

1915.
NEW ZEALAND.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT:

YEARLY STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HON. THE MINISTER OF LABOUR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 18 of the Workers Dwellings Act, 1910.

IN pursuance of section 18 of the Workers' Dwellings Act, 1910, I have the honour to present the following statement of the Superintendent of Workers' Dwellings relating to the operations of the Act during the year ending the 31st March, 1915.

W. F. MASSEY,
Minister of Labour.

SIR,—

I have to report as follows on the operation of the Workers' Dwellings Act during the year ending 31st March, 1915.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

The proposed four rural settlements referred to in last year's report have been duly established by the erection of thirty-six dwellings. They are as follow: Willowbridge (near Waimate), thirteen allotments of an average of $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres each; Solway (near Masterton), eleven allotments of an average of $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres each; Fairlie, six allotments of an average of $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres each, also one allotment of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre; Blenheim, five allotments of an average of $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres each. The dwellings have just been completed, and the whole of them are being purchased by the applicants on the instalment-purchase system (by the payment of £10 deposits, and the balance repayable in $25\frac{1}{2}$ years at 7 per cent. plus fire insurance and rates). The payments (inclusive of insurance but not rates) range from 13s. 4d. to 18s. 7d. per week. Rates may be taken at approximately £1 per annum or 5d. per week. The table on page 5 shows further details of the dwellings and of the payments to be made in respect of same.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS AMENDMENT ACT, 1914.

During the year this amendment to the Act was passed for the purpose of facilitating the administration of the Act. In lieu of the Boards formerly constituted in the various land districts a Central Board has, under section 2, been constituted in Wellington, with District Boards in the various centres where agencies of the Department are established.

The maximum capital value of a worker's dwelling was by the amendment extended from £600 to £750. This extension has been necessitated mainly by the fact that workers' dwellings are now being erected on rural allotments of about 5 acres, with the maximum unimproved value of land of £250: this allows £500 for the cost of any buildings erected. Other minor amendments to the Act are as follow:—

- (1.) Instead of the first instalment of £10 being required when application for a dwelling is made, £1 only is now necessary in the first instance, and the remaining £9 is called for by the Department as soon as it is decided to erect a dwelling for the applicant.
- (2.) Provision has also been made, in the case of a concrete or brick dwelling, to extend the period for the repayment of the principal from $25\frac{1}{2}$ to $36\frac{1}{2}$ years. It is anticipated that by this means the weekly payments on a dwelling will be reduced by about 2s. 6d.

LAND.

The land purchased during the year for workers' dwellings was as follows: Tauranga, 6 acres; Manaia, 3 roods; Hawera, 3 roods 10 perches; Patea, $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Masterton, $45\frac{3}{4}$ acres; Picton, $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres; Fairlie, 31 acres.

The following areas are now available for new dwellings: Auckland, 86 acres—viz., Lawry, 9 acres; Cadman, 31 acres; Carroll, 16 acres—all at Ellerslie; and 30 acres at Otahuhu; Huntly, 24 acres; Ngauwawahia, 1 acre; Frankton (Hamilton), $7\frac{1}{4}$ acres; Tolago Bay, 3 acres; Gisborne, 2 acres; Napier (Awatoto, 3 acres; and Westshore, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres); Hastings, 30 acres; Waitara, 3 acres; Patea, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres; Stratford, 4 acres; Wanganui (Gonville, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres; and Puriri Street, 4 acres); Rangataua, 3 acres; Palmerston North, 33 acres; Levin, 8 acres; Masterton, 3 acres; Wellington (Taitville, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Petone, 7 acres; and Johnsonville, $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres); Nelson, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Westport, $\frac{3}{4}$ acre; Greymouth, $\frac{3}{4}$ acre; Ashburton, 10 acres; Temuka, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; Fairlie, 2 acres; Waimate, 6 acres; Oamaru, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre; and Dunedin (Mornington, $5\frac{3}{4}$ acres; and Ravensbourne, 27 acres).

