

From the passing of the Act to 31st July, 1921, 107 dwellings were purchased under section 10 of the Act, which authorizes the purchase of dwellings (already erected) for applicants. In all cases houses have been purchased in this way only where the applicants were urgently in need of dwellings and where the dwellings would readily resell if at any future time the purchasers gave up possession.

TOWN-PLANNING, ETC.

Development of New Areas.—Considerable attention has been devoted to the question of town-planning for the development of large areas. The close attention which has been paid to the “lay-out” plans, besides improving the appearance of the proposed settlements, will result in many advantages of a more practical nature, such as better lighting and healthier conditions. Lay-out plans have been prepared for the housing schemes in Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, Hamilton, and New Plymouth. The development work at Christchurch, as described in last year’s report, is proceeding satisfactorily. That at Wellington comprises an area of 57½ acres of land which was purchased during the year at central Miramar. This plan provides for 280 house allotments, sites for shopping area, reserves for gardens and public buildings, a playing-green, and two smaller ones for children’s playgrounds. The survey plans have been completed, and the plans for roads and drainage are being prepared. This is perhaps the largest area to be so planned for a housing scheme in this Dominion.

Plans of Dwellings.—A number of new plans of modern design have been prepared so as to secure the maximum of accommodation at the minimum of expense. The sizes of the houses have been reduced to the minimum area on account of high-building costs. Special attention has been given to the planning from the point of view of having no space wasted in unnecessary halls or passages, while the fittings have been arranged so as to give as little labour as possible in the housework.

Method of Construction.—Various new methods of construction have been tried and tested, especially in concrete. Six different methods in concrete have been used at the Miramar works. It has been found that of the concrete and brick systems the small concrete-slab hollow-wall construction and the ordinary brick hollow-wall construction are the most speedy in erection. They are the most economical in the weekly cost or rental, and make the best houses to live in. Different roofing-materials have been used, of which the terra-cotta tile is so far found the most satisfactory. On account of the difficulty in procuring joinery for windows, steel casements have been used in some of the dwellings. These are found to be watertight, and are suitable for brick or concrete houses.

PART III.—LOANS TO EMPLOYERS.

Employers have not to any extent taken advantage of this Part of the Act, which enables employers to obtain loans for the purpose of erecting dwellings for their employees. During the year two grants were made—one in the dairying industry for one dwelling, and one in the engineering industry for four dwellings. The total number of dwellings for which grants have been made since the passing of the Act to 31st March, 1921, is eleven, while six were pending.

PART V.—ERECTION OF WORKERS’ DWELLINGS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The following is the estimated number of dwellings erected by local authorities since the Housing Act was passed in November, 1919, to 31st March, 1921, also the number of additional dwellings immediately contemplated or arranged for:—

District.						Number of Dwellings completed.	Number of Dwellings in course of Erection.	Number of Dwellings con- templated or arranged for.
Hamilton	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Napier	..	..	..	..	..	10	1	2
Palmerston North	..	..	..	..	..	4	3	..
Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	10	..	..
Whangarei	..	..	..	..	..	11	10	..
Christchurch	..	..	..	..	..	8	..	..
Gisborne	..	..	..	..	..	5	6	11
New Plymouth	..	..	..	..	..	5	3	15
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	10	9	30
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	63	32	63

ESTIMATED SHORTAGE OF HOUSES.

An estimate was made in last year’s report (Housing Act, H.—11A, page 3) as to the number of houses required to provide at least one room for every 1½ persons. This was the basis adopted in the report of the Board of Health, from which it was shown that in 1916 (the last census year) there were 4,100 houses in New Zealand in which there were more than 1½ persons per room.