

## APPENDIX G

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING  
CONSTRUCTION

THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTION TO THE HON. MINISTER OF WORKS.  
SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Division's activities for the year ended 31st March, 1949.

## 1. GENERAL

The number of houses completed and handed over by the Housing Division during the past year reached the record figure of 4,193, as against 3,210 for the preceding year, while a further 3,587 houses were under construction at 31st March, 1949. In the Auckland District the carpenters' dispute came at a critical period of the year and the loss of completed houses was estimated at 50. The Auckland District programme for this year will also be seriously hampered.

It is pleasing to report that the material supply position in certain directions has shown a distinct improvement over the past year, but it is still by no means satisfactory, and is discussed in the following section.

Every effort is being made to introduce new contractors to State housing work, particularly in the smaller centres, where there is always difficulty in letting contracts. Special attention is also being given to reducing the average time for completion of houses, and considerable improvement in this direction has already taken place.

## 2. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Although the past year has been a record one for house construction, the results have not been achieved easily and the demand for certain material items continues to outstrip the available supplies. Apart from the shortage of cement, the biggest difficulty is the shortage of exterior sheathing-materials, whether wood, brick, or cement board, and periodic local shortages of particular lines.

The use of *Pinus insignis* has alleviated the shortage of framing-timbers, although its use for weatherboard framing cannot be unreservedly recommended. This is mainly due to the fact that, as yet, a satisfactory protective paint has not been produced, although exhaustive tests are being carried out.

A contract has been let for the construction of two experimental houses in sun-dried brick, but it is most unlikely that such a method of construction will be adopted to any extent, due to the heavy labour cost. Such houses cost more to build by contract than the most expensive type of brick or concrete house.

Although the activities of the Rehabilitation Department's trainee scheme has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of carpenters, there would appear to be no corresponding increase in the number of men engaged in the sub-trades. This has given some concern over the past year and the completion of houses has been held up for lack of subcontractors, more particularly in the painting trade.

With the virtual completion of the housing scheme in the Hutt Valley, construction is well under way on the first units at Titahi Bay in the major project for the Porirua Basin, where it is planned to build approximately 3,000 houses. Progress is being well maintained at Tamaki (Auckland) where it is planned ultimately to build 6,000 houses; indeed, in all the main towns major schemes are proceeding.

Constant review and revision of existing standard houses to effect improvements are taking place. New designs have been added to those already in use, and the standard specification has been rewritten.