As it would not be possible for some years to erect workers' dwellings on the whole of the areas set apart in some of the towns and the lying-idle of land would result in considerable loss of interest, it is proposed by the Board that certain portions should be sold. Sections 4 and 14 of the Act of 1914 were passed for this purpose, and negotiations are now proceeding with a number of applicant purchasers. In every case preference will be given to workers, and if desired by them assistance will be given under section 14 to enable them to obtain loans for building purposes from the Advances to Workers Office.

COLLECTION OF RENTS AND INSTALMENTS.

Since 1910, when the administration of the Act was taken over by this Department, the collection of rents and instalments has been attended to by the Public Trust Office. It has now been decided that, as from 1st May, 1915, the collection shall be undertaken by the officers of this Department, as it is found that the Department's own agents are already in close touch with the various occupants and are therefore in a better position to see that payments of rents and instalments are regularly and promptly made.

As at 31st March, 1915 (*vide* table on pages 3 and 4), there was £1,215 11s. 5d. in arrear, as compared with £896 11s. 2d. in arrear on 31st March, 1914. (It should be mentioned, however, that a portion of both these amounts had just become due on those dates.) It is anticipated that a considerable reduction of the total amount of arrears will shortly be effected.* It is perhaps hardly necessary to state that, unless the payments due upon workers' dwellings are regularly and promptly made, the workers' dwellings system cannot be regarded as successful. It is hoped that by the exercise of great care in the selection of applicants and by close attention from week to week to the prompt collection of payments it will be possible at the end of the present financial year to present a more satisfactory report in this connection.

PERIODICAL INSPECTION OF WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

During the year a periodical inspection by local officers of the Department has been instituted in order to ascertain from time to time whether each purchaser is satisfactorily maintaining his dwelling. Where it is found that such is not the case the occupant is called upon to effect the repairs deemed necessary. Under this heading twenty-three notices were issued during the year in respect of a total of 293 dwellings, which goes to show that nearly all of the occupants are taking an interest in their homes.

KEEPING OF ACCOUNTS.

As the total expenditure on workers' dwellings to date now exceeds a quarter of a million pounds (£288,000), of which the expenditure authorized last year alone comprises about £100,000, and as, no doubt, similar expenditure will be authorized in future years, it is essential that a commercial system of book-keeping be established, including a profit and loss account. A qualified accountant has therefore been engaged for the past several weeks in instituting the necessary set of accounts, and it is hoped to be able to present a satisfactory balance-sheet at the end of this year.

It might be explained that under the present Act the expenditure and receipts in respect of workers' dwellings appear in four different accounts, thus: the purchase of land, cost of roading, erection of dwellings, &c., are paid for out of the Public Works Fund; administration expenses are paid out of the Labour Department's vote; while the receipts for workers' dwellings erected on land originally set apart under the Land for Settlements Act are credited to the Land for Settlements Account, and the receipts for workers' dwellings erected on other Crown land or on land purchased for the purpose are paid into a "Workers' Dwellings Account" established under section 16 of the Workers' Dwellings Act. It is now proposed to bring all the expenditure and receipts into one (a Workers' Dwellings) Account, and at the same time to establish a Workers' Dwellings Fund into and out of which all workers' dwellings money will be paid. Proposals to this end will be submitted to you shortly for your consideration.

F. W. ROWLEY,
Superintendent of Workers' Dwellings.

* It has been ascertained that as at the 5th July, 1915, the amount outstanding has been reduced to £821 14s. 1d.

RETURNS.

(Made pursuant to section 18 of the Act.)

(a.) THE MONEYS EXPENDED DURING THE PRECEDING FINANCIAL YEAR IN ACQUIRING LAND UNDER THE ACT, IN PREPARING THE SAME FOR WORKERS' DWELLINGS, AND IN ERECTING SUCH DWELLINGS.

