

APPENDIX B.

YEARLY STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HON. THE MINISTER OF LABOUR PURSUANT TO SECTION 18 OF THE WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT, 1910.

In pursuance of section 18 of the Workers' Dwellings Act, 1910, I have the honour to present the following statement of the Superintendent of Workers' Dwellings relating to the operations of the Act during the year ended 31st March, 1918.

W. F. MASSEY,
Minister of Labour.

DWELLINGS ERECTED DURING THE YEAR.

The number of workers' dwellings erected and purchased during the year was only twenty-one. Of this number eleven were in the course of erection on the 31st March, 1917, and four already erected have been purchased on behalf of approved applicants from private owners. In addition there were eight in the course of erection on the 31st March, 1918. Two dwellings have been destroyed by fire; both were fully covered by insurance. As was the case last year, it was found almost impossible to accept tenders for the erection of workers' dwellings, because with one or two exceptions those received were so high as to be quite prohibitive. There were on the 31st March a total of 647 dwellings in the Dominion (including the eight then building).

INSPECTION OF WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

The annual inspection of workers' dwellings by officers of the Department instituted in 1914 was again carried out, and it is satisfactory to note that with very few exceptions the occupants take a pride in improving their dwellings and sections. In accordance with the Department's requirements, the dwellings are now painted once in five years. In several districts the local authorities speak very highly of the manner in which the dwellings and sections are looked after. In one instance the member for the district was so struck with the appearance of the sections that he offered a prize for the best kept and laid-out garden.

COLLECTION OF RENTS AND INSTALMENTS.

The total amount owing in arrears of instalments and rents on the 31st March, 1918, on workers' dwellings has somewhat increased during the past twelve months, and although the average per dwelling is higher than in 1916 or 1917, it is still lower than it was in 1915, being now £2 7s. 4d. per dwelling, as against £2 11s. 8d. in 1915. Considering that all classes of the community, particularly workers, have during the war found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet owing to the continued rise in the cost of the necessities of life, it cannot be considered that the arrears are unduly high. A very considerable reduction in the amount of arrears was in fact effected in April, as by the 16th of the month £542 had been paid off, and by the 30th a further £99 was paid, indicating that the arrears are mostly due to inability to pay at the moment. The instalments and rents due on the 31st March and not paid by the 16th April (£972) amount to an average of 7s. 9d. per dwelling per year, compared with 7s. 6d. in April, 1916. With two exceptions the arrears are more than covered by the amount paid off principal over and above interest, depreciation, and other charges. In the two exceptions the deficit is under £7.

Date.					Total Number of Dwellings.	Arrears.			Average Arrears per Dwelling.		
						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
31st March, 1915	..	..	..	..	471	1,215	11	5	2	11	8
31st March, 1916	..	..	..	..	553	1,251	12	8	2	5	3
31st March, 1917	..	..	..	..	619	1,013	11	11	1	12	9
31st March, 1918	..	..	..	..	639*	1,529	0	6	2	7	4†

* One dwelling at Willowbridge burnt down, not yet reinstated.

† Reduced to £1 7s. 4d. by the 30th April.