

cost them anything. Where there is direct local responsibility there is likely to be greater care and consideration as to what should be done.

Housing

It is the policy of the Government to assist people to get homes of their own. State housing activities will continue, but every encouragement will be given to an expansion of private building. For this purpose building sections are being offered for sale, and a "suspensory" loan of 10 per cent. of the cost of a house, with a maximum of £200, is offered, the loan to be cancelled if the house is held by the owner for seven years. Existing State houses are also being offered for sale to occupiers on attractive terms, and during the first ten days after publication of the details of the scheme 858 applications for purchase were made by State tenants. In addition, there were over three thousand preliminary inquiries by tenants during this period, thus indicating the popularity of the new policy.

The Government has a comprehensive building programme covering both State rental houses and those for Government Departments. These latter are for accommodation away from the towns for the staffs of the Armed Services and State Hydro-electric Department, for example, and also for the settlement of ex-servicemen, both European and Maori. This year altogether £12,450,000 will be provided for housing construction, and 5,260 units are estimated to be completed. These figures compare with total expenditure of £11,380,000 and 4,405 units completed last year. The Maori housing programme is included here for both years.

To meet the urgent needs of people now living in caravans and tents and other unsatisfactory types of accommodation the Minister of Works has in hand a scheme for constructing in the four main centres temporary blocks of flats equipped with proper amenities. Blocks containing fifty flats will be erected in each centre as soon as possible. If necessary the scheme will later be extended to other centres.

Additional rural housing is being given high priority by the Government because adequate accommodation of this nature in most districts means so much towards increasing the labour force in our primary industries. A survey of requirements is being undertaken, and funds will be made available so that building contracts can be let this year.