

viewpoint of those who have to live and work in a dwelling) what they consider to be the essentials of a worker's home, and, in our opinion, the railway dwellings come up fairly to the standard set by this Committee. There is no possibility of reaching the ideal when a strict monetary limitation has to be placed on these schemes, but the Department is certainly liberal in its rent-fixing policy. The railway employee is expected to pay, as a weekly rent, one day's wages. If he has a large family, and requires the largest house built by the Department, he is so much the better off in value of house accommodation for his day's pay. Thus the Department is doing in a practical way what statesmen talk about—it is assisting the large family. Under this system the highest rents would be much less than those charged for privately owned dwellings. The General Manager of Railways, Mr. R. McVilly, who has taken a direct personal interest in the Department's housing scheme, deserves credit for adopting a liberal policy, which will have a far-reaching effect in promoting content among those of his employees who are fortunate enough to secure a railway dwelling for their accommodation.

TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING.

The adoption of large schemes of housing by the Labour Department and the Railway Department gives scope for planning on lines superior to the usual checker-board system, and we are glad to notice that the opportunity has been taken, both by Mr. G. A. Troup, the Railway architect, and by Mr. P. H. Graham, the chief architect of the Labour Department's Housing Branch. Mr. Graham's scope is strictly limited by the exigencies of finance, for he has to turn out dwellings which are sold to the tenants. So that in planning a residential area, too liberal attention to the amenities might heavily load the dwellings with their proportion of the value of the land used for public purposes. However, he has done well with a twenty-five acre subdivision on the North Road at Papanui, Christchurch, and we will have the pleasure of publishing in our next issue a perspective view of this settlement. In this issue we reproduce the plans of the Railway Department's lay-out of two railway settlements, one at Marton Junction and the other at Frankton. In both cases, about one-third of the whole has been set aside for recreation or other public purpose, the reserves being so placed that they will add greatly to the general attractiveness of the residential district. In the Marton lay-out, rows of trees, and the bulk of the recreation areas are placed between the dwellings and the railway, so as to provide good shelter from the prevailing wind, and keep down the smoke nuisance. As the land is excellent for gardening, the sections are larger than usual, being mostly quarter acres. The Frankton area is eighty acres in extent, but thirty acres are reserved for the proposed house factory, where standard houses will be turned out in quantities by special machinery. The frontage to an existing road has been nicely modelled with a curved roadway fronting two small

plantations. The central recreation reserve is five and a half acres in extent. It will be noticed that on both plans the street corners are rounded so as to improve visibility for traffic. As the Department is happily independent of local by-laws or even the statute in regard to the width of roads, it has provided the statutory 66 feet wide road, but will macadamise only 20 feet in the centre. The curbing and channeling will be provided on the edges of this road, which will be quite wide enough for the traffic likely to use it. Then, on either side, are to be 15 feet grass stretches, planted with trees. On either edge of the lawn strips are paths, eight feet wide. We think that once the local administration see how pleasant are roads planned in this enlightened style they will agitate for power to authorise similar arrangements with private subdivisions. Frankton is fairly dusty in the summer, but we imagine that the Frankton railway settlement will not be troubled much with this nuisance, thanks to the foresight of the planners. It is with great pleasure that we are able to write of these actual designs, which are being carried out, for it means that good planning is at last being practised in New Zealand.

* * *

BUILDING MATERIALS.

In the course of a very comprehensive survey of the position of the building industry's supplies, published in this issue, the Chairman of the Board of Trade, Mr. Macdonald, gives us some hope that the coming year will see a lessening of the troubles of short supplies which have so retarded work during the past year. Official control has operated beneficially in giving right-of-road to the more important buildings, enabling them to be pushed on with fair expedition. It has not prevented annoying delays, because the factors controlling supplies of cement, bricks, and timber have been outside the possibility of control by regulation. Orders in Council carry great weight in this country, but no Order in Council will secure sufficient tonnage to carry timber where it is wanted, or produce enough coal to keep the cement works going at full capacity. The Board of Trade is going to make a special effort to get enough coal, from inside or outside the country, to keep the cement works going at full capacity during 1921, and it will be seen from the details of production and capacity given by the Board of Trade Chairman, that this policy, if successful, will give us all the cement we require for ordinary purposes. It seems, however, that we are still going to be short of what the Dominion could readily absorb if more cement was available. Cement is coming into more extended use than ever, and if a big national roading policy is adopted it is certain that this material would figure in the requirements. But at present there is no room for great extensions of this kind. Evidently it will take many years before the Dominion fully recovers the full tide of development interrupted in August, 1914, but we are going to get nearer that pleasant prospect during the New Year.