

Growing Up by Plan

By FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

N EWS that the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs had completed its work and published its prophetic findings reminded me vividly of that day nearly twenty years ago when Charles D. Norton and my uncle, Frederic Delano, first talked to me about the City Plan of Chicago. I think from that very moment I have been interested in not the mere planning of a single city but in the larger aspects of planning. It is the way of the future.

Out of the survey initiated by Mr. Norton in Chicago has developed something new; not a science, but a new understanding of problems that affect not merely bricks and mortar, subways and streets; planning that affects also the economic and social life of a community, then of a county, then of a state; perhaps the day is not far distant when planning will become a part of the national policy of this country.

It is remarkable how this germ of thought has taken hold all over the United States; how the Chicago Plan and afterwards the Regional Plan for the metropolitan area in and around New York, have spread over the country; how almost every city that counts itself progressive is thinking in terms of the future; how that thought has spread down to the smaller communities known as villages and spread upwards, as we know well, in the neighboring county of Westchester to include planning for the entire county; and how in exactly the same way the thought of the future has taken hold of those of us who are charged with conducting the affairs of a state government.

I wish that the Regional Plan Committee had started its work before 1922; that was over a generation too late so far as I was concerned. I might say it was over a century late. If the Plan had been started in 1817 it might have prevented my great-grandfather from selling his farm in Harlem and moving up to Dutchess County. He let go of it because the young people of that day got into their buggies in what was then New York City, some seven miles away, in the evening, especially on moonlight nights, drove out to his country place and parked inside his gates. The old gentleman was so distressed by these young people that he sold a perfectly good farm of 125 acres—a farm that now is bounded by Fifth Avenue on one side and the East River on the other and ran from 110 Street to 125 Street. Of course, if he had held on to it and hadn't moved to Dutchess

County, probably the family would have been so rich that we should have died out and I shouldn't be here now!

It is high time for this city and this country to take thought of the future. Let me expand for a moment that thought of Dwight Morrow's—the cost of *not* planning. You and I who are in middle life remember well the countless buildings in this city which, when we were young, were considered the last word not only in architecture but in usefulness. They have gone; torn down to make room for buildings three times as high. You and I can remember literally the days when goats browsed in the pastures of Harlem. Yet in those days, when there was opportunity to plan for this year of 1932, nobody gave a thought to it. New York grew up like Topsy.

That is true not only of this city, but of neighboring cities of Long Island; it was true of Westchester; it is true of much of the nearer parts of New Jersey and Connecticut. There has been no thought for the prevention of waste. Good, hard dollars were invested in structures, public improvements, private investments of all kinds with the expectation on the part of the people who put up the good dollars, whether they were private investors or mere taxpayers, that the particular structure their money was going into would last through the ages. Today it is torn down. Think of the waste of it; the unhappiness of it! Think of the lives in this city which today are being lived under distressing conditions, which would have been vastly better off if our grandparents had thought about the future!

NOW if that is true of a city, how much truer is it of the larger community. Three years ago when I went to Albany—just to cite one of many examples—I found that the State of New York had a shortage of twelve thousand beds for the patients in our hospitals. When I say a shortage I do not mean that we turned these patients away. I mean that in hospitals then in existence twelve thousand beds had been crowded side by side into corridors, so that the conditions were a disgrace to the state. It was only then

that we began to plan for the future. As a result of that planning, within another three years we will have worked out a sound five-year plan under which every patient who is a ward of the State of New York will be housed according to the best modern practices. It was at the cost of a bond issue to be sure, but from the time when we have caught up with the needs we will be able to pay as we go

THE GOVERNOR of New York has for many years been an outstanding advocate of a practical kind of regionalism which would bring producers and consumers together not in a city market but on their own acres of farmland or rural village. Mr. Roosevelt has written elsewhere of the ebbing of the great tide of population which surged for so many years from country to city. He has showed how changes in electric power and in transportation have tended to decentralize industry. Here he writes on the glowing promise of planning as a way to the better life, with practical examples, from his experience as farmer and as governor, and delightful stories running back to his great-grandfather and the time of joy-riding in buggies.

every year to care for the increased number of patients caused by a normal increase in population. Yes, regional planning has hit Albany at last!