	£	s.	d.
Amount expended in acquiring land for workers' dwellings..	7,547	0	7
Amount expended in preparing land for workers' dwellings..	1,353	9	1
Amount expended in erecting dwellings	59,440	12	1
Amount expended in administration and travelling ..	396	5	5
Total	£68,737	7	2*

* As shown on page 4, there were also seventy-seven dwellings in course of erection at the 31st March, 1915, the bulk of the expenditure for which will appear in next year's accounts.

The above return does not include the sum of £603 13s. incurred for maintenance, fire insurance, rates, &c., upon the dwellings erected and leased to occupants under the Act of 1905 (which amount is charged for in the rents collected), nor the sum of £4 10s. paid for clearing noxious weeds from vacant sections.

The total expenditure in connection with workers' dwellings during the year was thus £69,345 10s. 2d.—viz., £68,341 1s. 9d. out of Public Works Fund and £1,004 8s. 5d. out of Labour Department's vote.

(b.) THE NUMBER OF DWELLINGS ERECTED DURING THE YEAR AND THE NUMBER DISPOSED OF.

The number of dwellings erected	172
The number of dwellings disposed of	172

(c.) THE WEEKLY OR OTHER PAYMENTS CONTRACTED FOR, THE AMOUNT OF SUCH PAYMENTS RECEIVED, AND THE AMOUNT OF ARREARS OUTSTANDING.

Settlement.	Weekly or other Payments con- tracted for (Total for Year).	Total Amount received for Year.	Arrears out- standing as at 31/3/15.
Auckland—	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Lawry	2,683 10 4	2,666 10 10	268 6 9
Eccleston	750 14 4	756 6 10	112 1 3
Wellington—			
Taitville	98 2 6	90 3 5	7 19 1
Island Bay	921 6 10	934 0 7	39 15 8
Coromandel Street	437 9 8	429 8 5	21 3 11
Heretaunga (Petone)	814 10 9	812 5 4	60 15 10
Christchurch—			
Camelot	1,091 2 1	1,069 17 7	47 8 0
Walker	532 15 6	516 10 4	67 13 10
Chancellor Street	228 11 0	204 7 3	27 13 1
Dunedin—			
Windle	701 8 7	688 15 0	61 5 10
Wanganui—			
Ballance	254 9 0	259 17 0	4 5 11
Willis	235 15 0	232 0 2	22 4 3
Palmerston North—			
Loughnan	198 1 0	198 6 0	2 10 10
Greymouth—			
Cobden	379 13 0	329 8 3	82 16 0
Temuka—			
Buxton	296 16 10	287 9 6	46 6 1
Waimate—			
Willowbridge	408 9 2	309 15 0	98 14 2
Timaru—			
Craigie	298 9 8	290 14 5	19 18 3
Melton Road	290 18 9	189 18 3	100 19 8
Invercargill—			
Seaward Bush	429 11 4	418 6 11	20 3 0
Masterton—			
Kuripuni	193 3 10	173 5 2	19 18 8
Hamilton—			
Laurenson	70 15 9	64 4 7	6 11 2
Westport—			
Leaver	306 4 3	301 1 1	5 3 2
Patea	122 16 0	94 19 6	27 16 6

(c.) THE WEEKLY OR OTHER PAYMENTS CONTRACTED FOR, THE AMOUNT OF SUCH PAYMENTS RECEIVED, AND THE AMOUNT OF ARREARS OUTSTANDING—continued.

Settlement.	Weekly or other Payments contracted for (Total for Year).	Total Amount received for Year.	Arrears out-standing as at 31/3/15.
Gisborne—	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Te Hapara	143 9 11	130 2 7	13 7 4
Te Puke	38 17 11	15 1 8	24 16 1
Tolago Bay—			
Uawa	26 17 4	25 4 7	1 12 9
Nelson—			
Winearls	162 6 4	178 2 0	4 4 4
Totals	12,116 6 8	*11,666 2 3	†1,215 11 5

* Of this amount £40 13s. was paid in advance on account of amounts to fall due during 1915–16.
† A portion of these amounts had, on 31st March, only recently become due, and £446 9s. 6d. of same has since 31st March been paid. The arrears mentioned include amounts owing by former occupiers of workers' dwellings. As opportunity arises steps are being taken to recover these amounts.

