

As a means of increasing the quantity of water available for Tuai and Piripaua Stations, three 4-ft.-diameter steel siphons have been installed at Onepoto and are in continuous operation.

At Karapiro the major part of the excavation and the power-house structure have been completed, and 10 per cent. only of the work on the spillway section and siphons remains to be done. It is anticipated that construction work will be virtually completed by December, 1946.

Portal excavation at the diversion tunnel has commenced at Maraetai, and foundations investigations continue at Cobb River and Lake Tekapo Schemes. A commencement has also been made on the construction of the large intake tunnel on the Tekapo Scheme. This tunnel is constructed through glacial moraine, and in this type of material it is difficult to provide full watertightness with the usual methods of tunnelling and lining. At Tekapo, for the first time in New Zealand, we are utilizing methods evolved abroad to secure on completion a thoroughly sound job. Unfortunately, this work has been interfered with by the war, and some initial difficulties have been experienced which have to date delayed progress. Most of these troubles have been overcome, and it is hoped that in the near future much better progress will be obtained.

Work continues on access to the proposed site at Black Jack's Point Scheme, on the Waitaki River, but it seems more likely that the Coal Creek Development on the Clutha River above Roxburgh will be given priority.

The Highbank Power Scheme, the power-house of which is situated on the banks of the Rakaia River and which uses water from the Rangitata Diversion Race, was put into operation during the year.

HOUSING

The diversion of production from military to civilian needs has made possible an increase in the output of housing construction, both public and private.

It was expected that production would be limited by the amount of man-power and materials available. To overcome the former, carpentry training centres for the training of ex-servicemen have been expanded, and so far there has been no real shortage of tradesmen. At 31st March, 4,473 workmen were employed by contractors on the actual construction of State houses, and it is significant to note that over recent months almost one-third of the total number of tradesmen engaged have been trainees under rehabilitation schemes.

The shortage of materials has, however, not been overcome, but every effort is being made to keep up the production of houses by the use of substitute materials until the supply position improves.

In spite of these difficulties, 2,954 house units were completed by the Department during the year, as compared with 1,969 the previous year, and, in addition, 3,147 units were under construction at the end of the year. To be added to these figures are 31 rural houses built and 106 houses in course of construction under the rehabilitation scheme for the settlement of returned servicemen on farms. Also, over 450 temporary dwellings were erected for farmers under the Rural Housing Emergency Act, and some 370 miscellaneous farm buildings, such as milking-sheds, wool-sheds, &c., were either erected or are in course of erection on farms settled by returned servicemen.

To provide for future sites, suitable land is continually being bought, and at present some 21,400 sites are held for future operations. In addition, plans are in hand for the development of large-scale housing schemes adjacent to the different towns, the most important schemes being Tamaki at Auckland, and the Porirua Basin at Wellington. Each of these latter housing undertakings will be fully developed and will ultimately provide for a population of some thirty thousand people. The plans embrace all amenities in accordance with the most modern town-planning practice.