

It was impossible during the time available to visit every project or to visit every home on each project which was visited. All that could be done and all that needed to be done to establish a general pattern as to the standards of construction carried out, was to view these projects which contain approximately 80 per cent of the total and to sample from ten to fifteen per cent of the homes on the projects visited. Fifty-five separate projects located in twenty-nine localities and comprising twenty-one hundred housing units were seen. Approximately two hundred and fifty individual units were subjected to detailed examination.

The houses inspected were chosen at random or where contact was made with the representatives of the veterans occupying these homes (which occurred in many instances) inspection was made of samples chosen by these representatives. It is important to note that this inspection was carried out during a season of the year when climatic severity would disclose structural defects which might not otherwise be readily apparent.

No attempt is made in this report to recite a mass of details, but to confine comment to general terms based on:—

1. The intent of the construction program;
2. A realistic appreciation of the difficulties inherent in a construction program of this magnitude;
3. The genuineness of the complaints which have been made with respect to these houses as to quality of construction and the sale prices quoted to the veterans in occupation;
4. The action which has been taken.
5. Recommendations.

Findings are as follows:—

1. The intent of the program was to more readily meet established demand by veterans interested in establishment on small holdings who would be rapidly demobilized after cessation of hostilities. The houses were to be of sound, durable construction and of good architectural design. To locate and purchase individual parcels of land, all serviced with water and roads, and to secure contractors to build individual units, would have been impossible within the time during which the need was paramount. Therefore, the purchases of comparatively large tracts of land sub-divided into small units and the adoption of more or less mass construction methods, was the only practical alternative to doing nothing under the heading of new construction so far as the Veterans' Land Act was concerned. This is borne out by the fact that during the calendar year 1946 no new project developments were undertaken by the Department, but 1,750 individual loans were approved for the purpose of home construction, only 224 of which were actually completed. This was due entirely to the difficulty confronting the Administration and veterans in obtaining individual units of land, firm bids from small contractors and the difficulty confronting the Administration, veterans and contractors alike in obtaining materials and labour required. The fact that the main program of 2,663 units extended over a considerably greater period of time than was originally estimated, does not detract from the force of what is stated above.

2. With regard to a realistic appreciation of difficulties, it is observed that these project developments, while for the most part located near the larger urban centres of Canada, are at some distance from municipal limits, thus giving rise to the problem of providing for a potable supply of water and sanitation to meet local and provincial health regulations. It also gave rise to the problem confronting contractors in securing the services of sufficient skilled workmen to carry out construction which involved travelling outside of urban limits while there was ample demand for their services nearer home. This led to the necessity of the Administration having to bear transportation costs and travelling time, which in some instances amounted to very substantial sums.