

PART IV.—MAORI HOUSING-OPERATIONS AND WORKS ORGANIZATION

A progressive rate of housing construction, improvement, and purchase has been maintained over the past year, the over-all completed housing figures under the Maori Housing Act, land-development, and rehabilitation being 388, made up as follows: new dwellings, 196 (143); additions, alterations, and improvements, 159 (94); purchases, 33 (20). Housing works in progress as at 31st March, 1948, were: new dwellings, 194 (133); additions and other improvements 65 (62). The figures in parentheses indicate the relative returns for the previous year.

In addition to the works mentioned above, building-operations were undertaken as follows:—

- (a) *Maori Trust*.—Three new houses erected; 2 in progress.
- (b) *Maori Land Board*.—One new house in course of erection.
- (c) *Miscellaneous Farm Buildings*.—Thirty-nine erected; 13 in progress.
- (d) *Departmental*:—

Erected: Store and workers' accommodation, Hurumua Soldier Settlement Scheme; buildings (£10,000), Rotorua Works Centre; bulk store at Hastings; workshop at Gisborne in conjunction with Public Works Department.

In progress: Joinery-workshop, Rotorua Works Centre; general improvements, Works Centre, Gisborne; reservoir, Hurumua Soldier Settlement Scheme; bridge and cottage extensions, Anaura Station.

- (e) *Education Department* (Maori school building programme, East Coast):—

Completed: Rangitukia School additions.

In progress: Tokomaru Bay School additions.

While the progress indicated shows a marked advance over the previous year, a more intensive approach to the housing problems of the Maori people is necessary to enable at least a threefold increase in the output of new homes and housing improvement. During the war years there was a large accumulation of housing applications which, for obvious reasons, could not be satisfied at the time.

The activities of the Department since the war have created in the Maori people an increased "house-consciousness," with the result that the volume of applications and loan authorities on hand have increased sharply, and departmental activities will require to be stepped up to overcome the pressing needs of the people. As evidence of this, loan authorities awaiting attention and housing applications under investigation as at the 31st March, 1948, were 820 and 1,660 respectively. In addition, several group housing schemes, as a result of surveys undertaken by the Department, are being considered for various localities throughout New Zealand.

The Department is aware of the urgency required in overcoming the present and future demands for new houses and housing improvement, and although the difficulties of supply and man-power are likely to prove a deterrent to the progress desired, several measures have been and are being taken to meet the position. These measures include a revision of the lending policy and administrative procedure, reorganization and expansion of the field and technical division, co-ordination with other State Departments in regard to rental and group housing scheme and authorities connected with works and supply, and improved employment conditions for tradesmen.

The Department's building organization has been developing since 1944, and although effort has been restricted by the limited availability of skilled tradesmen to undertake country work, it has proved a satisfactory venture as regards both the technical