

miles from Wellington's centre, runs variously from £4 to £8 per foot of frontage, and anything cheaper than this is either situated on an unroaded hilltop or remote from the tramway system. However, with the increased facilities of transit which may be brought about through the completion of the Railway Department's duplication works both at Wellington and Dunedin, suitable suburban lands at reasonable rates may be secured. It will be noted from return B attached to this report that there is a fairly large area of land available both at Petone and Lower Hutt, comprising some 1,142 sections. The drawback at present is, as you are aware, the distance these sections are from the railway-station; but, as I have remarked, on the completion of the duplication works this difficulty will be largely overcome, in that the time taken by the present train service will be reduced by one-half. Most of the occupants of the Petone houses work at Petone, but it is hoped that with a quick train service many of the workers of Wellington will find it cheaper to live at Petone or the Lower Hutt. The fact that there were sixty-eight applicants for the last eight cottages erected at Seddon Terrace proves most conclusively that there is a very real demand for dwellings in the Wellington district. The twelve houses erected at Coromandel Street and Seddon Terrace are in many respects superior to any that have previously been erected, inasmuch as they contain wardrobes and linen-cupboards, and are fitted up with the hot-water service. The illustrations and ground-plans shown at the end of this report give a general idea of the finished houses. Eleven houses are in course of erection at Sydenham (Christchurch) and three at Petone. Plans are also in course of preparation for twelve new dwellings on the Lawry Settlement, Ellerslie, Auckland, and are expected to be ready by the end of June next. The supervision, architectural and clerical work in connection with these dwellings has been carried out by the staff of the Labour Department, and each house now erected has to bear its proportion of the expenses and salaries of the officers concerned. The street-formation works are under the control of the Roads Department.

INTERNATIONAL HOUSING CONGRESS, LONDON.

In August of last year an International Housing Congress was held in London, and was attended by representatives from the Governments of Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, Belgium, France, Holland, Sweden, South Australia. The Hon. W. P. Reeves attended the Conference on behalf of the New Zealand Government. By your instructions a special pamphlet was printed for presentation to delegates attending this Conference. This booklet outlined the provisions of the Workers' Dwellings Act and the Advances to Workers Act; in addition it gave some photo reproductions showing the class of dwellings erected in the chief centres of the Dominion, and particulars concerning the rents.

The work of the Congress covered so much ground that it would be rather difficult to condense the papers dealt with, in this report, but, as you are aware, a complete list of the papers read have been secured by the Department, and I propose to ask you to lay these on the table of both Houses of the Legislature for the information of members who may be interested in the subject. In addition to the papers themselves, the High Commissioner has also collected other literature bearing on the question, and this, I suggest, should accompany the papers to be laid on the table.

From the report supplied I have gathered the following information, which may be of interest:—

The municipalities in England have built 30 lodginghouses; 12,165 block dwellings, with 27,523 rooms; 2,507 tenement houses, with 6,068 rooms; 2,004 cottage flats, with 5,747 rooms; 3,830 cottages, with 17,611 rooms: or a total of 20,506 dwellings, with 56,949 rooms.

In addition to municipal enterprise in this direction, ten philanthropic societies had built dwellings for 125,000 persons in London, while six lodginghouses, accommodating 5,162 persons, had been built by "Rowton Houses" alone. Co-operative societies to the number of 413 had built 46,707 houses at a cost of £9,603,438. Of these, 20 per cent. were owned by the societies and let to tenants. The co-partnership housing societies, one of the most admirable forms of private enterprise, corresponding as nearly as might be to the societies of public utility on the Continent, had quite recently provided about 400 houses at a cost of about £100,000; while the Garden City had been steadily developing at Letchworth, and three cottage exhibitions run by private enterprise were in full swing during last year—two of them at Newcastle and Sheffield on municipal land, and the other at Garden City.

There were, in addition, some 2,000 building societies (which were not building but loan societies), with over 600,000 members, who had advanced on mortgage about £10,000,000 in one year, and had total assets of £66,000,000. Finally, there were the remarkable model villages of Bournville (Cadbury's), Earswick, and Port Sunlight.

The delegate from Belgium gave an interesting address as to the cheap transit provided by the State railways. On these railways no less than one-quarter of the working-class travels to and from their work. The fares are remarkably low; a double journey each day of twenty miles costs 1s. 6d. per week, or 2s. a week for 44 miles, and 2s. 6d. a week for 66 miles. These cheap fares have not only stopped the depopulation of the rural districts and the congestion of the towns, but they have afforded the worker facilities to acquire dwellings and plots of ground in healthy localities far removed from their work.

A tabulated statement (marked A) showing in a detailed form the locality, number of section, trade or occupation of tenant, area of land and frontage, value of section, and the number of rooms, is given in the report. I also attach a further return (marked B) showing localities and areas of lands set apart under the Land for Settlements Act, but not yet proclaimed under the Workers' Dwellings Act, which are available when required for the purposes of erecting dwellings for workers. A return (marked C) is also given showing the moneys expended in acquiring land; in preparing it