It isn't a mere question of sociology, of welfare in the sense of taking care of the dependent and the sick. It is also a question very largely of economics; and when we get into that field we open up a vista of which we can scarcely appreciate the magnitude. Let me give an illustration. Two or three years ago down in Georgia, as I happened to be passing a station on one of the through railroads, there came by a long milk train made up of fourteen or fifteen tank-cars and milk-cars laden with milk and cream and running on passenger schedule. I said to the station master, "Where is that train coming from, northern Georgia?"

He said: "Oh, no, that train originated in the State of Wisconsin. It is loaded with milk and cream that came from the pastures of Wisconsin and Illinois, and it is being taken across those two states, across the State of Indiana, across the State of Kentucky, across the State of Tennessee, across the State of Georgia, and then down to be used by the consuming public in Florida."

I SAID to the station agent: "We get perfectly good milk around here; why doesn't the milk supply of Florida originate at the nearest practicable point, the State of Georgia? I know that they can't raise dairy herds in Florida because of the cow tick, but Georgia hasn't got the tick. Why don't we in Georgia raise the milk for Florida?"

He said: "That is one of the mysteries that we are all asking about."

Here was milk coming to Florida half way across the United States!

Some three years ago we were in somewhat the same condition in this state, and my good friend the commissioner of health of the City of New York aided and abetted me, shall I say, by avoiding or evading the letter, while keeping to the spirit, of the Constitution of the United States. At that time the people of New York City were getting their milk from all over the United States. The New York State farmers and the nearby farmers of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and western Vermont called it bootleg milk when it came in from Iowa and Wisconsin and Maryland. The commissioner of health very properly held that no milk should come into the city except from inspected sources; in other words, except it were milk that had been approved as to its purity. Now it was quite impossible for the State and City Departments of Health to inspect dairy farms all over the United States. So we told some of our good friends out in the Middle West and the Upper South that we could only take milk into New York that had come from inspected sources. Then we did a selfish thing, if you like, but a regional thing which has been justified economically. We inspected dairy farms only in the State of New York and the nearer points in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont, and that is where the milk supply of the city comes from now.

And what is the result of this planning? Your dairy farmer within this New York City milkshed knows approximately the needs of today and of the future. If he is told by the Dairyemen's League, the Grange and other organizations that too much milk is being produced within the shed, he is apt to follow out the recommendation that he should not bring to maturity as many heifers as he expected to. On the other hand, if he knows that there is room for a greater

consumption in the City of New York, he has the information on which he can base a larger dairy herd. Planning!

The result is that the dairy farmers within this metropolitan milkshed have suffered less from the depression during the past two years than any other set of dairy farmers in the United States.

Now carry it further from the practical point of view. A lot of us upstate farmers think that New York apples are better than any other apples in the United States. But the consuming public prefers the Washington and the Oregon apples. Why? Because they are better wrapped and have got pinker cheeks and are better burnished. Now I have nothing against the western apple, but the time is coming when the apple growers of this state will realize that if they will emulate the apple-packing of their brothers out on the Pacific Coast, they will have their own market in their own neighborhood. Again, planning!

So you could go on with agriculture, in which the trend all over the United States is toward the regional application of planning; that is, saving unnecessary cost, bringing the producer into closer contact with the consumer. And Heaven knows, that is one of the most vital problems today. *There is something wrong with the City of New York and a lot of other cities when the farmer fifty or sixty miles away gets two and a half and three cents a quart for his milk and the mother of a family in the City of New York pays twelve and fifteen cents for that same milk the next day.*

These are problems which can't be solved by ukase. They might be solved by a Mussolini; but that isn't our method of solving things. We have got to do it by planning, and by the same token I think that we can apply the theory of planning to the whole trend of population.

I have been rather an explorer in the general thought of land utilization. We have heard very often that land is the basis of all wealth. That is true. It has been exemplified by theories in regard to taxes by Henry George and many others. But there is an addition to that theme which is equally true. Land is not only the source of all wealth, it is also the source of all human happiness. Now that is an important factor in planning anything ahead. Let me illustrate.

