

A similar position arises among contractors, who are unwilling to take country work due to the volume of other work available in the more closely settled centres, to which large numbers of skilled artisans migrated during the war years. Among seasonal workers there are many excellent tradesmen whose services are unfortunately not available regularly throughout the year. This fact further handicaps consistent progress and proves an unreliable source of labour.

Under these conditions a long-range plan, with particular reference to apprenticeship orders, is being adopted whereby more attention will be given to the employment and trade training of Maori youths under qualified working instructors. This plan should assist in the economic advancement of the Maori in the industrial field.

The number of building teams now operating is 58, as against 30 teams operating last March, while the number of workers engaged on housing construction total 198.

As an aid to the trade training of Maoris in addition to meeting the requirements of the housing programme locally, proposals are in hand for the establishment of the joinery workshop and general works depot at Rotorua. This will be the first of several to be erected in key districts for the purpose of extending training and works facilities in connection with the constructional and maintenance activities of the Department.

Constant attention is being given to improving the standard of Maori housing by providing those amenities necessary to safeguarding the welfare and health of the people. The standard of houses now being provided is in conformity with the New Zealand Standard Code of Building By-laws. One of the greatest problems, however, is that of bringing the costs of satisfactory housing standards within the financial means of applicants with large families. Taken generally, the economic status of the Maori restricts the degree to which modern housing standards can be adopted, and accordingly housing standards have to be modified to provide the bare minimum of accommodation and amenities consistent only with health requirements. Unless some form of assistance can be guaranteed to bridge the gap between the costs of such housing and the financial ability of the large family groups, endeavours to provide adequate housing standards will be handicapped. This matter is receiving constant attention with a view to arriving at a satisfactory solution.

One pleasing feature of housing operations is the widespread interest being created among Maoris, who are developing a house consciousness to a high degree and the will to effect savings for such purposes. This is particularly noticeable in the commendable manner in which the majority of owners are reacting in their care and use of the homes already provided.

With the recent appointment of an architect, the establishment of a complete plan service scheme for housing is now in hand. This service will provide a wide range of designs suitable for rural and urban communities and the varying needs of housing applicants.

The trend of industrial development, with its large demands on labour, is presenting an ever-increasing housing problem by the large numbers of Maoris migrating to the industrial centres for factory employment. Similarly, Maoris are being absorbed more and more into commercial, clerical, and professional employment in the cities and townships, where they hold no land interests, a basic requirement for housing advances. The Department has fully investigated this aspect of housing on a rental basis and submitted recommendations which are now being considered by the Government.

The need for the maintenance and improvement of existing securities has been fully recognized by the Department for some time, and now that the housing organization and the staffing position has developed to a stage where