

NOTES AND NEWS: A CAUSERIE OF TOPICS FOR THE ODD MOMENT

More facts have come to the knowledge of engineers in this country regarding the harnessing of hot springs in Iceland to furnish the capital, Reykjavik, with a piped hot-water supply and have aroused widespread interest.

The series of hot springs lie ten miles from the city, and have been brought together into an insulated pipeline, carrying 65 gallons per second and supplying houses with water which is between 95°—100° Centigrade at source and loses a bare 5° Centigrade on the journey.

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Reykjavik, which has the war to thank for the gathering of experts from the U.S. and Britain which has made the experiment possible, hopes to have 90 per cent. of its homes supplied by next winter.

A lesson for Britain lies in the fact that the city saved a third of its normal fuel consumption last winter and hopes to better that record next season. Cost of the water to consumers is 1s. a ton in winter and less in summer.

Even these prices are war-inflated and will drop when peace comes again.

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Britain's first pre-fabricated house, set up in secret within the recesses of the Tate Gallery, has now become "public property" and revised versions incorporating new amenities are on view there and in the provinces.

Built of steel with £80 worth of fitted furniture, it provides a challenge to heating and ventilating experts, for though its "building time" took a mere four days, its life, as prototype of pre-fabricated homes, is estimated at five years.

Architect is Mr. A. W. Kenyon, and supreme chief of the scheme, Lord Portal, the Minister of Works.

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Insulation of roof and outside walls should meet the objections of those who visualised life in a steel bungalow as life in an immobile tank.

"Light, cool and airy," was a description applied to the building by one of the first women—a housewife—to see over the building when completed. Since then there have been criticisms—and answering improvements.

Refrigerators are fitted and an electric, thermostatically-controlled

boiler makes the hot-water supply independent of the kitchen fire.

At Northolt, Middlesex, other pre-fabricated houses are nearing completion. Here, foamed slag, wood, concrete and other materials have been used. Each will supply its own problems.

The coming winter should provide two chances—one for the tenant to observe the houses' advantages and otherwise, the other for visiting experts who by periodic inspections may be able to spot, in advance, weak points in a system of building which will soon affect hundreds of thousands of people.

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A recent note on the progress made by U.S. heating and ventilating experts in dealing with the problems which have arisen in the great new arms towns called into being by the war, serves as a reminder of what is perhaps their greatest problem and achievement.

This is the Pentagon Building, America's War Office, which lies on the Virginian side of the river Potomac at Washington.

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Completed early in 1943 after eighteen months' work, the building covers 140 acres with a cubic footage of 86,000,000.

In its myriad rooms and 16 odd miles of corridors, the atmosphere is "controlled" for 40,000 men and women by a vast combined ventilating, heating and air-conditioning apparatus.

Even the largest post-war installations will surely learn from this father of all buildings. This "city under one roof" will probably act as prototype for many post-war "association" buildings in both hemispheres.

AN APPEAL

A Special Appeal is made to all Institution members who do not wish to retain copies of their I.H.V.E. Journals for binding, to return them to the Institution, where they will be more valuable for technical reference than as salvage.

This appeal particularly applies to copies of the Journal dated Sept.-Oct. 1943, numbers of which are still required to meet enquiries. Existing supplies are exhausted.