

Victoria River Downs, cattle station in Australia's Northern Territory, covers 6,686,912 acres, more land than Vermont.

The taipan, an Australian snake, is so poisonous that horses are said to die of its bite within four minutes.

Plans of Oregon Localities To Aid Veterans in Getting Homes Still in Paper Stage

By GORDON G. MacNAB
Associated Press Staff Writer.

Oregon's veterans are being housed, but homes—the places that give them roots and a feeling of permanence—still are paper houses. Municipal administrations, Chambers of Commerce, veterans' and other groups have worked, planned, called on federal agencies and have come up against the same obstacle: Too little to buy at too great a cost for the average veteran.

A survey of a dozen Oregon cities reveals overcrowding, inconvenience, frustration, but little actual distress.

Some cities, confronted with the acute housing shortage, have attempted to provide temporary houses. Others, for variety of reasons, have not.

At Portland, 3,695 families live in the city's several housing projects—all but one of which are temporary, born of the need to house war workers. Other Oregon cities—principally college towns—by late May had been listed for 571 temporary housing units from surplus projects at Portland and Vancouver, Wash.

Eugene and Corvallis, faced with a record influx of students, have large temporary housing projects—but for the most part these do not touch the problem of the non-student veteran who wants to put down roots. Eugene's Veterans of Foreign Wars arranged for an 80-unit trailer park and city of Corvallis set aside four blocks for 60 temporary units on which work is under way, to meet, partially, community needs.

Slum Phase Feared
But Pendleton, which has an allocation of units from the federal public housing administration, is

confronted with this problem: If the units are grouped, the city will have to install sewer and water mains for which it lacks permanent or semi-permanent funds. If they are scattered, the problem of finding lots will be acute.

Many cities are reluctant to take temporary measures because of the fear that temporary units will become permanent slums.

So, aside from shelter for students, housing for veterans has been viewed largely from the permanent or semi-permanent point of view.

What has been accomplished toward this end has been almost solely the result of private initiative; and in relation to the demand, it has been woefully little. At Baker, for example, 200 to 300 veterans want homes yet only 27 residential construction permits were issued in the first five months of this year.

Plans Slow to Materialize
At Portland, two major suburban communities are planned with some 3,000 homes to be built—but one is still in the blueprint stage and the other has only a handful of houses under construction. Throughout the city, hundreds of houses are being built, but they fall far short of the mayor's committee estimate of 17,000 needed.

At Bend, one contractor plans 25 houses; others plan more but few have actually been built. At Corvallis one contractor has announced plans for 32 houses—but at the moment is building only seven. Some 25 houses are being built at La Grande where an estimated 200 families are living doubled up in 100 dwellings. Pendleton hopes that two subdivisions will produce 300 houses—eventually. Roseburg is dependent on private builders to relieve crowding in a government-owned trailer project and the city's pre-war houses.

Throughout the state, new houses are going up. But because builders cannot get materials their rate of progress is slow and the number is far below the needs.

Medford Sets Example
Communities have not been lacking in effort, however, to find a solution. Medford last March, under the leadership of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, attempted to show

that a low-cost house could be built and converted to other use later without loss of the original investment. A lot was donated as were materials and labor. In 24 hours 150 workmen erected a 20-by-24-foot structure suitable for later use as a double garage. The veteran who got it in a drawing paid \$1,900 to the Community Chest for his house. It gave him a liveable house for a sum most veterans could afford to pay.

But other Medford veterans did not follow the lead, for at going prices a duplicate would cost \$3,897—a sizable sum for a two-room house.

Grants Pass Gives Land
Grants Pass adopted a different approach. Veteran Homes, Inc., was formed to equip veterans with lots as cheaply as possible so they could qualify for GI loans. Josephine County turned over a 40-acre tract within city limits for \$1. The non-profit corporation borrowed money from its members and business men and laid out 89 large lots on part of the acreage. They installed sewers and water mains and offered the lots at cost. Fifty-odd have been sold on a down payment of \$75 each. The total payment is expected to be between \$125 and \$150 in a city where lots have been held up to \$2,600.

No one has yet moved into a home as a result, but backers of Veteran Homes, Inc., believe they have solved one problem. Now they are tackling another. They plan to act as agent for groups of veterans and buy materials on a mass basis, easing

the problem of getting what the builders need.

The problem of high property costs also was viewed at La Grande and the city set a 25 per cent discount on its lots when bought by veterans.

Awaiting Price Slash
Probably no city in the state has a more critical situation than Astoria. The Chamber of Commerce has tried to stimulate building by private interests, and aided in getting 275 temporary government units opened to veterans and service personnel. But it has no answer now, or in sight, for the 3,000 men who will be stationed with the 19th Fleet Reserve base, the 200 base construction workers or the men who have returned from service.

They, as others throughout the state, are building a little at a time and waiting for the day when contractors tell them that materials can be had at a price veterans can afford.

Mrs. Lena Smith, Kin of Roseburg Residents, Dies
Mrs. Lena Smith, wife of E. W. Smith, and a resident of Oakridge, died at her home, August 3. Services and burial were held at Bend on Tuesday.

Mrs. Smith was sister of Mrs. C. W. Wharton, a niece of Mrs. J. F. Barker, and a cousin of Mrs. Velle Broadway and Mrs. L. W. Josse, all of Roseburg, who, with Mrs. Florence Wickland of Honolulu, a daughter of Mrs. Wharton, attended the funeral services.

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