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A survey shows sub-standard housing areas in Kalamazoo linked with increased cost for police and fire protection, proportionately heavier outlays for relief, and a higher rate of communicable diseases.

The survey was sponsored by the Kalamazoo Council of Social Agencies and was conducted under the direction of the statistical department of the Kalamazoo County Emergency Relief Administration, with William H. Belden as project supervisor. The study is based upon Kalamazoo housing conditions for 1937, the latest period for which complete comparable figures are available.

Agencies whose records were consulted or which assisted in the survey are the Chamber of Commerce, the Central Index of the Council of Social Agencies, city assessor, city health and welfare department, city fire department, city police department, Civic League, County Emergency Relief Administration, National Association of Housing officials, public schools and the truant officer, Salvation Army, Tuberculosis Association, transient bureau, and What-so-ever-free-bed Association.

Condemned Houses Occupied

The particular area rated as having sub-standard housing and subject of detailed study in the survey borders the central section of the city. It is that area bordered on the south by the Michigan Central tracks, on the west by Edwards street, on the north by Paterson street, and on the east by Walbridge street.

If all the houses in that area which are rated as having depreciated more than 50 per cent and which cannot be economically repaired were demolished and "every other house filled there would be more than 40 homeless families," according to survey.

Housing conditions there are indicated in the survey which points out that 19 houses vacant in 1934 are now occupied "in spite of the fact that nine of them were listed as fit only for demolition, and four others as badly out of repair." Only three of the houses that were vacant in 1934 are still vacant.

Families are now occupying a group of five residences in that section which were described in a former survey as "condemned, boarded up, and partly razed," the study shows. The five dwellings are on a back lot and at the time of the survey housed a total of 37 persons.

Cost to City Heavy

"It is to be noted that all the better residences among those vacant in 1934 as well as some of the poorer ones are now occupied," the survey emphasizes.

The study finds that fire costs in the rated sub-standard housing area are proportionately heavier than for the city as a whole. The per capita fire department cost for that section is listed at \$3.98 as compared to \$2.85 for the city as a whole. The comparative property loss from fire is similar, the comparative per capita loss for the section listed at \$3.48 as compared to \$1.88 for the entire city.

"Bad housing conditions are evidently an expense to the city as well as to the residents of this area," the survey points out. "The total city's fire expense for this area in 1936 — amounted to more than all the tax assessed

residence owners in the area, and to nearly half of the entire tax received by the city from the area."

The study found that in a number of cases "faulty building construction was the factor principally responsible for the fires." A similar condition is reported to prevail in other sub-standard housing areas.

Police costs also are found to be proportionately heavier for the particular sub-standard housing area. It was found that for the area the percentage of Kalamazoo city police department costs amounted to \$9,453.68, "or more than the total residence property tax paid to the city from the area or to three-fourths of the total estimated tax contribution to the city from the area."

Relief Above City Average

The report shows that out of the 2,524 arrests made in 1936 in Kalamazoo, 147 or 5.82 per cent "either were made in this area or were arrests of persons residing in this area or committing offenses elsewhere."

The survey comments that though it may seem unfair to assess against this area the arrests of outsiders within the area, an examination of the offenses committed by the outsiders "shows that all but a mere handful were joining in the conditions found within the area or finding a refuge there after committing offenses elsewhere rather than preying on property or persons within the area."

The comment is made in the survey that:

"The social cost of crime is of course much greater than the mere financial expense of police protection which has been estimated. These areas of poor housing in Kalamazoo have a juvenile

delinquency rate nearly twice as high as the city at large."

Direct relief expense for the area is found by the survey to be greater than the city average. "For the 12-month period, February, 1935 to January, 1936, the direct relief payments in this area amounted to \$22,592.14, or nearly four times the 1936 figure of \$5,966.34, the report states. "The large PWA payroll during 1936 largely explains the difference between the two years."

For the seven-year period 1930-36 high rates prevailed in the area compared with the city as a whole for tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, and chicken pox, the study points out.

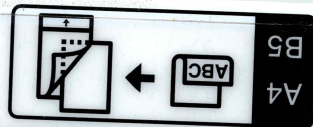
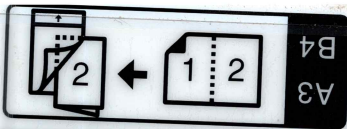
Comments on Health

The survey reports that "while the population was 2.6 per cent of the city in 1936 and while the proportion of children is smaller than in the whole city, the area had 2.86 per cent of the communicable disease cases during those seven years. This percentage has varied from the high point of 4.7 per cent in 1936 to the low point of 1.4 per cent in 1930."

"It is reported that "the survey of the area showed 23.6 per cent of the population of five years to 19 years inclusive, while the city percentage was 24 per cent. As about 90 per cent of communicable diseases are children's diseases, under normal conditions this area should show a lower disease record than the city at large."

The survey states that "if the percentage of children were larger during the earlier part of this seven-year period we would expect to find a larger percentage of disease cases in the area during the early part of the period, other factors remaining the same. This is not in line with facts, but quite the reverse."

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