

APPENDIX G

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING
CONSTRUCTION

The DIRECTOR OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTION to the Hon. the MINISTER OF WORKS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Housing Division's activities for the year ended 31st March, 1946 :—

(1) *General*.—The number of houses completed during the year reached the total of 2,985, an increase of more than 51 per cent. over the previous year's total, and at the end of the period there were a further 3,400 in various stages of completion.

The shortage of materials and fittings referred to in my last annual report has been even more evident during the past year. House contractors have been seriously hampered by delayed delivery or absolute lack of many essential items, and last-minute substitutions have frequently had to be authorized. Most evident have been short supplies of timber, cement, and bricks, while other items such as baths, electric ranges, roofing-materials, and water-pipe fittings have caused frequent delays. A frequently recurring difficulty is, and has been, the inability of suppliers to deliver timber to dimension.

The removal of man-power restrictions during the year had a depleting effect upon the staffing position, principally among the technical and skilled workers, and many builders have experienced difficulty in obtaining fully qualified "finishing hands."

(2) *Building Construction*.—(a) With the supply position of most building-materials becoming increasingly difficult, maximum effort was directed to the task of keeping the building industry fully employed, and the use of substitute materials has been extensively explored.

Conservation of timber has been practised to the fullest possible extent, and in this direction the use of concrete products has been extended. Houses of various experimental types and using various materials are being constructed under close scrutiny, and it is anticipated that from these experiments we may be able to eliminate some of the troubles attendant upon the short supply of materials hitherto regarded as standard.

For instance, use is being made of treated timbers in order to conserve heart timber for joinery and other essential purposes. *Pinus insignis*, specially treated, is being used as a framing timber in so far as it is available, and it is hoped that the supply will be increased so that its use may be extended.