

1908.
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, 11th June, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to present herewith reports from Mr. J. Lomas, Chief Advisory Officer under the Workers' Dwellings Act, on the work done under the provisions of the Act for the year ending the 31st March, 1908. Mr. Lomas succeeded to this office on the death of Mr. James Mackay. I also attach statement of the Architect (Mr. Woburn Temple). Three interesting returns are also included in the report. They give information upon almost every detail concerning the erection of these houses, cost of building, value of land, total rent, &c. There were only two houses to let as at 31st March last. These were situated at Dunedin (Windle Settlement).

J. A. MILLAR,
Minister of Labour.

SIR,—

Wellington, 14th June, 1908.

I have the honour, in compliance with the terms of "The Workers' Dwellings Act, 1905," to submit a report on the working of the Act for the year now terminated. I was appointed Chief Advisory Officer on the 1st day of October, 1907, in place of the late Mr. James Mackay.

During the period I have occupied the position I visited and inspected, in company with the other members of the Boards in Wellington and Christchurch, quite a number of blocks of land which were placed under offer to the Government by owners for the purposes of the Act. This land varied in area from half an acre to twenty-six acres in extent. Two of the largest blocks of land have been referred to the Land Purchase Board for their favourable consideration—one block being within easy distance of the centre of Wellington, and the other near Christchurch. Quite close to the latter block several important industries are being carried on in which a large number of male workers are permanently employed. The other offers have been declined owing to several reasons, but principally because (1) unsuitable for purpose, (2) excessive price asked. Owing to the increase in the price of building-material, if the Department has to pay an excessive price for the land, it is almost impossible to erect workers' dwellings with all the latest conveniences and to let them at rents which the average working-man can afford to give. The difficulty of getting land at a reasonable figure in or near Wellington and Dunedin is very great, and offer after offer of land has had to be rejected owing to the price being considered excessive. The price asked for land, even in the suburbs situated several