

COUNCIL TAKE OVER HOLMSLEY 'DROME

Nissen Hut Homes Available for 400 People

Ringwood Jumps In As Last W.A.A.F. Goes

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IT was learned this week that Christchurch Town Council have succeeded in securing the major portion of Holmesley South aerodrome for temporary housing purposes. This news will be welcomed by a large number of people in the Borough, particularly workers at Airspeeds Factory at Somerford, who recently set up a committee to ensure that every possible step was taken to see that the aerodrome buildings were not allowed to remain empty when vacated by the R.A.F.

When the Ministry of Works sanctioned the handing over of the camp to the local authority they did so on the understanding that the Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C. should be allowed to take over No. 2 W.A.A.F. site. This the Rural District Council have done with remarkable speed and they have already installed more than 15 families in the Nissen huts in spite of the fact that they only took over on Friday afternoon of last week.

While the Christchurch Council have not acted with quite so much speed—there are various reasons why they cannot do so—there is every reason to think that local families will be housed on the aerodrome in the very near future. The Ringwood Council had the advantage in taking over the W.A.A.F. quarters in so far as they were more readily adaptable for housing purposes than the men's quarters. It is understood that the latter will require certain alterations before they are suitable for occupation by different families.

In an interview with a Christchurch Times reporter, the Housing Officer for the Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C., Mr. Vere Myles, said "We have been watching this

aerodrome like a cat watches a mouse and we were determined to get in on it at the very first opportunity. The last W.A.A.F. moved out on Friday morning of last week and in the afternoon we had a caretaker in to see that no squatters took up residence there. We hope to house 29 families there and on Saturday night a dozen or more had already moved in."

HAND IN GLOVE WITH CHRISTCHURCH.

Mr. Myles said that the accommodation at Holmsley was far superior to that at Ibsley and was reasonably convenient to the people in Bransgore who were on the Council's housing list. "We have been working hand in glove with Christchurch over this matter and it is very gratifying to think that we have achieved some positive results," he said.

The huts have water and electricity laid on and the R.D.C. propose to install sinks in each one. They had also ordered 30 oil stoves and granted fuel permits to the families moving in. "We have exploited the taking over of disused service buildings to the utmost limit and at present we have 75 families in services huts of one kind or another," said Mr. Myles, who added that the R.D.C. as a housing authority were doing everything possible to ease the housing situation.

OPEN TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS.

With regard to the accommodation taken over by Christchurch, it is hoped that it will accommodate about 400 people. "While we prefer to take people like those from Airspeeds, who have been pressing for the aerodrome, we are open to receive applications from anybody and they will be considered according to the circumstances," the Town Clerk, Mr. W. D. Platt, told our reporter.

One of the drawbacks with the huts, and one which it is proposed to rectify, is that there are no separate forms of cooking as, in common with all camps, the layout provides for communal feeding.

It is understood that the possibility of moving some of the huts to sites nearer Christchurch will receive consideration, but no decision has been reached on this point so far.

NEW HOUSING CHAIRMAN VERY SATISFIED.

Coun. W. R. Bingham, who was appointed chairman of the Christchurch Council's Housing Committee on Thursday of last week, took a sub-committee up to the aerodrome on the following morning to carry out an inspection. Since then the committee has met several times and arrangements have been made for certain alterations to the buildings to be made, subject to the consent of the Minister of Health.

“We are very satisfied with the way things are going and feel that we have done something really worthwhile,” Coun. Bingham told our reporter. He added that they would have about 50 families installed in the aerodrome.

Housing Target May Be Passed

“IN spite of many set-backs and difficulties the position gives rise to hope.” This was how the Mayor, Councillor E. J. Slinn, summed up the housing situation when he took office, and this week Christchurch Times is able to reveal that some very definite although not spectacular progress has been made during the past few weeks.

Exactly three months ago six schemes submitted by builders willing to build for the Council had been approved by the Ministry, but since then the number has increased to 12. Under these schemes there are now three houses completed and 42 under construction.

The Council have set as their target for houses completed by the end of the year a total of 16, but there is every likelihood that this will be exceeded. Here is the position as regards actual Council houses to date: Heath Road—16 under construction, two completed. Douglas Avenue—ten under construction, two completed.

PLANS WELL ADVANCED.

Plans are now well advanced for the erection of 37 dwellings on the Jumpers Common site between Endfield Road and Canberra Road, and with regard to the Somerford Road site contractors for the erection of 50 B.I.S.F. permanent prefabricated houses have commenced laying out a road and putting down the sewers. There is, however, little hope of the Council's larger scheme for the development of this Somerford site being got under way before the early part of next year. The scheme provides for the erection of 150 permanent houses and the completed plans are now in the hands of the quantity surveyor.

As regards the temporary prefabricated bungalows, the Melbourne Road scheme is now complete, and at Highcliffe 29 out of the 50 being erected are occupied. It is hoped that by Christmas at least 40 and perhaps the whole 50 will be completed.