

PART II. HOUSING ACCOUNT

In terms of the Housing Act, 1919, and amendments thereto it is the responsibility of the Corporation to administer various phases of the Government's activities in the field of housing, both in rural and urban districts.

RURAL HOUSING

The Rural Housing Act, 1939, enables the Corporation to make advances from the Housing Account to local authorities who desire to make loans to eligible farmers within the area controlled by the authority, and the Corporation is also responsible to some extent for the supervision of the operations under this Act. It is unfortunate that during the war years, owing to the shortage of labour and materials and the rising cost of building, there has been little progress made under the Act, but it is hoped that as the conditions in the building trade improve there will be a revival of interest.

Loans are made to local authorities bearing interest at 3 per cent. and repayable on the amortization system over terms of up to twenty-five years. The local authorities are then in a position to make loans to farmer applicants bearing interest at the rate of 3½ per cent., and such loans are usually repayable over a term similar to that on which the local authority has borrowed. The loan made to the farmer by the Council is secured by a statutory land charge.

During the war, arising out of the need for maintaining or increasing production, there have been several schemes for assisting farmers in the provision of housing required for the purpose of accommodating additional workers, and the Corporation has been associated with other Departments in arranging for the consideration of applications, the granting of loans, the allocation of temporary housing units made available for the purpose, and all incidental administration work arising therefrom. The financing of these schemes has, however, been arranged on an agency basis, the necessary funds being provided through the Treasury.

There is provision under the Housing Act for the granting of loans to employers, and this has provided an avenue of assistance for such branches of the industry as dairy companies and limeworks. Although some applications have recently been dealt with under this section, the volume of business has been adversely affected by difficult conditions in the building trade in the same way as has been the case with housing generally.

URBAN HOUSING

In the cities and towns throughout the Dominion there has been a continuing demand for tenancies of State houses, and it is in this phase of the Government's housing schemes that the Corporation's administration has been particularly active. Houses and shops are erected under the direction of the Housing Construction Department, and when these buildings are ready for occupation the control of the assets passes to the Corporation. The number of houses and shops built is, under existing conditions, limited by the amount of labour and material available, but in its planning of the various housing schemes throughout the Dominion the Housing Construction Department is guided largely by the volume of applications that have been received by the Corporation, and for this reason applications are classified according to location and to the size and type of house suited to the families concerned. The Housing Construction Department is regularly supplied with comprehensive reports showing the extent of the unsatisfied demand in the various localities, and as the result of discussions between the two organizations the programme for the future is developed.

An examination of recently prepared statistics discloses that the demand for additional houses is well spread throughout the Dominion, and even the smallest of communities appears to have a housing problem. The claims of all localities are given careful consideration in arranging the building programme.