

On development schemes sixty-seven dwellings were erected during the past year for settlers. The following is a summary of the housing activities up to 31st March, 1938 :—

Class.						Numbers.	Cost.
Indigent scheme—							
New—							
Erected	..	..	..	..	..	1	
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	4	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	15	
						— 20	
Repairs—							
Effectuated	..	..	..	..	..	..
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	..
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	13	
						— 13	
Total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	33	£ 7,705
						—	
Under Act—							
New—							
Erected	..	..	..	..	..	..
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	1	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	27	
						— 28	
Repairs—							
Effectuated	..	..	..	..	..	..
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	..
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	25	
						— 25	
Total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	53	13,339
Grand total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	86	21,044

AOTEA DISTRICT: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

The housing conditions generally in this district are reasonably good, although in certain localities, such as the Wanganui River area, there is need for improvement. No actual housing survey has yet been attempted, but the provisions of the Act have become widely known, and applications have been received from all parts of the district, the first housing application being received in February, 1937. By the end of the following month no fewer than 40 applications had been lodged, and 198 had come to hand by 31st March, 1938.

After the Department's building supervisor has inspected the present dwelling of the applicant the matter is dealt with by the Native Land Court, the applicant appearing and giving evidence in support of his application. He is asked what income he has and what amount he is prepared to assign in repayment of any advance that may be made.

In some cases the housing conditions are deplorable, yet the applicant's position is such that there is little or no security at all. It may be that the only income of the applicant is an old-age pension. In these cases the facts are reported to the Board of Native Affairs with a view to having an advance made under the indigent housing scheme.

In several instances arrangements were made with the Public Works Department to have the house erected. In most cases, however, a local builder is requested to submit a price for the house. The building is inspected periodically and progress payments made.

The conditions disclosed in some of the reports by the supervisors are shocking. A typical case is that of an old building situated at Parikino Pa, on the Wanganui River. This building was described by the building supervisor as an old shack built of slabs and patched up with old sheets of iron. It had neither flooring nor lining, and the chimney was built of old iron. This miserable abode of one room contained the applicant, his wife, and daughter, and, as stated by the supervisor, was unsuitable for human habitation.

In another case, also on the Wanganui River, it was discovered that the applicant, his wife, and three adopted children were living in a one-roomed whare with neither flooring nor lining, their beds being spread on the earth floor, with dry fern-leaves and straw as the matting. The building supervisor stated that the occupants appeared to have no initiative, and it is not to be wondered at considering the deplorable conditions in which this family was living.