

on February 28. Levitt has been putting up smaller, more variegated developments, and it has gone abroad to France and Puerto Rico.

Waiting for Congress.—Meanwhile, the company is getting ready to launch another revolution in homebuilding. Bill Levitt says he will give the signal for it the minute President Johnson's request for a \$2.3 billion, 6-year program to remake the Nation's cities becomes law. The President's program contemplates helping to finance the building of brandnew cities. "That is the next stage in homebuilding," says Levitt. "Not housing developments in the suburbs of existing cities, but new cities."

He frankly believes the existing cities are hopeless. "I have ideas about what should be done," he says, "but they're politically impossible. For example, no U.S. mayor would dare to do what De Gaulle has done in France. If you tear down an eight-story building in Paris," Levitt says, "you can't replace it with a building bigger than eight stories. It's almost impossible to get permission to build a new factory in Paris. Here, well, you have that monstrosity in New York, the PanAm Building, which dumps 50,000 people into the street at lunch time. You have that disgrace known as Park Avenue. It's a social disgrace, and economically, it's created chaos. Factories keep going up around the cities, creating impossible transportation problems."

The only solution, says Levitt, is dispersal. "We have millions of acres in this country with nobody there. People have been concentrated in just a few metropolitan centers. We must reverse this trend. We must move them out into new cities."

These cities, Levitt adds, "should be planned from scratch. We live in a planned society. We must plan our cities, too. And the whole city must be built at once. There's no sense in putting up homes if people have no place to work. There's no sense putting up factories if the workers have no place to live. We must put up everything at the same time—homes, factories, stores, schools, police stations, recreation areas, everything."

Guarantee needed.—If this sounds distinctly like a socialized society, Levitt thinks it need not necessarily be one. He believes that private industry can do the job—but only with Government help. "Nobody can risk the kind of money you'll need," he says. Specifically, what he would like is for Congress to broaden the scope of the Federal Housing Administration. "In 1934, when you couldn't get mortgage money, Congress created the FHA to guarantee mortgages for homes. Now Congress should let the FHA guarantee loans for building new cities—for the sewers and firehouses, as well as the homes." One such project, he thinks, would cost about \$650 million, not including the factories.

As soon as the President's program is enacted, Levitt says, "We'll get serious. We'll tie up 20,000 acres. Where? Well, climate will be a consideration. So will scenic attractions. The South. The Southwest. The West. Then we'll call a meeting of companies like General Electric and International Business Machines. We'll tell them we plan to build a city for 100,000 people, a city which provides for their every need. The one thing it won't have is a wrong side of the tracks.

"I'm sure many companies will be interested. I remember Charley Wilson (former General Electric president) telling me once it was a mistake to concentrate GE in Schenectady. He should have built the plants all over the country. It would have made a lot of his problems easier—for example, his distribution problems."

Planning the new city may take "3 or 4 years," Levitt says. "When we start building it, we'll start the firehouses and the schools the same day we start the homes."

Levitt adds: "You'll notice I say 'when,' not 'if.' Congress has to accept the idea of new towns. We can't keep going on this way. There's just so much room in the cities and the metropolitan areas. There's a limit to how many people you can keep putting into them. The Nation has to start spreading out again."

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WHAT JOHNSON WANTS

President Johnson's plan for the Nation's cities is highly ambitious and possibly visionary. He wants nothing less than to transform the decaying cities of the present into "the masterpieces of our civilization."

As a start, he proposes to select 60 to 70 "demonstration cities." These will receive large doses of Federal aid, doses of sufficient magnitude to "arrest blight