

*Works completed—continued*

(d) Maori Land Board project: Tea-kiosk, Rotoiti.

(e) Miscellaneous—

Departmental store, office, and timber yard, Wairoa.

Rangiatea Church, Otaki.

*Works in Progress—*

(a) New houses .. .. . 218 (187)

(b) Other building-work .. .. . 93 (50)

(c) On behalf of Education Department—

Residence and garage at Hiruharama.

Class-room at Ruatoria.

Manutahi Maori District High School at Ruatoria.

41. The above summary of work undertaken shows the widening scope of the departmental organization, and whilst school work, for instance, impedes the progress of house-building to some extent, it is felt that the ultimate benefit to the Maori generally will offset any delay in meeting the very pressing need for better living conditions.

*Building Organization*

42. A move has been made to strengthen the field staff of the Department, and, as has been mentioned previously, more progress has been made in the areas where additional supervisors have been appointed. In addition, steps have been taken to co-ordinate the field activities for better organization on both a district and national basis. In this direction, District Building Supervisors have been appointed whose main function is the co-ordination of building-works. A Director of Maori Housing will be appointed, and it is anticipated that this appointment will give the impetus and drive necessary to meet the increasingly heavy demand for homes.

43. Since the end of the war the Department has suffered from shortages of building-materials, but probably the most serious factor to be faced is the virtual absence of skilled workmen in the scattered rural areas where most Maori house-building is carried out. Private contractors are not easily attracted to isolated areas, and it has been necessary to give special attention to the employment and training of local labour. This has proved worth while, for the twofold reason that, in addition to building homes, the Department has, at the same time, provided regular employment in a sound industry for men who otherwise would be wholly dependent on seasonal and casual work. Many of these men have reached a stage of proficiency where they are employed on co-operative contracts.

44. The departmental organization cannot meet the full demand for houses, and applicants are encouraged to seek the services of private contractors wherever it is possible to carry out work in this way. Difficulty is found in getting private builders to undertake country work, but knowledge of general conditions in any area makes it possible to give suitable advice to applicants where there is a chance of getting them settled quicker than the operations of the official organization will allow.

*Works Centres*

45. In order to facilitate regular supplies of materials and joinery, bulk stores and works centres have continued to receive attention during the year. It is hoped to expand this phase of our organization as requirements and opportunity permits.

46. The works centre at Rotorua has continued the production of concrete roofing-tiles, concrete blocks, fibrous-plaster sheets, and joinery, whilst timber is treated and dressed in the timber-yard.

47. The Gisborne centre is concentrating on the production of joinery and plumbing and it has been found that the plumbing-shop is providing Maori youths with experience in a very useful trade.