

10. BUILDINGS

(a) *General*

The Buildings Section has again recorded a substantial turnover for the year. New declarations of surplus buildings have tapered off considerably, but it is expected that small numbers will still be declared from time to time during the next twelve months. During the year there has been a complete reversal of the factors of supply and demand. In the earlier stages of the Board's operations, buildings and huts were available in very large numbers in various parts of the country and a considerable amount of advertising and salesmanship was required in order to quicken the demand. Latterly, as a result of the reduction in supply, the increased difficulty in obtaining new materials, and the proved usefulness of surplus buildings, available supplies are mostly absorbed by Government Departments, local authorities for transit housing, ex-servicemen, welfare organizations, &c., on the basis of relative priority. When selections by the above-mentioned priority applicants have been completed, only a few of the poorer and less useful types of buildings remain for sale to the general public. It will be appreciated that disposal of assets through a screen of varying degrees of priority is a lengthy process as compared with straightforward sales on the open market.

Very few buildings remain for disposal in the South Island, and it is particularly gratifying to report that at the Delta camps, near Blenheim, all buildings have been sold. In these camps there were 316 buildings of various sizes, 137 of the better type of accommodation huts, and 1,240 of the poorer type 15 x 8 accommodation hut. In addition, a large number of buildings and huts from an Army camp and four Air Force dispersal camps in the vicinity of Blenheim were completely cleared.

(b) *Clearance of Sites*

The need for the prompt clearance of buildings from sites so as to facilitate the termination of tenancies, restoration of properties, &c., is fully appreciated. For various reasons, chiefly labour shortages, Government Departments and other purchasers frequently meet with difficulty in removing buildings. The Board's officers are following up all transactions to ensure that removals are effected as quickly as possible.

(c) *Transit Housing*

In September, 1945, the Government inaugurated a scheme for the establishment of transit housing by local authorities. Under this scheme buildings are provided by the Board from surpluses declared free of cost to the local authorities. In cases where the local authority takes over an existing camp *in situ*, all existing fittings necessary for the scheme are included without charge. In cases where the buildings are removed to another site, the local body purchases the required fittings from the Board or from any other source. The initial negotiations with local bodies are carried out by the Commissioner of Works, and the Board provides buildings on his recommendation. Each scheme is subject to the approval of the Right Hon. the Minister of Finance.

Although no charge is made to local bodies, the removal value of all buildings and fittings supplied is credited to the Board's funds from a special subdivision of the War Expenses Account.

Up to the present negotiations have been finalized in respect of the transfer of sufficient buildings for the construction of 889 transit-housing units, and negotiations are proceeding in respect of an additional 245 units.