

My Ministers are giving close attention to land-development, and have under consideration proposals for the provision, and the preparation for closer settlement, of substantially increased areas of land. The policy of utilizing the Small Farms Board's organization to recondition and develop abandoned and deteriorated Crown leaseholds is producing excellent results, and, in order to provide winter employment for single men who depend on seasonal work during summer months, steps were recently taken considerably to extend this work, thus serving the dual purpose of creating a national asset and of providing productive work for men who would otherwise have to rely on sustenance during the winter months.

Special attention has been given by my Ministers to the administration of the legislation providing for the adjustment of mortgage indebtedness. Thirty-eight Adjustment Commissions have been engaged upon this work, and excellent progress is being made. In some districts the work is now completed; in others it is on the verge of completion, and my Ministers confidently expect that it will everywhere be substantially complete before the end of the present calendar year.

With the object of granting further assistance to the farmer in the efficient production of commodities of the highest quality, my Government have authorized a substantial increase in the instructional and advisory services of the Department of Agriculture. Plans have been completed for a national scheme of farm-dairy instruction, and this scheme will be in operation before the next milking season. It has been decided, also, with the object of decreasing live-stock losses in the Dominion, to increase that Department's activities on animal research. An elaborate programme of research into the cause of facial eczema in stock has been commenced under a committee of management which includes representative farmers, and another scheme of investigation has been inaugurated in connection with lamb-mortality in Canterbury. During the year concessions were extended to Southland farmers who had suffered from drought conditions in that province and who desired to send stock to other parts of the South Island or obtain supplementary fodder. Facilities were also provided for farmers on the East Coast of the North Island whose properties had been damaged by floods to obtain grass-seed and fencing material under most favourable terms. In addition, provision was made at a reasonable weekly wage for the employment, in the rehabilitation of their own flooded lands, of those farmers affected who desired it, and additional labour was provided as required.

My Ministers, aware of the inconvenience caused to the farming community and to all branches of industry and commerce during the past season through an inadequate supply of railway rolling-stock to meet the increased business offering, are carrying out a comprehensive plan of construction. The funds available for this purpose will be utilized in such a way as to afford relief to those industries most urgently in need of it, and to this end live-stock and general-goods wagons will absorb a substantial portion of the expenditure.

The results of housing surveys recently carried out by local authorities indicate undesirable conditions of overcrowding and inadequate sanitation in a number of towns. My Ministers are accordingly extending the operations of the Housing Construction Department as rapidly as possible. Tenders have been called for 4,250 houses in seventy-five towns, and 2,600 houses in sixty-seven towns are either completed or in course of construction. Progress is, however, delayed owing to a serious shortage of skilled labour.

My Advisers have devoted careful attention to the matter of educational policy, and a draft Bill, providing for the complete reorganization of the system, was laid before you during last session and has been receiving the consideration of the Education Committee. A special committee has reported on measures necessary to secure stability of staffing in the schools. Draft legislation for the establishment of a Council for Adult Education is now ready, and steps have been taken to accelerate the rebuilding of schools, with special attention to open-air conditions. The arrangements for the supply of free