

for dwellings; in erecting same out of Land for Settlements funds and upon Crown lands; also the total number of dwellings erected and leased to 31st March last, and total rent due.

A largely increased vote is asked for to enable the Department to extend the operations of the Act commensurate with the demand for these dwellings.

In closing this report I have to express my appreciation of the very valuable assistance I have received from the Wellington Crown Lands Commissioner (Mr. J. Strauchan). I am pleased to note that his services will still be available on the Advisory Board at Auckland, where he is shortly to be transferred.

I also have to express my sincere regret at the projected retirement of Mr. J. E. March, who, in addition to his duties as Inspector and Supervisor under his own Department, has rendered efficient service on the Wellington Advisory Board. I have always found him ready to assist in every possible way to make the workers' dwelling scheme a thorough success.

I append statement and suggestions made by the Architect for Workers' Dwellings (Mr. Woburn Temple).

I have, &c.,

J. LOMAS,

Chief Advisory Officer, Wellington.

The Hon. the Minister of Labour.

#### STATEMENT FROM ARCHITECT FOR WORKERS' DWELLINGS.

Two experiments were made this year in order to bring the cost of erection (on which the rents are of course dependent) down to the lowest possible level without sacrificing in any way the standard established by the Department—(1) by carrying out the work by day labour instead of by contract, (2) by erecting two of the houses in concrete (solid 9 in. concrete, external walls and foundations) instead of wood. The result of the experiment of day labour has shown that the work can be done for about 10 per cent. less than by contract, and there is the additional advantage that the material obtained can be relied upon as being of better quality; while in the case of the use of concrete the cost (for the two four-roomed houses) is only £20 to £25 more than wood, notwithstanding the fact that the material for the concrete costs nearly double that similarly used at Petone at the present time. I fully expect, therefore, to be able to report next year that concrete is as cheap as wood, besides being much more durable, warmer, and costing very little for maintenance and fire insurance. No doubt a large item in the cost of wooden residences is the abnormal price of timber and other materials during the last two or three years, and the experiments being made will, if the results expected are satisfactorily established, enable the Department to further reduce the cost of rent and at the same time to offer more valuable dwellings.

There appears to be some diversity of opinion as to the style of dwelling most in favour amongst the class of persons coming under the Act, and in this connection I would suggest the following classification which should, I think, meet all requirements:—

*Class A.*—Six-roomed houses: one large living-room, one medium-sized sitting-room (which could be used as an extra bedroom), four bedrooms, separate kitchen-scutlery, wash-house, bathroom, and other conveniences.

*Class B.*—Five-roomed houses: one large living-room, one medium-sized sitting-room, three bedrooms, scullery, wash-house, bathroom, and other conveniences; range to be placed where required, either by making scullery into a kitchen-scutlery or placing it in the living-room. This latter, however, is not recommended.

*Class C.*—Five-roomed houses: one large living-room, one medium-sized kitchen and scullery combined, three bedrooms, wash-house, bath-room, and other conveniences.

*Class D.*—Four-roomed houses, containing one large living and sitting room combined, one medium-sized kitchen and scullery combined, two bedrooms, wash-house, bathroom, and other conveniences.

*Class E.*—Four-roomed houses, containing one fair-sized living-room, two bedrooms, one medium-sized sitting or extra bedroom, with kitchen-scutlery, wash-house, bathroom, and other conveniences.

The most useful class of house, judging by the number of applications for dwellings of this type, appears to me to be one that would come under Class B—viz., an ordinary one-story five-roomed detached house.

For these houses the rent would range from about 11s. 6d. to 16s. 6d., inclusive of rates, insurance, &c., but the rents must necessarily depend on the cost of labour, materials, &c., at the time of erection, and also on the locality, as, of course, the cost of land in Wellington is considerably higher than elsewhere. For example, the sections in Coromandel Street, Wellington, were valued at an average of about £245 each. This makes a rental of £12 5s. per year, or nearly 5s. per week rent for land alone.

The question has also been raised as to whether concrete should not be substituted for wood piles. I consider that concrete would eventually be found to be cheaper than wood, and it is generally supposed to be more durable, but I am of the opinion that wood is more suitable as being a better means of fixing in the event of earthquakes, &c., in addition to the fact that if the right kind of timber is used, the piles are as durable as concrete.