

Of the 119 local authorities affected by the Act referred to, 105 have furnished the necessary returns. An analysis has already been made of 90 of these returns, and the following brief summary indicates the results:—

Total population of the 90 towns in question ..	655,829
Number of dwellings	163,429
Number of buildings used as dwellings which are unsatisfactory but reparable	21,697
Number of buildings totally unsatisfactory	3,653
Number of dwelling units in which equipment is only partly satisfactory	16,174
Number of dwelling units in which the equipment is totally unsatisfactory	13,891
Number of houses at present providing accommodation below the minimum standard	20,260
Number of surplus persons accommodated in these houses	50,686

The Government had already anticipated the seriousness of the position and a Housing Construction Department was set up towards the end of 1936 with a view to proceeding as quickly as possible with the erection of houses throughout the Dominion for purposes of letting. Adequate provision was also made through the State Advances Corporation for mortgage funds on the table principle and at low rates of interest for those who desired to own their own homes.

**Housing
Construction
Department.**

The first contracts for the erection of houses were accepted in March, 1937, and since that date great progress has been achieved.

**Housing
contracts.**

To date tenders have been called for 4,711 houses in 79 different towns.

Contracts have been actually let for 3,748 houses in 70 different towns.

The average number of houses in each contract is 5.

One hundred and eighty different contracting firms are carrying out work for the Department.

Over 1,000 houses have been completed, and within four and one-half months it is estimated that a further 1,000 will be handed over for occupation.

The total number of houses actually commenced by contractors from March, 1937, to date is over 2,800, and 5,000 persons are directly engaged on the work.

Houses have already been completed in the following twenty-eight towns:—

Whangarei, Auckland, Otahuhu, Hamilton, Thames, Te Aroha, Tauranga, Whakatane, New Plymouth, Hawera, Wanganui, Marton, Feilding, Palmerston North, Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Masterton, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Johnsonville, Westport, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Invercargill.

Houses are under way in the following additional thirty-nine towns:—

Dargaville, Devonport, Mount Albert, Mount Roskill, One Tree Hill, Pukekohe, Ngaruawahia, Cambridge, Matamata, Morrinsville, Paeroa, Te Awamutu, Rotorua, Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Wairoa, Waipukurau, Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Carterton, Stratford, Eltham, Patea, Taihape, Levin, Blenheim, Nelson, Greymouth, Hokitika, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Riccarton, Lincoln, Lyttelton, Waimate, Temuka, Mosgiel, Balclutha, Gore.

It was realized at the commencement that the progress of the Housing Scheme would depend very largely on the availability of skilled labour. The operations of the Department are, at the moment, being seriously delayed on account of this factor. The average number of artisans employed by the contractors on each house that is under actual construction is only 1.8. This figure explains the long period required by many builders to finish their contracts.