional planning has been successful, all planning and zoning matters are under the supervision of a "superior authority". At the same time, home rule for all local authorities is preserved, and where this combination has had trials, "nothing incompatible between local home rule and central supervision has arisen". (17). It must be made clear that the central supervisor is not an administrator, but merely a supervisor, at least until experience and public sentiment give greater freedom to better trained supervisors.

#### NEED FOR REGIONAL PLANNING.

We are fast realizing in this country the need for planning larger regions as a whole. It is more economical, more efficient, and more apt to avoid conflict of varied local regulations.

Our larger towns are not organized in any logical way. As one writer puts it, (16) "The great central city flows out over a wider and wider area, overwhelming formerly independent and self contained suburbs in its outward sweep. There is little differentiation in structure; little specialization of function; little attempt at harmonious development; activities are crowded and intermingled with little regard for each other or for the life and work of the community as a whole."



This student of present conditions adds, (16) "The Central city should be devoted primarily to commerce and to the homes of the people engaged in such commerce. The suburban towns - clustering about the big commercial city - should be devoted chiefly to industries and to the homes of workers engaged in these industries. This arrangement will reduce traffic, transit and housing problems to a minimum, and increase commercial and industrial efficiency." He proposes, "--That the great metropolitan community, instead of being a heterogeneous mass developed by a process of accretion and agglomeration, should approach closer to a true organism in type; should develop a more complex structure with a more minute specialization of function, and should unfold and grow in accord with a design or plan that is the expression of its own true purpose and nature." But, these conditions cannot result without a regional plan, well designed and diligently adhered to during long periods of growth.

#### REGIONAL ZONING.

In regional planning, zoning is the basis upon which the region is built. Its purposes are similar to those of city zoning and the work is equally important.

In the first place, it is necessary to prevent conflict between the various local regulations, and at the same time let the communities keep their individuality. In city development, there has been a well marked tendency to push

objectionable enterprises into the outskirts of cities, or to force them into regions outside the city limits. These nuisances have become a problem with the advent of regional planning, as they are already built in areas now proposed for homes. In some cases, they have been built in small towns near larger cities.

Today, suburbs are determined to protect themselves within well defined areas. The most common practice to this end is to encircle each suburban area with strips of land laid out in parks, farm estates, or other uses that require open development. Among the uses employed now we find playfields, golf grounds, country clubs, forest reservations, cemeteries, private and civic or state institutions, private estates, fair grounds, water reservoirs, truck farms and greenhouses. Any enterprise that would bring large crowds of people there every day is excluded.

Some problems arise at once under such a program, and here is where regional zoning plays its part. Naturally, it is desired that land values should rise in these areas, yet taxation, especially on farm land, must be kept down. This is accomplished by carefully selecting the areas that are to be used for open development work. Tax and assessment laws are so modified as to prevent taxation of open strips to support municipal services and improvements that are to be of benefit to the urban areas. This must be made

clear early in the development of the entire region, and must be planned for a long time in advance, or these strips, so necessary to the end desired, will be absorbed by adjacent municipalities.

The main purpose of regional zoning rules is to protect the territory concerned from enterprises, and especially the undesirable ones, that may interfere with its usefulness later on. The zoning regulations must, therefore, cover not only the improved and built-up areas, but those areas desired for future open development purposes. To date, our rules for zoning, especially in city development, have dealt with the built-up areas exclusively. But, the main purpose of regional zoning will be defeated, unless we preserve the open strips, and regional zoning rules must protect them.

#### ORIGIN OF REGIONAL PLANNING IDEAS.

Regional planning has come about largely through the modern tendency of cities to grow into outlying districts. The citizens of these districts demand the same improvements and supervision of development as demanded by those living inside. The idea is a modification of the English ideals, which have been kept before the public by capable writers on town planning.

In 1915, Patric Geddes, in his book, "Cities in Evolution", (13) said, "It is not a little significant to note that the various steps of housing progress - have not

arisen automatically - on ordinary economic lines; nor yet as political advances; though these are the two alternatives between which most modern minds are confined. Each main advance has arisen with outcry or protest against the prevalent state of things; and has developed from dreams and schemes which have invariably aroused counter-protest and out-cry of 'unpractical' and 'Utopian'. Yet these unpractical dreams have none the less become resolve and effort." Then he adds, "Regional survey and their applications - rural development, town planning, city design, these are destined to become master thoughts and practical ambitions for the opening generation".