HOW many people are there out of employment today in this country? If you believe the administration in Washington, four or five million. If you believe their opponents, nine or ten million. Take it half way between—a lot of people out of employment, and add to them twice as many again to represent their dependents. Where do most of those people live? Where is the dependent unemployment in this country? I am speaking in general terms because there are thousands of exceptions that prove the rule. But if you will go through the smaller communities of New York and Connecticut you will find no starvation, no evictions, few people who have not got an overcoat or a pair of shoes.

And if you go on into the farming areas, you will not find people starving on the farms. On the contrary. There is suffering, there is deprivation; but in the smaller communities and on the farms, there is not the same kind of being up against it, of not knowing where you are going to sleep tonight or where you are going to get the next meal that you find in the cities. So I venture the assertion that at least three quarters, and probably more of the dependent

unemployed throughout the United States today, are in the cities.

That brings up the question as to whether we have not gone far enough in talking about the mere size of cities, in the old, now outworn chamber-of-commerce idea of boosting.

Not so long ago the four cities of Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Kingston and Hudson, up the Hudson River, each had a "live" chamber of commerce. The Chamber of Commerce of Poughkeepsie spent at least three quarters of its time in running down Newburgh, Hudson and Kingston, and the other quarter of the time in talking about the advantages of Poughkeepsie. The Chamber of Commerce of Newburgh adopted the same policy about Hudson, et cetera. It was a case of running down the other fellow in the hope that you would boost yourself thereby. They were thinking in terms of population, and every ten years when the census-taker came along and told one of those cities that it had thirty-nine thousand people the population rose up in arms and demanded a recount because they were perfectly sure they had forty-five thousand.

It was a great public issue. They put their trust in Bigness. They wanted size. And I can illustrate that mania throughout the nation by the story of a very charming lady who came out of the West in 1928 on a political mission and spent Sunday on the Hudson River with us. As I drove her down through the City of Poughkeepsie to Vassar College to see some friends she had there, she said:

"This is a very nice little town. What is the population?"

I said, "About forty-two thousand." And I was not exaggerating. I was talking census figures.

She said, "That is quite impossible, Mr. Roosevelt."

I said, "The United States Census said so."

She said, "It can't be. You have not a single skyscraper here."

Is that not a false criterion? Are we not beginning now to visualize a different kind of city? Are we not beginning to envisage the possibility of a lower cost of living by having a greater percentage of our population living a little closer to the source of supply? So much closer that instead of paying fifteen cents a quart for milk they might be able to get milk for six or seven cents for which the farmer gets three cents? Some people will object that that means more people turning out more agricultural products, and thereby increasing an existing surplus.



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT OF NEW YORK

But put yourselves in the place of the mother of a family who in her meager budget now is able to buy one fifteen-cent quart of milk a day for three or four children because she cannot afford more. If she could buy that milk for seven and a half cents would she rest content with one quart? Of course not. She would buy two; and there you have the health of the future of the race as an added factor. I don't know much about the modern theories of medicine, but I do know that a great many of our doctor friends are blaming a type of city life as being the cause of the increase in numbers in our insane asylums. Some eminent doctors making a survey of European cities have advanced the theory that city-bred families, bred under tenement-house conditions over a period of three or four generations, die out. It may be a form of birth control which this human race of ours is bringing upon itself whether it likes it or not. We hope blindly that government in some miraculous way can prevent any future economic depression, that government or some great leader will (Continued on page 506)

The Simple Life of New York

By MARY ROSS

A FEW days ago I met an old friend on the street. After the usual preliminaries she asked brightly, "Are you joining the nuts and berries brigade?"

I disclaimed any interest in dietary cults.

"Oh, I don't mean that," she went on.

"I mean the back-to-the-land rush among our urban intellectuals. Why, I know five or six couples who have lost jobs or incomes and have just decided to go to the country and chop wood. I still have my own job, but I must say the simple life looks pretty good to me right now."

