

"6. *Statistics*.—The progress of the Department since its inception as at the 31st March, is as follows:—

	1937-38.	1938-39.	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.	Total.
	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.	Units.	
"1. Houses advertised ..	3,172	3,526	4,373	3,013	2,945	17,029
"2. Contracts let ..	2,507	3,681	4,165	3,294	2,875	16,522
"3. Houses under construction	1,560	2,326	2,847	2,444	2,033	..
"4. Houses completed and handed over to the State Advances Corporation and various departments ..	399	2,665	3,395	3,966	3,208	13,633
"5. Towns and localities work conducted in ..	Towns. 70	Towns. 106	Towns. 121	Towns. 129	Towns. 142	..

"7. *Staff*.—The past year has been a particularly difficult one for all branches of the Department, owing to large numbers of trained personnel being released for military service. Altogether 103 officers of a total of 443 have been called up.

"There has also been a heavy falling off in the number of men employed both by the Department and by contractors. In 1940 the total number, including staff, was 5,594. In 1941 the number was reduced to 4,287, and in March, 1942, only 2,275 were employed. Despite the heavy reduction in man-power due to the war it is pleasing to note that the total number of units completed this financial year was 3,208.

"During the early part of the year, in spite of the difficulty of obtaining certain essential materials from overseas, good progress was maintained, though with the draw-off of man-power for the armed forces a steady drop in production has become apparent.

"With the advent of the Japanese into the war a new phase of construction became necessary—that is, additional defence works, both military and civil—and all other construction has been subordinated in order that these works may be completed.

"To carry out this programme it has been necessary to make available for defence works all of the man-power of the Housing Department and also to curtail drastically all private building that could not be considered essential to the war effort.

"However, the Government considers housing to be second only in importance to defence work and will resume the programme with all possible vigour as soon as the way is clear. It recognizes that housing will play a most important part in our rehabilitation work and there will be a huge demand for houses from returned soldiers who will wish to settle down in the married state as soon as the war finishes. With these requirements in view it is intended that as many additional houses as possible should be built before the termination of the war.

"In the meantime those officers of the Department who are not required for war work are prosecuting the preparation of many schemes throughout the country so that the Government's programme may proceed when labour and material again become available.

"I can confidently say that during the past year considerable progress has been made, and a large amount of the credit must be handed on to a very efficient and loyal staff who have performed their duties with the interests of the Department at heart, and by so doing have earned the goodwill and respect of the Department's associates in all phases of its activities.

"G. ALBERTSON,
Director of Housing Construction."

The most active section of the Corporation's administration under the Housing Act is the State Rental House Scheme, which involves the management and supervision of the houses after they are handed over by the Housing Construction Department. At the 31st March, 1942, there were 13,482 of these houses under administration. The selection of tenants for new and vacated houses, together with the maintenance of the buildings, engages a considerable proportion of the time of the Corporation's office and urban field staff. The repainting of the houses erected in 1937 and 1938 is now having attention, and a system of group contracts has been adopted with a view to conserving labour and reducing transport costs, both for the tradesmen employed and for the Corporation's field officers. In addition to the new rental houses, there are 868 tenancies of houses erected prior to the commencement of the present building scheme.