

It gave rise to the problems involved in obtaining prompt and regular deliveries of materials. Many delays under this heading occurred, which prevented the works being carried on with proper sequence and scheduling of operations. Delays in material deliveries with consequent confusion in maintaining adequate manpower on the job, forced construction during critical stages into winter conditions, which of course gave rise to further problems, such as the necessity of working under excessive mud conditions, supplying winter heat, and a general slowdown in operations. It was a condition precedent in the purchase of the various sites for these project developments that the land must be of good agricultural quality and this in turn created problems of drainage which could have easily been avoided if soil quality was a secondary consideration.

3. With regard to the genuineness of the complaints which have been made with respect to these houses, it is necessary to deal separately with them under the headings of construction and sale price.

Dealing first with construction, it is frankly admitted that many minor deficiencies were seen. At the same time it would be decidedly unfair to the Administration to assume that all these deficiencies were being ignored. These are all new houses, built under many trying conditions. As is the case with all new construction of this kind, time is required for the settling of back-fill against basement walls and for the shrinkage which occurs in building material which was not thoroughly dried. For the most part the veterans went into occupation of these homes during the late summer months and it was not until furnace heat was applied during winter months that this drying out process could commence. Meanwhile, it would be largely a waste of public funds to proceed with correction of construction of deficiencies until their real extent could be determined.

Construction deficiencies fall within the groupings of basement structures, interior finish, drainage and sewage disposal. Quality of concrete in basement walls is in my opinion excellent, but there is some defective concrete in basement floor slabs which will require replacement. I believe this is largely traceable to construction under winter conditions and to excessive water pressure until drainage is improved. In certain designs of houses additional beam supports are indicated and some minor alterations in the framing of joist structures close to brick chimneys. Sump pumps have been or are being installed in all cases where the need is indicated.

Interior finish varies in ratio to the extent of skilled mechanics employed, the quality of materials available and the degree of close supervision by the contractor of construction details. There are some poorly fitted doors or windows. There has been some rough work in the installation of high grade heating equipment. There is evidence here and there of some carelessness in the application of insulating material. There are some poorly finished hardwood floors, and in some cases in the Toronto area where the use of softwood flooring was ordered by the Timber Controller it will have to be replaced due to excessive shrinkage. There is some trim in these houses that was not sanded to a smooth finish. There has been some corner opening of gyproc wallboards caused by shrinkage of studding. In the province of British Columbia there are cases where wet plaster was used when gyproc board was not available and evidence was seen of unsatisfactory workmanship. To add to this difficulty it appears that lime used for a putty coat was taken from a cargo which has shown defects where used in housing projects other than the Veterans' Land Act.

Under the heading of drainage and sewage disposal it can be said that wet basements here and there will continue to occur until back-fills have settled and there is a general improvement in the drainage of the whole project concerned. All these works were not completed by freezeup last year. There are occasional septic tank installations which require correction. These defects are due to some faulty installations; some due to impervious clay conditions and others directly related to main project drainage.