The people she had in mind were also acquaintances of mine—writers and artists, for the most part. They were fleeing a city in which suddenly they found themselves classed as a luxury trade. With one exception they had no children; in the family that did, the children were so young that "education" had not yet become a family topic. What they were doing was to scrape together all the cash they had, give up the city apartment, and retire to the week-end shack till the storm blew over. It was not so much a return to the simple life as a hibernation through a hard winter. When better times returned to the city, so would they. Meanwhile the money they had earned in the city or still were earning in smaller dribblets would go further where there was little temptation to spend it; a country winter would be a lark for a change. Best of all, what a relief to end all the worry about one's shaky or dwindling income at one fell swoop by forgetting it for a season or a year!

Needless to say people who have savings to fall back on and a shack and woodlot to retreat to are still in the luxury class. For many of those to whom 1932 spells the "simple life" there is no lovely outlook on sun setting across snowy fields, but the bleak prospect of pounding city pavements in search of a job or the still bleaker vista of municipal lodging-houses and breadlines. In her casual use of the phrase, however, my friend was thinking in terms of people such as herself and myself, who were jogging along much as we had done before, not rich in the boom nor broke in the depression. Yet on the one hand depression has awakened and bruised our sympathies; and on the purely selfish side it has given us a jolt to realize that it was only a lucky turn of chance that one's self was not that draggled person sunning on a park bench. The city's streets look less golden than they used to; the quiet towns look green in the distance. How inviting the phrase, "simple life." As I went on through the traffic about my business I began mulling it over again, not in terms of this winter's tragedies, but of the self-interest of middle-class going families.

For ten years my horizon was bounded almost exclusively by the towers of lower Manhattan, with occasional side-flights to green wilderness in New England. I had come to accept what Americans are fond of saying as boast or reproach: that life in New York is more rasping, more

nerve-wracking, more complicated than anywhere else in the world. Then within a few months professional errands and a vacation took me on expeditions to the South, the Middlewest and the Pacific Coast. Here were vistas of tree-lined avenues such as I had frequented but little since my childhood in a middle-sized city; bustling towns on the make, and a slightly faded little city of apparent leisure; glimpses of friends whom I had not seen since we wore freckles instead of sun-tan, and of people whom I had known only through letters to and from a New York office. As I came back, a little bewildered, and quite content to settle down again in a hole-in-the-wall such as one calls home in Manhattan; here, somehow, life seems so much simpler and easier.

I am not thinking of the merely mechanical aids to living that New York supplies so lavishly—cheap and plentiful taxicabs, for example, household servants who will come for an hour or two a day, the ubiquitous delicatessen and obliging restaurant; the possibility, if one has the money, of satisfying almost any material want within the radius of a ten-minute walk. Nor even of the galleries, theaters and museums that so often are given as a charm of metropolitan life. It is something less tangible that explains, I think, why thousands upon thousands of young people are drawn to the great city each year and once here remain, however much they deplore their roles as subway rats and traffic robots.

THERE are a number of things which the professional middle-class family must buy in New York, if they want and can afford them, which people of the same sort would take for granted elsewhere or get at a much smaller outlay. Among these are: Space, sunlight and quiet in one's home. Private education for one's children unless one is willing to put them through the overcrowded mill of mass education, probably less progressive than public education in many other places. Summer vacations away from this reflecting oven of asphalt and brick.

On the other hand there are a number of things which New Yorkers of this stripe need not buy, though in the suburbs just outside and in towns thence on to the opposite coast, except for the very largest cities, they seem to be an essential of family life. For example:

An "address" in a "good residential neighborhood." A "good" car. Membership in the chosen country club or its equivalent with all that goes with it in standards of dress, entertaining and the like.

In short, for one's self and one's children, conformity to a social setting.

On one of my southern expeditions I ran afoul of the predicament of a naïve New Yorker caught on the reefs of small-town etiquette. I had gone to this delightful little city in search of facts for an article, armed with appropriate introductions and greeted with the utmost cordiality. In the course of my search it seemed that I might find interest-