

At Nelson Park three large mess-rooms, staff mess-rooms, hot-water service, and sanitary accommodation were provided, and sanitary accommodation was also provided at Clive Square.

On the 3rd March instructions were received regarding the effecting of minimum repairs necessary to make private dwellings habitable, to the extent of reconditioning one chimney, permanently repairing the roof, and putting drains and sanitary fittings in good order. Owing to the absence of householders, the greatest difficulty was found in properly organizing this service. However, under the circumstances, good progress was made. It soon became apparent the work involved in reconstructing the drains at private houses was so extensive that operations were discontinued, and this work was left to be dealt with under the £100-loan scheme.

The work done in the way of restoration of private dwellings is summarized as follows :—

In the Napier Borough chimneys have been erected in 954 houses where roofs have also been permanently repaired and sanitary fittings put in order.

In the Hawke's Bay County chimneys have been repaired, water-supply restored, and minor repairs effected in 367 houses, the operations extending to Taradale, Puketapu, Greenmeadows, Meeanee, Clive, Haumoana, Tukituki, Pakowhai, and Mangateretere districts.

The greatest number of men employed at any one time in the work of chimney re-erection was 200. A good deal of difficulty was experienced in obtaining suitable labour, as the local reputable bricklaying contractors were employed on private work.

It was found possible to let the plumbing-work, to a considerable extent, in batches of houses, as petty contracts.

Cost of repairs to houses in the Napier Borough has averaged about £15 per house, and corresponding work in the county districts has averaged £22.

STAFF.

The staff of the Public Works Department is now almost as large as at any time in its history, although relatively to the expenditure and the number of employees it is less in proportion than it was ten years ago. It is apparent that a substantial reduction in the amount of loan-money which will be available for expenditure will necessitate a reduction of the staff. Already a very substantial decrease in numbers has been effected. I desire to say that the various officers have carried out their duties in a commendable manner, often under conditions which were calculated to test their capacity.

As appendices to this Statement honourable members will find full details of the principal works carried out by the Department, together with reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, the Chief Electrical Engineer, the Government Architect, and the Main Highways Board.