

The value of permits issued for housing and housing additions—viz., £28,202,603—represents 71·3 per cent. of the value of all permits authorized.

The total value of works completed during 1948-49 covered by permits and assessed on permit values amounted to £39 millions. The value of deferred applications has increased from £11·2 millions to £14·9 millions.

In keeping with Government policy to remove restrictions on building construction as soon as circumstances permit, building control policy was kept under constant review during the year. A measure of relaxation and decentralization was made effective from December last, delegating local bodies wider powers to authorize permits of various classes without reference to District Building Controllers. Additional authority was issued to District Building Controllers to authorize works without Head Office approval, thereby speeding up the procedure in dealing with applications. During the coming year further reviews will be carried out, with particular reference to outstanding applications which have been deferred.

CONTRACTS

The following statement shows the number and value of contracts let during the year by the respective Tenders Boards:—

	Buildings (Includes Alterations, &c.).		Engineering.		Total.	
	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.
District Tenders Board—		£		£		£
Auckland	45	66,731	45	101,868	90	168,599
Hamilton	26	21,997	32	42,801	58	64,798
Napier	15	10,854	27	52,546	42	63,400
Wanganui	28	43,180	12	21,780	40	64,960
Wellington	103	85,660	39	55,786	142	141,446
Christchurch	50	67,657	41	78,134	91	145,791
Dunedin	48	47,535	35	48,870	83	96,405
Totals for district Boards	315	343,614	231	401,785	546	745,399
Tenders Board, Head Office ..	38	767,201	61	1,382,819	99	2,150,020
Grand totals ..	353	1,110,815	292	1,784,604	645	2,895,419

During the year, tendering has shown a tendency towards keener competition, particularly for civil engineering works.

HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

In Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and such parts of Europe as I visited a very serious housing shortage exists, and in every case this was receiving the urgent attention of the Government concerned. The methods by which this shortage was being overtaken varied from one country to another, but in all cases considerable Government assistance was supplied.

In Great Britain the responsibility for housing is vested in the local authorities. The proposals of these authorities carry a substantial Government subsidy, but, in part at least, are also financed from the rates. The responsibility for selecting tenants remains with the local authority. Control was very restrictive, and while local authorities were permitted to issue one permit for every three subsidized houses built, in effect little private building was being done.