It is interesting to note that regional planning is coincident with the growth of English cities beyond the old walls of defense. Growth caused many ancient towns to become so greatly condensed that those seeking relief moved outside to fulfill their dreams. Raymond Unwin, in "Town Planning in Practice", points out, "We have no occasion - to seek to fortify our towns with walls, nor is it desirable that we should cause undue congestion; but it is most necessary in some way to define our town areas, and in the case of large towns to define and separate new areas and suburbs. - The removal of inner rings has given an opportunity to replace them (the walls) by wide boulevards, avenues, or belts of park lands." (14)

## THE BRITISH GARDEN CITY PLANS.

Early in this century, the British town planners constructed a theory of town building that would eliminate the evils of extensive city growth, known as the "British Garden City Theory". The plan was built on the following proposals: first, to make all residence areas spacious so that every home might have room for a garden and other out-door interests: second, to keep each residence community small enough to avoid the evils of a large city, this being done by limiting the area of the city, and also the number of dwellings per acre; and third, to preserve the identity of the community, as well as its limits, by establishing around it an agricultural belt intended to "isolate the city completely and prevent its gradual extension into neighboring territory. When the time comes that there arises a surplus of population, it is proposed that new garden cities should be established" (7)

Mr. Arthur C. Comey, in his "Reply to the British Challenge," (7) says, "Upon close examination, there appear from our present angle of view two flaws in the British theory; one concerned with its general usefulness, the other tending to undermine its success in attaining its goal. -- These garden cities -- should be readily applicable wherever cities are to grow. But we note that there elapsed some fifteen years between the founding of the first garden city and the second; -- that they are in

effect practically tours de force, and, like so many forms of altruistic social endeavor, do not contain within themselves sufficient vital force to induce a general utilization of their basic principles in the production of ever increasing numbers of garden cities."

Regarding the second criticism, Mr. Comey adds, (7) "The remaining flaw in the British garden city theory is the difficulty of holding to any fixed limit of population. -- When Letchworth (One of the first British garden cities) grows to the stated limit, it will apparently continue to grow despite all efforts to the contrary. -- In these most healthful of cities, -- people will continue to be attracted from outside to seek to live within its confines. There will then occur congestion in the dwellings, -- or the restrictions on the number of dwellings per acre will be relaxed, thereby beginning the destruction of the essential spaciousness of the town, or the agricultural belt will be invaded and eventually broken,-- lessening the community spirit, -- and reintroducing most of the evils of the usual steadily expanding large city."

#### AMERICAN THEORIES.

American planners seek to direct the forces that make cities grow. They propose to use these forces in such a way as to make them a benefit to their communities. This, then, is the difference between British and American theories

on regional planning, the former seeking to control, the latter to direct. American planners contend their theory will result "in economies and extraordinary positive and far reaching benefits." (8)

In summarizing our regional planning theories, Mr. Arthur C. Comey proposes: "First, automatic or natural distribution of the elements of a city, due to proper planning and control of its traffic arteries; and, second, as the city grows large, the automatic or natural development of local communities articulated to one another and to the central community by this plan and control."(9)

In brief, the American plan proposes to let the region about a city develop along arteries, permitting zones to form on either side of the main artery. Inter - community arteries will form as needed at low cost. It is indicated that "The effect of these arteries -- and their local community feeders, will be to segregate permantly the land of high value and land of low value, and to bring about an automatic distribution of industry and other business and their accompanying residence districts along the arteries, with argiculture between them. This agricultural land will remain cheap, "(a factor necessary to cost of production) "due to its relative inaccessibility, and will not tend to be invaded by the urban development except for a very narrow fringe close to the residential zones, thus preserving a proper balance between city and country." (10)

It is maintained that the outlying regions will be more greatly benefitted by the American plan than by the British garden city theory. In commenting upon this point, Mr. Comey says, "These communities may combine all the best that city planning using garden city methods has to offer: spaciousness, amenities, and a plan promoting vigorous community spirit." (11) And then he concludes, "Given the opportunity, any city region, small or large, can plan its entire tributary area and adopt a program of construction of main arterial routes and other civic improvements which will effectively control the city's natural development in an economical, healthful and truly civilized manner."(12)

#### SIMILARITY OF THEORIES.

Both plans agree upon the importance of preserving the open development strips. In a recent article, (16) Robert Whitten points out the advantages of these open areas. He says, "They will furnish economical routes for future railroads, and railroad belt lines, electric power transmission lines, oil pipe lines, water supply tunnels, interurban railway and buss lines, high speed trucking and automobile roads.-- They will give room to meet future exigencies of growth and improvements in the arts of transportation and communication. Though we cannot possibly foresee the exact nature of these requirements, we may be sure that they will involve an increased need for open or unbuilt-upon areas."



