

co-partnership scheme, this does not add to the dead-weight liability upon industry, for capital has to be paid for whether loaned by a wealthy individual or by the worker. In the first case the investor is a sleeping partner, but, in the case of co-partnership, the holder of the scrip is someone with a lively interest in the success of the concern, and able by his own exertions to assist in securing good results. We feel inclined to agree with a representative Socialist who gave evidence before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. He was urging that his doctrine only represented a normal development—though to some people it seems revolutionary. First, he said, came the age of slavery. Then the age of feudalism. This was replaced by the age of capitalism, accompanied by wage-slavery. He looked forward to Socialism as the next development, but as we have already suggested in these columns, capitalism will remain with us a long time if it will move with the times and adapt itself to changed conditions. As this is the age of large businesses, an increasing proportion of the most able individuals have necessarily to remain wage or salary earners all their lives. Their keen personal interest in their work can best be secured by a personal interest and benefit from its results. And co-partnership provides the means to this desirable end.

**Workers'  
Dwellings  
and  
Quantity  
Production**

A number of practical people in New Zealand are interesting themselves in the task of standardising and quantity production of dwellings in concrete. They will get their practical opportunity shortly, when the Labour Department will call for tenders for two hundred dwellings for workers to be built in various parts of the country. The designs have been prepared with a view to utilising concrete, and all the houses are to be of five rooms. Although the Labour Department has its own plans upon which tenders will be invited, we are informed officially that it will be prepared to consider tenders from firms which submit their own plans for standard dwellings, and that it will consider tenders for the erection of any number, up to the full two hundred. It is the intention to abandon the former policy of grouping the dwellings. They will be scattered wherever sections can be found, but we hope the Department—which is still looking for land—will give some chance to the advocates of quantity production by not scattering the sites too thoroughly. After all, standard planning is not the whole secret of cheap building. Some expense can of course be saved by using copies of the same design over and over again, but the really substantial gain is when large quantities of material can be brought to the ground and used, concrete turned out in batches, and buildings designed for construction in the fewest materials, so that one class of labour is not obliged to wait for work to be completed by another set of men. Mr. J. F. Munnings, a New Zealander who was a Government architect in Bengal, informs us that the administration standardised its dwellings, providing seven different types of larger dwelling, three types for houses occupied by subordinates, and three types for the Indian staff. They were built of reinforced brick, and between 500 and 600 of the smaller houses for the Indian staff were constructed at the capital of Dekka, Eastern Bengal.

To a certain extent one type was used as a set off against another of the same class. Economy was obtained by large building operations and standardisation of details, and this is the line on which the New Zealand Labour Department will have to proceed if it wishes to assist in solving the housing problem. A few houses here and there will not meet the position, nor will this narrow programme be any improvement on the present expensive system of building workers' dwellings. Possibly Parliament will soon take an interest in the question, and show that it appreciates the necessity of handling the matter on a large scale, as befits so urgent a national problem.

**Timber  
Milling  
and  
Transport.**

The building industry has been severely prejudiced by the railway curtailment which, in consequence of coal shortage, came into operation early in July. Though the Railway Department has been able to pull up its stocks a little during the period of the "cut," there appears no hope at the moment of an improvement in the facilities, save a slight revision of the services under which more freight will be carried instead of passengers. On the West Coast of the South Island, as there is plenty of coal from the local collieries, there has been no need to seriously curtail the goods services, but the reduced schedule of goods carried on other sections does not include timber, consequently the timber mills of the North Island are faced with the prospect of shutting down, and building operations, especially in the inland towns, are terribly handicapped for lack of material. There is very little timber stock available for use in such an exceptional emergency. The fact that stocks are not large at the mills enables them to keep working as long as they can be financed. A suggestion was made at an early stage that the Government might help the millers to keep going by making advances against milled timber, but the Hon. A. M. Myers, acting-Minister of Finance, replied by referring the millers to their bankers, with the remark that he felt sure the banks would do their part in helping to overcome the difficulties of the situation. We hope so, too, but as it is a Governmental transport system which has temporarily failed, the State could well recognise its special responsibility under the circumstances, as timely aid will be of advantage to the whole building industry, enabling it to secure ample supplies when conditions of transport revert to normal. As we go to press we ascertain that the Railway Department has not materially improved its supplies of coal since the curtailment, owing to the Australian shipping strike interfering with supplies from that quarter. There are, however, substantial cargoes en route from America, and the Australian trouble seemed on the verge of settlement. Until this actually occurs, there will be little chance of a substantial improvement in goods services on the railways. Slight improvement will no doubt be effected by the drastic curtailment in passenger traffic. Whatever is saved in this way will be applied to the relief of industry. First to receive consideration, we understand, will be the building operations on dairy factories, now getting ready for the new season. The timber industry is also to receive the earliest consideration, so as to prevent unemployment through lack of material in the towns and at the mills.