

Public attention has been directed to the "housing conditions" in Halifax in more than one published report, by public speakers, and by the newspapers themselves. It is obvious to anyone who has studied such questions here and in other parts of the world, that a disgracefully large proportion of Halifax houses may be called "slum dwellings". About this whole question, there are certain leading and guiding facts to remember: A city does not come to have slums simply because at one period in the past there was jerry-building; nor again do slums arise merely from chronic shortage of houses. It may be said in a general way that slums are a disease which affect all communities, rural as well as urban, when there exists no policy or plan. There must be town planning, and the planning includes the laying out of streets, water supply and drainage, as well as the supervision of buildings. But the supervision of buildings is very important.

Written for and

Given to Mr. Gaul

Now, Halifax, except at certain periods in the past, would seem to have had very little town planning, and there obviously exists no inspection of buildings worthy of the name at the present time. Except in mushroom towns, in mining areas, I have nowhere seen such shoddy building of houses as I have seen in Halifax in the last two years; even in the better quarters of the City contractors are allowed to build so-called houses which are constructed of a sheathing, made of poor lumber, covered with a bit of paper and shingles. No attempt is made to insulate outside walls or roofs, nor is there any "packing" of window and door frames. Neither coal, nor oil, nor any other fuel, will heat such a building. In addition to this, the framework would seem to be of a very flimsy kind, unable to stand the stress of weather or the wear of time. Under such conditions, potential slums are being added every year to the City. I have observed that attention has been called to the matter in the press on frequent occasions, but nothing seems to be done about it.

In my opinion, it is the duty of citizens of Halifax to protest,
and to go on protesting, about these conditions until the wrongs is righted.

January 23, 1934.

Written for and
Given to Mr. Gaul of the Chronicle