

Excluding flats, about one-third of the houses erected are either constructed of or are sheathed in materials other than timber, the principal substitutes being brick veneer, total brick, asbestos sheathing, reinforced concrete exterior walls, asbestos sidings, concrete blocks, "no fines" concrete, &c.

Of the various types of construction being tried experimentally, "no fines" concrete appears to hold most promise. This material is being used with metal or pumice aggregate in conjunction with a special type of shuttering.

Other experiments include the use of reinforced-concrete sheets with reinforced-concrete columns and beams, hollow concrete blocks, concrete blocks erected to form cavity walls, pumice-concrete panels, and concrete cavity walls cast on the flat and hoisted into position with cranes, and "stressed skin" concrete in conjunction with the "Gunite" process.

(b) During the past year 189 flat units were in course of construction, while 42 were handed over for occupation. Plans have been completed for the calling of tenders for an additional 28 flat units in Auckland and 20 in Christchurch, while 578 more are in the design stage.

(c) Although the Division has for some time concentrated upon the building of houses to the exclusion of other buildings, there are instances, by reason of the creation of new communities isolated from normal amenities, where it has been necessary to provide some shopping facilities. Contracts have accordingly now been let for the erection of a few shops in Lower Hutt, Hamilton, and Christchurch, while plans are in preparation for others in Auckland, Dunedin, Invercargill, Masterton, and Palmerston North.

(3) *Purchase of Land.*—In the main centres and even in many of the provincial towns the acquisition of satisfactory land which is or can be served by existing city and borough water and drainage services has been limited. There has been little movement in private subdivision and development of residential sections in recent years, and local authorities have paid small attention to the extension of their services. These conditions are forcing the Division into the development of larger blocks, which involve increased costs in the extension and provision of these services, and in some cases necessitate the enlargement of borough areas by the inclusion of adjacent county lands.

During the year the purchase of building-sites has been considerably increased over the previous year's figures. Some 3,590 sites were acquired, bringing the cumulative total to 45,838. Of this total, exclusive of the land on which houses have been completed, some 4,200 unit sections are embraced in housing contracts let or under construction, and there remain approximately 21,400 sites for dwellings, although much of this land has still to be developed.

(4) *Land-development.*—As can be realized, a great amount of planning must be done before real land-development can commence, and in this phase of the Division's activities, besides the actual production of finished scheme plans, much investigatory and preparatory work has been performed with a long-term view.

Despite limitations of staff, man-power, and materials, a total of 2,482 serviced sections were produced by this section of the Division and passed to the architects for siting. Creditable as this appears, the actual position is even better, as at the end of the year nearly as many more, mostly in Auckland, were almost ready for siting.