



The houses in the Te Horo District — the first to be built in Northland under the Housing Corporation's rural rental housing scheme.

Houses for the return home

Forestry is a major factor in the re-birth of a legendary valley in Northland.

The operations of N.Z. Forest Products Limited in the Piiwai Valley west of Whangarei are providing jobs for an increasing number in the Te Horo district. With permanent employment has come new houses for some of the younger people wanting to return to their "home valley".

At an official opening of the first four new houses built by the Housing Corporation, a spokesman for the Piiwai Housing Trust, Mr John Davis, said the houses were the fulfilment of a dream which began about 22 years ago.

The houses are the first to be built in Northland under the housing Corporation's rural rental housing scheme — a "rent-to-own" programme.

The Minister of Housing, Mr Friedlander, in a speech read on his behalf by the MP for Whangarei, John Banks, congratulated the Piiwai Housing Trust for its initiative and for the pride and concern the people had shown towards their own community needs.

The Minister said in his speech that it was recognised that many people did not wish to live in an urban environment.

"It is important to be able to offer individuals the opportunity to live in rural areas where they may have strong family ties or where they are able to find the type of employment opportunities they seek", Mr Banks said for the Minister.

The role of forestry in providing job opportunities was endorsed by Mr

Banks after his speech.

He said forestry was labour-intensive and gave job opportunities in remote pockets of Northland where Maori people lived and to which young Maori Northlanders were returning.

Mr Banks said that forestry would be the most important industry earner in Northland in the long term. "I am delighted with the work of NZFP here," he added.

John Davis, who is a contractor working for NZFP and employing local people, said the company had created work in the area which meant people no longer had to move away.

Mr Davis and a gang of up to 10 have been working at NZFP's Maromaku

block nearby and on other land holdings further to the west. Two of his staff and their families were the first tenants in the new houses.

NZFP's district forest officer, Whangarei, Rod Farrow, said the gang had worked exclusively for the company from the time that John Davis was referred to NZFP by the Labour Department.

"It's a fine example of community co-operation and NZFP has been the catalyst," Mr Farrow said.

Both Mr Farrow and NZFP Northland forest superintendent, Mr Denis Albert, were invited to attend the official opening of the houses and enjoy festivities afterwards.

John Davis (right) explains some of the colourful history of the Te Horo district to NZFP district forest officer, Whangarei, Rod Farrow (left) and NZFP Northland forest superintendent, Denis Albert.

