

Rentals and Shelter.—During 1945 the shortage of housing became an increasingly serious problem as returning veterans sought to set up households and as families that had been doubling up during the War looked for separate accommodation. While housing construction was on a scale comparable to that of the pre-depression years, it was hampered by shortages of building materials and labour and could only very gradually meet the large backlog of deficiencies left by the low level of construction in the depression and in some of the war years.

Eviction Control.—In these circumstances continued control over rentals was essential if drastic increases were to be prevented. Since the over-all ceiling on rentals was imposed, rent control has been associated with the protection of tenants against arbitrary eviction, and indeed, without such protection, maximum rentals could scarcely have been enforced. The eviction control regulations were tightened drastically in July, 1945. Previously the regulations had provided that a landlord wishing to secure possession of his property could do so in certain circumstances on giving the tenant six months' notice. The right of eviction on monthly or weekly tenancies was subject to the further provision that the tenant could not be evicted in the winter months, October to April. As the housing shortage intensified, rented dwellings were sold in increasing numbers for occupancy by the purchaser, who then gave the requisite notice to vacate to the tenant. The number of these notices mounted rapidly and by the early summer of 1945 the prospect of widespread evictions had created a serious social problem. In the City of Toronto alone, there were some 3,500 notices to vacate maturing in the three summer months, in Vancouver there were 1,100, in Winnipeg 700. Many of these notices had been served upon families or dependents of service men, a great number of whom were still overseas, and it was recognized that alternative accommodation for the many thousands of people involved simply did not exist. In this emergency situation, the Government instructed the Prices Board to extend the existing system of eviction control by imposing a complete "freeze" upon all leases covering housing accommodation. Accordingly, landlords of self-contained accommodation were prevented for an indefinite period from serving notices to vacate on well-behaved tenants. All such outstanding notices were suspended, and in such cases provision was made whereby the landlord could appeal to a Court of Rental Appeals, the decision on the appeal being based on an assessment of the relative burden of hardship involved.

This "freeze" did not apply to notices given where the landlord intended to subdivide the property so as to accommodate more people. Nor did it apply to a veteran wishing to return to his home which he owned before enlistment, or returning to accommodation owned by a member of his immediate family. For these latter cases special regulations were made enabling the veterans to recover the accommodation.

In the case of commercial accommodation, the end of the War and the needs of the reconversion period required certain relaxations in the eviction control regulations to ensure that these controls would not obstruct the expansion of peacetime business and employment. During 1945 a landlord of commercial accommodation requiring it for his own use had to give the tenant six months' notice, and could do so only if he himself had been forced to vacate accommodation in which he had been carrying on his business. To meet the requirements of the transition period a new code was put into effect in December defining various circumstances in which a landlord could recover possession of his property in the normal way. The