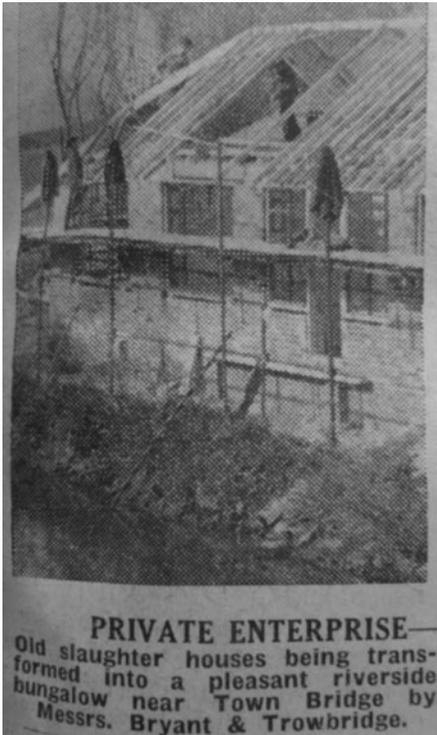


BUILDERS READY TO COLLECT THE FACTS Public and Mr. Bevan to be Told What Materials Exist

Christchurch Times April 23, 1948



PRIVATE ENTERPRISE—
Old slaughter houses being transformed into a pleasant riverside bungalow near Town Bridge by Messrs. Bryant & Trowbridge.

“LET the builders build,” is a slogan displayed on many motor car windscreens throughout the district at the present time.

People are beginning to ask what it is all about and very soon they are going to be given the full answer at public meetings in Christchurch, Bournemouth, Poole and Lymington.

Behind the slogan is a story of considerable activity that has been going on amongst local builders and others connected with the building industry since the launching a few weeks ago of a scheme to show Mr. Aneurin Bevan how many houses could be built in the district in the next 12 months from materials already available if only permission were given to get on with the job. Briefly, the scheme aims at getting by means of a questionnaire all possible information about materials, labour and land which could be put to immediate use for housing purposes. Builders from both the building federations as well as non-federated builders, architects, timber merchants and builders' merchants, have all agreed to participate in the scheme, and already a committee of 32 members have reached the stage of preparing the questionnaire. This will be circulated within the next few days to everyone in the district connected with the industry.

Public Opinion.



—COUNCIL ENTERPRISE.

Apprentices, who made such a fine job of their first houses in Galton Avenue, making good progress on another batch of dwellings on the Burton Road site.

Convinced that it will only be through the weight of public opinion that they will be able to get a speed-up in house building, the committee are going to lay all the facts before the public when the answers to the questionnaire have been collected. The Minister of Health will then be asked to receive a deputation who will tell him exactly what the local builders could achieve.

Mr. H. J. Hawkins, of Bournemouth, has been elected chairman of the committee, and Mr. T. Wesley Thorpe, partner in a Christchurch building firm, has been appointed secretary.

“Since the inaugural meetings a few weeks ago, enthusiasm for the

scheme has grown tremendously,” said Mr. Thorpe to a “Christchurch Times” reporter this week. “We have been promised the backing of the local authorities, and the idea has now spread to Lymington who want to come in with us,” he added. To carry out the plan, it was realised that a certain amount

of finance would be required, and all those who are taking part in it have each been asked to contribute £1.

Present Operations.

While the local building industry is pressing for more liberty, what is the extent of building operations in the borough at the present time?

Here are the figures for March given by the Housing Chairman (Coun. G. J. Furneaux) at last week's meeting of the Council: Tenders approved, 4; dwellings completed, 13; number commenced, 4. These comparatively small figures for a month do not, however, reflect the true position as to what has been accomplished in the borough since the war, but serve to indicate how more recent Government restrictions have slowed down production.

Since the war the total number of housing tenders approved were: Council, 328; private enterprise (including rebuilding bombed dwellings), 193; Somerford Housing Society, 32. Total 553.

Actually completed are: Council, 165; private enterprise, 190; Somerford Housing Society, 13. Under construction: Council, 163; private enterprise, 3; Somerford Housing Society, 19.

Quite recently a Housing Committee deputation went to Reading with a view to getting a speed-up of building, but when asked at last week's Council meeting for information about the talks which took place, Coun. Furneaux replied "I think we had quite a successful meeting, but the Committee feel it would be unwise to divulge anything about it at present."