

PART III—ADMINISTRATION

13. REORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ASSOCIATED DEPARTMENTS

The establishment of an organization with functions so far reaching as those which have been delegated to the Ministry of Works has naturally resulted in some adjustments in structure and procedure affecting particularly such Departments as are concerned with physical planning or building and constructional work in one form or another. However, this is not the only factor which has led to changes in the administrative structure. With the gradual change in the character of the constructional work carried out by the Public Works Department the necessity for alterations in its administration had become increasingly apparent. The Department's district offices were located to some extent in areas where there had been, in former years, considerable road and railway activity. Although very considerable changes had, in the course of years, been made to the structure of the Department, its framework remained essentially that of an organization constituted to undertake large engineering works connected with the initial development of the country.

Over a long period of time the Hydro-electric Branch of the Department had grown to become one of the Dominion's most important commercial undertakings, and its continued association with a Department whose purpose was to construct works was becoming increasingly illogical. Steps have therefore been taken to segregate it as a separate Department of State under the name of the State Hydro-electric Department.

Housing construction, originally prosecuted by a branch of the State Advances Corporation, had reached such magnitude as to have practically attained independent departmental status. In view of the extent of its operations in the years ahead, and also the desirability of avoiding any possibility of conflict in demands on materials, man-power, and plant, arrangements have been made for it to become a division of the Public Works Department. By this the technical facilities in the whole of the Department can be made available as required to the Housing Division, which, quite apart from the actual erection of houses, is itself faced with major architectural and engineering problems.

The activities of the Public Works Department itself have also increased in range and complexity. In recent years it has had separate and considerable responsibilities to the Main Highways Board, to the Local Bodies' Loans Board, and to the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council, and has carried out much work related to the classification of land for other State Departments, as well as independent reviews, on behalf of Treasury, of proposals arising in other Departments. Apart from these Government activities, it has been involved in local-authority administration throughout the country. Consideration of the above developments led the Government to authorize a review of the organization of the Department by the first Commissioner of Works, Mr. James Fletcher, and the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. J. H. Boyes. The report of these gentlemen was made available to the Government towards the end of 1944, and instructions were