

The Baltimore Plan Is Ready For Appraisal

The "Baltimore Plan" of slum rehabilitation has reached what must be close to the zenith of nation-wide publicity in the nonentertainment field. Written up in laudatory terms by three national magazines in the same week (*Life*, *Look* and the *Saturday Evening Post*), the plan has been commended to President Eisenhower by a housing-industry forum as the first answer to urban blight. It has made Baltimore the recipient of the 1952 award of the National Municipal League, and it has become the subject of a documentary motion picture, by Encyclopedia Britannica Films. Copied in part by a score of cities, the plan is also the subject of a book being sponsored by the Ford Foundation. **SUN**

If some Baltimoreans are wondering quietly to themselves just what the cheering is all about, the answer is fairly simple. While we in Baltimore know that our overcrowded slum areas are still overcrowded slum areas, with little outward evidence of improvements, nevertheless something has been done in many blocks. Apart from the few slum houses razed to make way for public housing and private redevelopment, thousands of slum houses have been made more livable and hygienic through the installation of inside toilets, roof repairs, ratproofing of basements and compulsory removal of backyard debris.

To outsiders especially it looks as though Baltimore has found an answer to the slum problem by simply enforcing, house by house and block by block, the city laws pertaining to safe and sound housing and sanitary living. The answer looks good, because it is faster and cheaper to fix up many houses than to tear them down and rebuild anew, and the property owners make the repairs, not the taxpayers. The plan has been promoted as the answer nationally by those groups anxious to defeat public-housing programs. **JAN 31 1953**

To insiders, which includes the many private and public organizations and agencies which have worked to push the plan along, the program for the most part has been more a matter of first aid than rehabilitation. But a year and a half ago a large-scale effort was made to apply the plan not to rock-bottom slums but to some 27 blocks in East Baltimore that might be saved permanently from sinking into the condition where razing is the final answer. It is this effort which the Encyclopedia Britannica has recorded step by step on film and which will be presented in a movie premiere on Monday.

The film will give Baltimoreans the first fairly objective and comprehensive view of what the plan can and cannot do under present circumstances. And from it we may have a better idea, apart from the national publicity, of how to go about rehabilitating the Mount Royal area, the next local rundown section slated for improvement. **SUN JAN 31 1953**