

Unfortunately, the present year's census tables are not yet sufficiently far advanced to show the exact present position. The only information so far obtainable states as follows:—

		Average Number of Persons per Dwelling.		
		Census 1911.	Census 1916.	Census 1921.
In New Zealand		4.68	4.5	4.5
In boroughs only		4.76	4.5	4.5

It is interesting in addition to the above to state that the towns where the average number of persons per house according to the 1921 census exceeds 4.5 are, with one exception, small, viz: Dargaville, 5; Otahuhu, 4.7; Pukekohe, 4.6; Te Aroha, 4.9; Rotorua, 5.5 (perhaps this is due to tourist traffic); Opotiki, 4.9; Taumarunui, 4.7; Eltham, 4.68; Palmerston North, 4.7; Richmond (Nelson), 4.6; Ashburton, 6.

In the larger towns the average is: Auckland and suburbs, 4.4; Wellington, 4.5; Christchurch, 4.1; Dunedin, 4.3; Hamilton, 4.5; Gisborne, 4.4; Napier, 4.3; Hastings, 4.1; Masterton, 4.3; New Plymouth, 4.2; Wanganui, 4.5; Nelson, 4.3; Greymouth, 4.5; Timaru, 4.5; Oamaru, 4.1; Invercargill, 4.5.

While these figures do not give a definite guide as to whether the number of overcrowded houses as disclosed by the 1916 returns has increased or not, they indicate that on the average the position has slightly improved even in the boroughs.

We have ascertained that during the twelve months ending November, 1920, 4,997—or, roughly, 5,000—houses had been or were being built in the various cities, boroughs, and town districts of the Dominion, in addition to which many improvements and additions were made to existing dwellings. No reliable information is obtainable as to the number built in the country or rural districts; no doubt the shortage in these does not exist to any great extent, but it would be reasonable to assume that in all at least 6,000 houses were built throughout the Dominion during that year. After allowing for fires and demolitions (estimated by experts at about 1,330 per annum), there should be a net increase of 4,670 houses during the year.

The increase in the population of New Zealand during the same period was 30,000, for whom, at 1½ persons per room, about 4,000 five-roomed houses would be required. It would appear, therefore, that the number of overcrowded houses is not quite so great as it was in 1916.

It might be added that the census tables for this year show that there were at the time of the census 2,046 houses in course of erection in New Zealand, of which 1,308 were in the cities and boroughs, while at the time of the 1916 census there were only 685 and 466 respectively, showing considerably increased activity in 1921.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The annual inspection of workers' dwellings already erected again shows that the houses are well cared for, and that, with few exceptions, the occupants take a pride in their properties and spend a great deal of time and labour in making improvements, thus adding considerably to the value of the dwellings. The painting of the houses, which had been in many cases postponed on account of the high cost of materials and labour, was carried out during the year, in most instances by the occupants themselves, but where necessary the Department assisted by advancing the cost of materials to the occupants—the amount to be repaid by instalments.

RETURNS.

(a), (b), and (c) made pursuant to Section 35 of the Act.

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

1920-21.		£	s.	d.
Amount expended in acquiring land and dwellings already erected		41,621	5	2
Amount expended in preparing land for dwellings		1,076	10	1
Amount expended in erecting dwellings		222,976	5	9
		£265,674	1	0

Amount expended in administration and in fire insurance, rates, &c., was £22,276 6s. 3d. The net expenditure for administration expenses for the year was £13,825 11s. 6d. These expenses were, of course, incurred not only in the erection of the 159 dwellings completed during the year, but also in connection with (a) some 320 that were about half finished on the 31st March, (b) inspections, collection of instalments, &c., of 695 dwellings built in previous years for which the purchase had not been completed by the occupants, and (c) preparing "layouts" of new settlements, investigating