

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS

(REPORT ON, BY THE HON. THE MINISTER OF LABOUR).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 20 of "The Workers' Dwellings Act, 1905."

Wellington, 2nd July, 1906.

PRELIMINARY MEASURES.

EARLY in January, 1906, a commencement was made in the purchasing of suitable areas for workers' homes in the vicinity of Wellington—viz., at Petone and the Lower Hutt—followed shortly afterwards by the acquisition of an area at Otahuhu, near Auckland, by which the Land Purchase Board were enabled to effect an exchange with the Auckland Agricultural and Pastoral Association for an excellent site for workers' dwellings close to the Ellerslie Railway-station, to the benefit to both parties to the exchange, the association obtaining an increased area for show-grounds in every way more suited to them, and the Crown a site eminently suited for workers' dwellings. A portion of the Otahuhu property known as the Ecclestone No. 2 Settlement was retained for workers' dwellings and a portion for opening under the Land for Settlements Act as suburban areas. At Christchurch the Crown fortunately had an area in its possession of 9 acres, situated at Sydenham, which was at once set apart for workers' dwellings. At Dunedin, in the Borough of Roslyn, an area of 12 acres, known as the Windle Settlement, was purchased in readiness to meet workers' requirements.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

The next step taken to give effect to Parliament's direction to proceed with the erection of dwellings for Workers was the setting up by Cabinet, on the 12th February, 1906, of an Advisory Board, consisting of the Under-Secretary for Lands (Chairman), the Colonial Architect, the Assistant Secretary for Labour, and Mr. March, the Inspector and Supervisor of Workers' Dwellings; the Colonial Architect to have the general supervision of the whole of the works. The duties of the Board were to advise the Minister of Labour:—

- (1.) Upon the designs to be used, and the class of houses to be erected in brick or timber.
- (2.) To recommend the architects to be employed and designs to be adopted, also the emoluments to be given, and to advise as to the appointing of overseers or clerks of works. The architects whose designs were chosen to have the carrying-out of the supervision of the erection of the houses in the several centres.

Immediately upon being set up the Board proceeded to visit all the sites and to arrange what street-formation and drainage-works were necessary, and to obtain estimates of the cost of carrying out the same.

The necessary authority for money-expenditure having been obtained, designs were invited from architects throughout New Zealand, and no less than 150 designs were received. Of this number thirty-four were selected, approved by Cabinet, and accepted as being the best and most suitable.

As soon as the designs for the erection of cottages were approved, recommendations were made by the Board and approved by Cabinet for the immediate erection of twelve houses adjoining Otahuhu Railway-station (to meet the needs of workers at the various industries in progress in its vicinity); and of twenty-two houses on the west side of Ellerslie Railway-station for Auckland workers—twelve designs by local architects having been chosen. For Wellington and Petone workers the Board received approval of the immediate erection of twenty-five houses on the Here-taunga Settlement, Petone, using seven different designs by Wellington architects. This was followed by approval of the erection of twenty houses on the Sydenham area, Christchurch, from six of the prize designs chiefly drawn by local architects, and finally the obtaining of approval of the erection of twenty houses on the Windle site in the Borough of Roslyn, Dunedin.