

(39.9 per cent. of the total applications), and 15,273 in the Wellington Province (32.4 per cent. of the total applications). Wellington and Auckland Provinces between them provided 72.3 per cent. of the applications. Auckland City applications were 17,259 (36.6 per cent. of the total applications) and Wellington City (including Lower Hutt and Petone), 12,265 (26.0 per cent. of the total applications). Wellington City and Auckland City provided between them 62.6 per cent. of the applications. In Christchurch City there were 3,752 applications (8 per cent. of the total applications), and in Dunedin City, 1,312 (2.8 per cent. of the total applications). The four main centres provided 73.4 per cent. or approximately three-quarters, of the total applications.

It is obvious that not all of the applications can be considered as urgent, and a reclassification last year revealed that of the 41,500 applications then filed, 19,200 (46.3 per cent.) represented applications from persons who were in premises which could not be classified as reasonably satisfactory. Returned servicemen applicants are entitled to 50 per cent. of the State rental houses, and this naturally limits the number of houses immediately available for civilian applicants. Taking all factors into consideration, the State Advances Corporation estimates that there is to-day a shortage of 25,000 houses. The State Advances Corporation also stated that a considerable number of families propose, when conditions are favourable, to build privately, and for this purpose many are approaching the Corporation for building loans.

The figure of 25,000, however, does not take into account either the fairly large numbers of servicemen yet to lodge applications who will require housing, or the marriages which are likely to take place in the future before the leeway is made up.

The Housing Construction Branch of the Ministry of Works stated that the 1936 census showed one house for every 4.19 people, while the 1945 census showed one house for every 3.96 people, so that, "in spite of the war, there has been an improvement as to numbers of approximately 5 per cent. in spite of the present clamour for houses . . . I do believe that if 22,000 extra houses could be thrown on the market immediately, so that there would be one house for every 3.7 persons, the rough edge at least would be taken off the problem."

The Director of Housing continues: "The next three years will probably require 7,000 to 8,000 houses per annum to take care of a normal growth, so that the aim should be in the next three years to build 45,000 houses" (that is, to take account of the normal growth of the population and to provide houses for persons not satisfactorily housed).

The bottle-neck in production is in materials and man-power. The main shortages, according to the Director of Housing Construction, are "cement, timber, and shipping." There is also a shortage of ferrous and non-ferrous metals. "It will probably be at least the end of the present year before overseas countries approach anything like normality, and on this account the present year is likely to be the most difficult that this country will experience, the war years not excepted."

As to man-power, the Director stresses the importance of Rehabilitation training courses. "The carpenters' training schools originally set up by the Department of Labour,⁽¹⁾ working in conjunction with this Department, have produced excellent results, and they provide a pattern on which similar establishments can be set up. Training establishments should be set up in all the main centres, and for trades other than carpentry."

The Director's conclusions may be summed up as follows: the failure to catch up with the demand for houses to-day is solely due to factors associated with the war. As far as general supplies other than timber and cement are concerned, the difficulties should be overcome by the end of this year. Man-power difficulties are serious, but considerable assistance should be forthcoming from the trade training schools of the Rehabilitation Department.

(¹) Now administered by the Rehabilitation Department.