## PROGRESS OF REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE U.S.

In the United States regional planning has begun in the larger cities, as has been the case in foreign countries. The cities that have led in this new field are New York City, and its environs; Chicago, with its proposed fifty mile radius development extending as far as Milwaukee, and including a part of Indiana; Milwaukee, with a rural plan; St. Louis; San Francisco; and Buffalo is now working on her regional needs.

Regional and county planning commissions are now created in the state of Ohio, largely for the benefit of outlying subdivisions. Cincinnati has already taken advantage of this law. Whole counties may zone in Wisconsin, following a county zoning law recently passed in that state. The Los Angeles County Planning Commission reported interesting progress in April, 1924.

## REGIONAL PLANNING IN FRANCE AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

Evidence of the growth of regional planning comes to us regularly from other countries, as well as from our own. Recently, twenty-six (26) communities extending along the coast line of The Department of the Var in France joined together for the purpose of preparing "A Regional Plan Study". In March, 1919, a law in France provided for such a planning project, termed a "syndicate". The towns referred to above "have approved the initiative, and voted funds for the

support of the syndicate," and a regional plan has been drawn by a well known city planner. The syndicate provides for water supply, gas, electricity, and other improvements. The plan allows each community the liberty of preparing detailed plans for its locality, but does not permit it to "destroy the unity of the general plan". In commenting upon this enterprise, French newspapers declare the plan will permit the region to "profit immensely in the future when the work is accomplished".

Plans for regional development near Lille, France, have been submitted. The area includes thirty-eight,(38) existing communities. The old "encircling fortifications are to be dismantled, and the area utilized for parks and boulevards. The existing beauty of the city is to be safeguarded, and better sanitary conditions are proposed."

In French -Africa, regional planning has been introduced for the benefit of both natives and European population. The results sought are "cleanliness, comfort, and beauty." (17)

In Germany, new planning for cities calls for three (17) elements, - "industry, housing, and circulation". The open strip areas are receiving much attention, and towns are setting aside certain forest clad areas for the recreation of the people. All cities are attempting to "decentralize the population over broad areas". The best farm lands surrounding cities are to be reserved for agricultural purposes, to be so developed as outlying strips.

## REMAKING THE WORLD.

In his new book, "Science Remaking the World," Dr. O. W. Caldwell touches upon a vital point in human contact. He says, (5) "Surely the imagery of the past seems trivial when compared with the reality of today. Science has successfully attacked many of the ills to which men succumb. It is making the earth a better home for men."

He continues, "One of the obligations placed on modern science requires that it shall organize and present many of its results so that these results may be seen and understood by intelligent but non-scientific persons. People will eventually follow the truth, but they cannot follow it unless they can, amidst their confusion, see its light at least often enough and clearly enough to enable them to keep the general direction in which truth is moving."

(5)

The public must be trained to see the benefits of everything science brings it. It is not unreasonable to expect some unfavorable criticism of a plan for civic betterment so comprehensive as regional planning, especially in its larger phases. There is but one power strong enough to carry out wisely such a planning scheme, and that is generally enlightened public opinion. And, Dr. Edwin E. Slosson adds, "The way to make a luxury innocuous is to make enough of it to go around." This is exactly what regional planning proposes to do.(6)

Evidently, social progress is to depend much on whether towns will set up and carry through regional planning programs. For, social progress has three principal aims: (15) First, the further development of the physical, intellectual and moral powers of the individual; second, the development of better social and economic relations; and third, the improvement of the physical environment. The progress of society is bound up in the progress of the individual, and the individual is largely dependent on the physical environment. Regional planning, (including, of course, city planning) aims at the betterment of physical environment, and a favorable environment promotes the life, health, and economic prosperity of both the individual and the community.

#### STATE AND NATIONAL PLANNING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

Regional planning is merely the fore-runner for a much larger program, to be known as state and national planning. Theodora Kimball, Librarian, Harvard School of Landscape Architecture, says (18) "Twenty-five years hence national planning may be no more difficult for the mind to encompass than regional planning today." In fact, there are many government activities of long standing that show us the way, and point out the possibilities of the near future. Such projects as state and national roads, national parks and forests, reclamation service, and our national

building and housing work indicate that state and national planning results in economy, efficiency, unity and satisfaction; and best of all, it will in all probability result in a new and better type of architecture for the United States, of which the need has been so long felt and deplored.

Someone has written, "While you are reading this, Henry Ford has made ten dollars". It may well be added, "While you are reading this, one person has been born, and the chances are, three to two, that he will live in a town or a city". The most momentuous question before our American Government is how to care for this growing urban population so that it may have the combined advantages of country and city life it deserves to have, and must have, if there is to be a better civilization surrounded by factors of environment conducive to health, morals, and art. To this end, regional planning after a national program is the most hopeful outlook for our generation.