

HOME-MADE HOMES:

Forty-eight men make a dream come true. Forty-eight amateurs, working every moment of their spare time for four years, have built this beautiful housing estate near Brentwood, for their families - and now the houses are ready to live in. Every one of the 48 homes is different; all are architect-designed, in accordance with the ideas of the families who'll be living there.

The women help with the finishing of the houses - but their chief contribution has been to give up their menfolk's company in the evenings and at weekends for four years. All the members of this housing association work during the day in Ford's motor factory at Dagenham. Two are electricians, one had some bricklaying experience, but the other 45 knew nothing about building - so they all went to evening classes to learn. They elected a committee of eight who decided which families should move in first as the houses were finished, according to the number of children and their existing housing conditions.

Now all the families are moving in. Mrs. Kelly has two young children, and her husband Dennis is chairman of the association. At the moment, the whole estate belongs to the association; in the autumn each house will officially become the property of the family who live in it. Says Dennis "Our early hope of getting homes of our own was to build them ourselves. The results of our labours has been beyond our wildest dreams." And the cost? Eighteen-fifty per house - little more than half their market value!