

Summary of Votes Under the Control of the Ministry of Works and Proposed Ways and Means of Raising the Necessary Funds, Year Ending 31st March, 1950

Vote.	Public Works Account (Loans.)	Consolidated Fund.	Total.
	£	£	£
Railway Construction	375,000	..	375,000
Housing Construction	9,250,000	..	9,250,000
Public Buildings	1,040,000	10,000	1,050,000
Lighthouses and Harbour-works	65,000	..	65,000
Roads, &c.	475,000	..	475,000
Soil Conservation and Rivers Control	475,000	5,000	480,000
Irrigation, Water-supply, and Drainage	300,000	..	300,000
Highways Construction	2,500,000	..	2,500,000
Highways Maintenance	4,533,430	4,533,430
Maintenance of Public Works and Services	7,864,380	7,864,380
	14,480,000	12,412,810	26,892,810

It is estimated that a sum of £5,258,000 will be recovered on account of vote "Maintenance of Public Works and Services" and £260,000 on account of vote "Highways Maintenance" for the year ending 31st March, 1950.

HOUSING

The Government has continued and will continue its policy of giving priority to housing, and its efforts in this direction, together with its policy of building control, have resulted in a record number of houses being completed during the year ended 31st March, 1949. The official figures for State rental, departmental, and Maori housing were 3,414, 1,010, and 337 respectively, making a total of 4,761. Data concerning private housing has been more difficult to obtain. However, according to returns furnished by the Power Supply Authorities at the request of the Building Controller, the total number of new dwelling units completed during the year, including both Government and private, is more than 16,000, an increase of nearly 3,300 houses, or 26 per cent., over the previous year.

This is a most creditable performance, and I wish to thank all those in the building and associated industries, including the 2,071 rehabilitation trainees employed by the Housing Division, who have contributed to this record achievement.

Although the past year has seen another record set for house-building, the demand for certain materials continues to exceed supply and attention is constantly being given to the use of satisfactory substitutes. *Pinus insignis* timber has alleviated the shortage of framing timber, but its use for weatherboard framing has not proved entirely successful as a satisfactory protective paint is not available. Tests are being continued in an effort to overcome this problem.

A contract was let for two experimental sun-dried brick houses, but the labour cost has proved heavy and it is unlikely that this method of construction will be adopted to any great extent. Everything possible is being done to speed up the erection of