

Section 3.—Statistics of Completed Construction

The Annual Survey of Dwelling Units Constructed in Canada.*—The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with various other Government agencies concerned, recently instituted an annual survey to ascertain the number of new houses and dwelling units being constructed in Canada, commencing with the year 1945. The data resulting from the survey will relate to the type of building, the general pattern or type of construction, and the locality, and also will show the number of new dwelling units created by the conversion or reconversion of existing buildings to provide additional housing.

Commencing with 1946, it is planned to have the statistics reported progressively as construction of the new houses, or dwelling units, is completed, so that current data on new housing construction may be available.

The Survey is an outgrowth of an informal inter-departmental Housing Statistics Committee formed in March, 1945, when the need for additional information by the various agencies of government concerned with housing problems was most urgent in view of the critical nature of the housing situation. At that time, it was found that there were no co-ordinated statistics available on the number of dwelling units built each year. The National Housing Administration and Wartime Housing Limited (see pp. 455 and 459) did compile figures relating to their respective jurisdictions, but these represented only a small percentage of total dwelling units completed. After examining various statistical methods of approach, the Committee recommended that nothing less than an actual count should be adopted: sampling and other methods of estimating were not suited to work of this kind, since construction of dwelling units showed a strong tendency to be concentrated not only in certain parts of the country and particularly urban sections but also in certain areas of those sections.

The Committee reported that municipalities were the most basic and potentially comprehensive sources of information because of their property-taxing interest and because they have experienced assessment organizations. When the Bureau of Statistics was requested to make the survey, the method instituted, therefore, was to have municipal authorities fill out a questionnaire for each housing unit completed in such a way that the data would be available as soon as possible after its completion. This method also lends itself to the extension of statistical work in the housing field to provide additional information to meet possible future requirements.

Figures from this survey for 1945, as shown in Table 7, provide a much needed measure of this type of construction and enable the problem of housing in Canada to be factually analysed. It should be clearly understood that the figures of the Annual Census of Construction below, are inclusive of the survey figures given in this table. The survey merely segregates the construction of houses and dwellings from the broader field. About 41,000 new dwelling units were completed between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1945, and, in addition, nearly 6,000 dwelling units were completed by conversion or reconversion. A comparison of the total number of dwelling units, exclusive of conversions, with the total number of new buildings, shows that there was an average of 1.32 dwelling units per building.

* More detailed information is contained in the Bulletin "Housing Statistics 1945—Dwelling Units, Types of Buildings and Types of Construction", published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Data as recorded in the 1941 Census *re* dwellings, households and families are given in the Population Chapter, pp. 119-126.