

to nationalise this industry has not been taken up by politicians regardless of party. Rail transport is a national industry, and belongs to the State. Hydro-electric power is regarded as an industry which must be controlled by the State. Why not coal-power? The nationalisation of coal mines would not do away at a stroke with labour troubles, for the men would still have to bargain for successive improvements in wages and possibly conditions. At present, they would be satisfied with the working conditions obtaining in the State mines, but the wages are not satisfactory, as they follow the scale of private mines. State control does not do away with labour difficulties, but State control, allied with some form of joint management by the men's representatives and profit-sharing would bring about a greatly needed improvement in industrial relations. We know that it is not a part of the present Government's policy to nationalise the Dominion's coal mines, but in view of the fact that a majority of the voters at last election cast their votes for candidates who favoured this experiment, the Prime Minister—who made his appeal on national and not party lines—might well take up the mandate, though it was not effectively presented owing to the split voting.

#### Housing Schemes.

Two months ago we criticised the Government for imagining that it could obtain the services of a properly equipped architect to conduct its housing scheme for £800 per annum. Nobody suitable would apply at the price, and the salary was increased to £1,000 per annum, at which figure Mr P. H. Graham, F.N.Z.I.A., Lic. R.I.B.A., of Gisborne, has been appointed. His official title is Architect and Housing Expert. He will be the chief officer under the Housing Board, and will superintend the housing schemes which were formerly carried out by the Labour Department's officers. This Department will still be concerned in the work, but Mr Graham's appointment will enable the Housing Board to carry out a vigorous policy under capable practical direction. A special housing branch of the Department has been established in its own offices and it already has in hand the erection of 181 dwellings, of which 117 are in the Wellington district. This shows that the Government is anxious to deal with the problem in a practical way, and we hope to see more developments when Mr Graham gets into his stride. It looks as if the Railway Department will make it a neck and neck race with the Housing Board as to the number of dwellings it will build in the hope of easing the shortage. The railways have been actually put to serious inconvenience through the men declining to transfer, even on promotion, owing to the difficulty in getting houses, and the fact that transfer often involves a loss through having to pay a higher rent in the new location. The site of the proposed central joinery factory for quantity production of joinery for rail-

way houses is Frankton Junction, which is centrally situated for distribution, and is easily reached by rail from Mamaku, where the Department's principal sawmill is established. About 13 acres of land at Kaiwarra, near Wellington has been bought by the Department for development on town planning lines as a railwaymen's settlement. We wish the experiment every success, and believe that it will turn out to be a good investment, as it can easily pay its way, and will give the Department the additional advantage of easing off its troubles in regard to obtaining men for work on the railways in the vicinity of the dearest housing centre of the Dominion. There is only one doubt we have about the railway scheme, and that is over the erection of the central joinery factory. If the railwaymen have to wait for this before a start can be made with the whole scheme, nothing practical will be possible for probably a year. Surely, if timber can be supplied to New Zealand firms by the Department, there are organisations already in existence in the Dominion which could turn out the joinery quickly and at reasonable rates. Or, as an alternative, the Department could import American joinery, when it would secure the advantage over the ordinary trader of being able to get its goods through the Customs duty free. Houses are so scarce that anything which makes for expedition is worth considering.

#### A Worked-out Experiment—and the Future.

New Zealand was once known as a country without strikes, and this phrase was actually used by one enthusiastic writer who described the success of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. But alas, this legislation has served its turn, and is being discarded for more militant activities by the workers. The Dominion secured an era of industrial peace by its great experiment in arbitration, and the question now arises, will it make a further courageous step towards State control of coal mines, with the workers participation in the management and profits? In our opinion, there is a strict limit to the possibilities of communistic effort, but where national essential industries are concerned, the case for nationalisation is clear, and the opportunity of the Government is right to its hand. We notice a development of this theory with the New Zealand railway employees, the organisation representing nearly nine thousand of the out-door workers having placed before the official inquiry into wages and working conditions a request for a share in the management. This indicates that State ownership alone does not make for complete harmony in industrial relations. The same demand is being made by the English railwaymen. Thus the movement is widespread, and New Zealand, with its two big opportunities for the experiment, its mines and railways, may again come into the leadership of the world in economic development.