OTHER RETURNS

(d.) SHOWING (1) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS ERECTED UNDER THE ORIGINAL ACT OF 1905 TO THE DATE OF THE COMING INTO OPERATION OF THE ACT OF 1910; (2) AND (3) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS ERECTED UNDER THE ACT OF 1910 FROM THE DATE OF THE COMING INTO OPERATION OF THE ACT TO THE 31ST MARCH, 1915; AND (4) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS IN COURSE OF ERECTION ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1915.

District.	(1.) Erected under the Act of 1905.	Erected under Act of 1910.		(4.) Number in Course of Erection on 31st March, 1915.	Total.
		(2.) To 31st March, 1914.	(3.) During Year ending 31st March, 1915.		
Auckland	35	58	25	..	118
Wellington	40	23	16	11	90
Christchurch	31	27	..	..	58
Dunedin	20	2	..	4	26
Frankton Junction	..	..	6	..	6
Ngaruawahia	..	..	..	6	6
Tauranga	..	..	..	6	6
Te Puke	..	..	7	..	7
Tolago Bay	..	..	8	..	8
Gisborne	..	..	14	..	14
Napier	..	..	4	2	6
Hastings	..	..	8	..	8
Patea	..	..	10	..	10
Hawera	..	..	..	4	4
Manaia	..	..	..	2	2
Wanganui	..	13	..	6	19
Palmerston North	..	6	6	..	12
Masterton	..	..	23	..	23
Picton	..	..	..	5	5
Blenheim	..	..	..	5	5
Nelson	..	..	6	..	6
Westport	..	..	12	..	12
Greymouth	..	14	..	..	14
Ashburton	..	..	..	6	6
Temuka	..	9	..	..	9
Timaru	..	19	..	..	19
Fairlie	..	..	..	7	7
Willowbridge	..	..	13	..	13
Waimate	..	..	..	6	6
Oamaru	..	..	..	7	7
Invercargill	..	12	4	..	16
Totals	126	183	162	77	548

NOTE.—The whole of the 126 dwellings erected under the 1905 Act were leased or let, after their erection, to applicants for same, but 79 have since the passing of the 1910 Act been disposed of under the instalment-purchase system provided in the latter Act. The whole of the dwellings erected under the 1910 Act were built for applicant purchasers.

e.) SHOWING THE AVERAGE WEEKLY AMOUNTS PAYABLE BY THE PURCHASERS OF FOUR- AND FIVE-ROOMED DWELLINGS (DIFFERENT DESIGNS) ERECTED UNDER THE ACT.

(The amounts payable include fire insurance but not rates, which range from 5d. per week in rural districts to about 1s. 6d. in towns.)

Name of Town.								Four Rooms and Section.	Five Rooms and Section.
								s. d.	s. d.
Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15 7*	14 9*
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17 3	17 6
Christchurch	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 2	13 9
Dunedin	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 4	15 5
Frankton Junction	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 10	15 6
Te Puke	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 3	13 0
Tolago Bay (only four-roomed dwellings erected)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 8	..
Gisborne	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13 6	15 3
Napier (only five-roomed dwellings erected)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 9
Hastings	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 1	15 0
Patea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13 2	15 1
Palmerston North	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 8	16 0
Masterton	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 8	17 5
„ (rural settlement)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 0	14 10
Nelson	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 8	13 6
Westport (only five-roomed dwellings erected)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11 10
Willowbridge (rural settlement)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16 0	17 2
Fairlie (rural settlement)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 3	14 2
Invercargill (only five-roomed dwellings erected)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14 1
Average for all towns								13 10	14 11

* The higher payments for four-roomed dwellings in these cases are due to the occupants having chosen more expensive designs than the occupants of five-roomed houses.

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