

LAND.

The land purchased during the year for workers' dwellings was as follows: Tauranga, 6 acres; Manaia, 3 roods; Hawera, 3 roods 10 perches; Patea, $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Masterton, $45\frac{3}{4}$ acres; Picton, $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres; Fairlie, 31 acres.

The following areas are now available for new dwellings: Auckland, 86 acres—viz., Lawry, 9 acres; Cadman, 31 acres; Carroll, 16 acres—all at Ellerslie; and 30 acres at Otahuhu; Huntly, 24 acres; Ngauruawahia, 1 acre; Frankton (Hamilton), $7\frac{1}{4}$ acres; Tolago Bay, 3 acres; Gisborne, 2 acres; Napier (Awatoto, 3 acres; and Westshore, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres); Hastings, 30 acres; Waitara, 3 acres; Patea, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres; Stratford, 4 acres; Wanganui (Gonville, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres; and Puriri Street, 4 acres); Rangataua, 3 acres; Palmerston North, 33 acres; Levin, 8 acres; Masterton, 3 acres; Wellington (Taitville, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Petone, 7 acres; and Johnsonville, $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres); Nelson, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Westport, $\frac{3}{4}$ acre; Greymouth, $\frac{3}{4}$ acre; Ashburton, 10 acres; Temuka, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Fairlie, 2 acres; Waimate, 6 acres; Oamaru, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre; and Dunedin (Mornington, $5\frac{3}{4}$ acres; and Ravensbourne, 27 acres).

As it would not be possible for some years to erect workers' dwellings on the whole of the areas set apart in some of the towns and the lying-idle of land would result in considerable loss of interest, it is proposed by the Board that certain portions should be sold. Sections 4 and 14 of the Act of 1914 were passed for this purpose, and negotiations are now proceeding with a number of applicant purchasers. In every case preference will be given to workers, and if desired by them assistance will be given under section 14 to enable them to obtain loans for building purposes from the Advances to Workers Office.

COLLECTION OF RENTS AND INSTALMENTS.

Since 1910, when the administration of the Act was taken over by this Department, the collection of rents and instalments has been attended to by the Public Trust Office. It has now been decided that, as from 1st May, 1915, the collection shall be undertaken by the officers of this Department, as it is found that the Department's own agents are already in close touch with the various occupants and are therefore in a better position to see that payments of rents and instalments are regularly and promptly made.

As at 31st March, 1915 (*vide* table on pages 3 and 4), there was £1,215 11s. 5d. in arrear, as compared with £896 11s. 2d. in arrear on 31st March, 1914. (It should be mentioned, however, that a portion of both these amounts had just become due on those dates.) It is anticipated that a considerable reduction of the total amount of arrears will shortly be effected.* It is perhaps hardly necessary to state that, unless the payments due upon workers' dwellings are regularly and promptly made, the workers' dwellings system cannot be regarded as successful. It is hoped that by the exercise of great care in the selection of applicants and by close attention from week to week to the prompt collection of payments it will be possible at the end of the present financial year to present a more satisfactory report in this connection.

PERIODICAL INSPECTION OF WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

During the year a periodical inspection by local officers of the Department has been instituted in order to ascertain from time to time whether each purchaser is satisfactorily maintaining his dwelling. Where it is found that such is not the case the occupant is called upon to effect the repairs deemed necessary. Under this heading twenty-three notices were issued during the year in respect of a total of 293 dwellings, which goes to show that nearly all of the occupants are taking an interest in their homes.

KEEPING OF ACCOUNTS.

As the total expenditure on workers' dwellings to date now exceeds a quarter of a million pounds (£288,000), of which the expenditure authorized last year alone comprises about £100,000, and as, no doubt, similar expenditure will be authorized in future years, it is essential that a commercial system of book-keeping be established, including a profit and loss account. A qualified accountant has therefore been engaged for the past several weeks in instituting the necessary set of accounts, and it is hoped to be able to present a satisfactory balance-sheet at the end of this year.

It might be explained that under the present Act the expenditure and receipts in respect of workers' dwellings appear in four different accounts, thus: the purchase of land, cost of roading, erection of dwellings, &c., are paid for out of the Public Works Fund; administration expenses are paid out of the Labour Department's vote; while the receipts for workers' dwellings erected on land originally set apart under the Land for Settlements Act are credited to the Land for Settlements Account, and the receipts for workers' dwellings erected on other Crown land or on land purchased for the purpose are paid into a "Workers' Dwellings Account" established under section 16 of the Workers' Dwellings Act. It is now proposed to bring all the expenditure and receipts into one (a Workers' Dwellings) Account, and at the same time to establish a Workers' Dwellings Fund into and out of which all workers' dwellings money will be paid. Proposals to this end will be submitted to you shortly for your consideration.

F. W. ROWLEY,
Superintendent of Workers' Dwellings.

* It has been ascertained that as at the 5th July, 1915, the amount outstanding has been reduced to £821 14s. 1d.