

## The Problem of the Over-population of Budapest

The home-service broadcast a discussion on this problem, in which the following took part: Dr. Karoly Szarka, head of a department in the National Planning Office; Ferenc Dallos, Chairman of the Bacs-Kiskun County Council; Egon Szabadi, Head of the Population Statistics Department in the Central Statistics Office; Karoly Szabo, Chairman of the Pest County Council; and Sandor Szenes, Head of the Home Affairs Department of Budapest radio. Karoly Kovalik was in the Chair. To start the discussion, Kovalik played a tape-recording of the answer to a Parliamentary question on the subject by the Minister of the Interior (Summary Part IIB, No.892, pp.21 and 22). The following is a summary of the main points of the discussion. It was not possible to identify the various speakers.

The population of Budapest has increased by about 300,000 people since 1949. Less than a third of this figure is natural growth; two-thirds are accounted for by the influx of people. Approximately 19 per cent of the country's population now lives in Budapest. In the last two years alone, 6,000 people moved to Budapest from County Bacs-Kiskun, 5,400 from County Szabolcs-Szatmar and 26,000 from County Pest. The problem was caused largely by the policy pursued in the last 12 years of establishing factories and administrative bodies in Budapest rather than in the provinces. About half the new population consists of non-manual workers. To resettle some of the new factories in the provinces would be too costly and would also entail a large-scale housing programme. Nor would the reintroduction of residence permits in Budapest solve the problem.

### Long-term Solutions

The only real solution is a long-term one, and would involve heavy expenditure over a long period. A 15 or 20-year development plan for the whole country would have to be worked out. When the overall plan is ready, a detailed long-term development plan for Budapest could be drawn up to deal with housing, transport and other aspects of community life. The problem of Budapest is part and parcel of the problems of the rest of the country. Future industrial development should be sited away from Budapest. It may be worth considering the idea of making the establishment of any new factory in and around Budapest subject to a permit from the Council of Ministers itself. The decentralisation of industry would also "strengthen the working class in rural districts". A housing programme would naturally have to accompany such a plan and would help many people who go out to the country to work, but live in Budapest because they cannot find other accommodation. Another helpful move might be for the National Savings Bank to offer loans to people living in Budapest and wishing to build homes in the country. (Budapest 16.00, 13.1.58)