

rural houses and farm buildings for the settlement of ex-servicemen and timber-workers, but difficulties still exist due to the reluctance of contractors to take work in country districts.

The prefabricated house imported from Sweden has proved satisfactory for New Zealand conditions, but as an economic proposition the use of such houses cannot be recommended. Further investigations of the prefabricated method of construction are being continued and have been the subject of a report from the Commissioner of Works following his visit overseas.

To provide facilities to State tenants comparable to those available in established residential areas, blocks of shops were opened for business in several localities. Contracts have been let for others, and plans are being prepared for still more.

Plans for 2 blocks of pensioners' flats, 1 nine-unit and 1 thirty-six unit, both in Auckland, have been prepared, and the Government hopes soon to have the erection of these buildings under way. These flats will be of the one-bedroom type and every consideration has been given to the comfort of the tenants. Sites for this purpose are held in a number of the larger towns and a number of building schemes for the housing of elderly people will be undertaken during the coming year.

Additional land in 62 towns, enough to provide 3,816 State rental houses, was acquired. To assist ex-servicemen desiring to build their own homes, 54 building sections were made available to the Lands and Survey Department, which completes the sale on behalf of the Government.

Detailed scheme plans covering over 10,000 units in various localities have been completed or are nearing completion. The operations of the Housing Construction Division for the year ended 31st March, 1949, are fully recorded by the Director of Housing Construction in his annual report (Appendix G).

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Continuance of the Government's policy of according highest priority to housing construction has again necessitated a sacrifice of other building-works, but of necessity urgency has been accorded to education buildings and hospitals. In other categories, such as post-offices, telephone-exchange buildings, police buildings, departmental offices, &c., only work of the utmost urgency has been undertaken. The Government realizes, however, that the time is approaching when the erection of many of these buildings will have to proceed, and it is hoped, with gradual improvement in the supply of both labour and materials, that it will not be long before some of those for which the need is most pressing will be put in hand. At present, however, the building programme must continue to receive careful study to ensure that limited available resources are used to the very best advantage and to avoid commencing any projects which might later be delayed through lack of supplies.

There is still considerable leeway to be made up in the construction of school buildings, and the programme here will have to be accelerated if the expected demand for accommodation due to increasing attendance rolls is to be met. During the year much has been done, but still more will be required in the next few years. The position is being carefully watched and everything possible will be done to ensure that the necessary buildings are available in time. Among the many education buildings completed during the year, those worthy of mention were the domestic science block at King Edward Technical College, Dunedin, and the assembly hall at Pasadena Intermediate School. The new Southland Technical College building is under construction, but has been retarded through lack of materials.