

(f) *Land Development*.—Miscellaneous farm buildings and services: completed, 93 (39); in progress, 47 (13).

*Summarized*, the over-all building activities for the year are—

Completed Works—

New dwellings	..	..	..	..	315
Housing improvements	..	..	..	..	160
Dwellings purchased	..	..	..	..	66
Maori schools, miscellaneous works on	..	..	..	..	6
Miscellaneous farm buildings and services	..	..	..	..	93

Works in progress—

New dwellings	..	..	..	..	189
Housing improvement	..	..	..	..	56
Maori schools, miscellaneous works on	..	..	..	..	2
Miscellaneous farm buildings and services	..	..	..	..	47

Departmental—

Completed: Joinery-factory and extension to bulk stores and timber bays, Rotorua Works Centre; timber-yard, Wairoa.

In progress: Office, bulk store, and workers' accommodation, Wairoa; timber-yard improvements, Gisborne.

Building activities as shown above cover a wide range of construction works the nature of which has had the effect of attracting more qualified tradesmen to the building organization in districts where the wider scope of work is offered. This has been particularly noticeable on the East Coast, where normal building activities have been expanded to cover the erection and improvement of Maori schools. However, the Department's activities, spread widely as they are over rural areas, are still handicapped by the limited numbers of tradesmen and contractors available to undertake country work. This is one of the greatest factors militating against success in overcoming the Maori housing problem, which is mainly concentrated in rural areas and townships.

The shortage of experienced and qualified tradesmen of foreman status makes it difficult to take full advantage of the lesser-skilled labour forces which are available and also makes it difficult to apply field-training methods in the various building trades. To a degree, therefore, workmanship has suffered, but in the main the standard of workmanship has shown much improvement, and the efforts of the majority of the workmen are commendable.

The policy of the departmental building organization is also to offer and develop trade employment and training opportunities for Maori Youth, and it is felt that the whole-hearted support of the Maori people themselves, particularly those qualified in the building trades, can greatly help to accelerate Maori housing.

The departmental works centres at Rotorua and Gisborne commenced production activities during the year, the Rotorua depot being engaged in the manufacture of concrete roofing-tiles, concrete blocks, fibrous-plaster sheet, and joinery to a value of £4,386.

The figures for the year represent the commencing stages of production of the various materials as installations have been completed. The ultimate production potential of the works centre when completely established and in full operation is expected to be some six times or more the present output value, thus making the building organization of the district a self-contained unit so far as the supply of these particular materials is concerned.

Workmen employed at the works centre, Rotorua, including timber-yard and store hands, as at 31st March, 1949, numbered 34.

At Gisborne, joinery production was commenced during the year, while the well-equipped plumbing workshop has facilitated the work in this field of operations.