

(9) *Statistics*.—The cumulative progress of the Department over the successive years since its inception as at 31st March is as follows :—

—	1937-38.	1938-39.	1939-40.	1940-41.*	1941-42.*	1942-43.*	1943-44.*
	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.
(a) Houses advertised	3,172	6,698	11,071	14,084	17,029	17,443	20,910
(b) Contracts let	2,507	6,188	10,353	13,647	16,522	16,799	19,487
(c) Houses under construction ..	1,560	2,326	2,847	2,444	2,033	1,209	2,078
(d) Houses completed and handed over for occupation	399	3,064	6,459	10,425	13,633	14,892	15,772
	Towns.	Towns.	Towns.	Towns.	Towns.	Towns.	Towns.
(e) Towns and localities work conducted in	70	106	121	137	141	146	153
(f) The work of the Department is spread amongst a large number of contractors, the number of different principal contractors to the 31st March each year being : 1937-38, 145 ; 1938-39, 240 ; 1939-40, 291 ; 1940-41, 326 ; 1941-42, 345 ; 1942-43, 346 ; 1943-44, 406.							
(g) Payments—	£	£	£	£*	£*	£*	£*
Land and services	298,500	890,600	1,638,900	2,549,100	3,086,400	3,665,500	4,212,300
Dwellings-construction	1,053,600	4,311,400	8,593,900	13,203,700	16,567,900	17,316,200	18,849,900
Joinery-factories, including machinery	48,900	50,500	52,600	49,400	45,900	46,700	46,700
Vehicles, plant, and equipment	2,600	6,200	12,900	17,200	19,100	21,600	23,100
Interest during construction ..	6,600	21,000	31,000	52,200	93,500	117,600	154,000
Administration	66,200	166,400	281,300	406,400	539,800	685,700	659,100
	1,476,400	5,446,100	10,610,600	16,278,000	20,352,600	21,853,300	23,945,100

* Work retarded due to the temporary diversion of contractors and the Department's organization to defence works.

(10) *Administration*.—Until the tapering-off of the defence programme, housing activities had been more or less at a standstill, consequently a large number of the Department's staff had been released to other duties. Of recent months, however, the staffing position has been improved by the return of a number of officers and by new appointments of female assistants, but the Department is still inadequately staffed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Our work has also been somewhat retarded by the lack of adequate transport conveyances, but the position is being relieved by the transfer of a number of motor-vehicles from the Army.

The past year has again been a particularly difficult one for all branches of the Department, owing to the large number of trained personnel that have been released for military service. Altogether 106 officers of a total of 440 were absent with the Forces as at 31st March, 1944.

In conclusion, I desire to place on record my appreciation of the efficient and loyal service rendered the Department by all members of the staff.

(11) *Proposals for Ensuing Year*.—Subject to the necessary material and labour being available, the Housing Construction Department will continue to operate to the fullest possible extent in an effort to provide additional houses, which are so urgently required, particularly in the larger centres. Provision for a total expenditure of £5,848,497 has accordingly been made in the current year's estimates, of which £5,523,497 will be financed from loans and the balance from rent receipts.

Those desiring to erect houses for themselves have been offered building loans by the State Advances Corporation on liberal terms, and there have been granted during the past financial year 359 building loans for a total value of £404,507, exclusive of loans granted to local authorities under Part III of the Housing Act, 1919, amounting to £100,000.

I have, &c.,

G. W. ALBERTSON,

Director of Housing Construction.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation not given ; printing (626 copies), £55