

the amount which should be included in the Budget for the 1947-48 works programme, and to ensure that State and State-subsidized works would be programmed realistically, a detailed survey on a regional basis of current works, manpower, and materials was undertaken. This survey has materially assisted in determining more accurately the amount of money required for these works during the current financial year and thereby also provides a better balance between finance, manpower, and materials.

For reasons already stated and as a means of implementing the ten-year schedules of works for all districts as announced by my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Works, all Government Departments and local bodies submitted to the Ministry of Works schedules of works which would involve the expenditure of Government funds and which they desired to undertake during the present year. The Government are fully aware that the programme of works for each year must be closely associated with long-term planning, which is vital to the future development and prosperity of the Dominion.

Although it can be claimed that, excepting for the man-power absorbed by our Armed Services in Japan and those incapacitated by war injuries, the whole of our manpower previously engaged in war duties has been rehabilitated to peacetime occupations, there still remains an acute shortage of labour for State and State-subsidized works. The total manpower at present available for such works is estimated at 18,500, and though this is well below the pre-war level, it is appreciated that this position may continue for some time to come. With a shortage of some 33,000 in various branches of industry, many of which are producing essential requirements for our housing programme, it is recognized that State works must be kept down to the barest minimum. Apart from housing, school buildings, and hydro-electric works, all of which are of first priority, the aim is to restrict capital works as much as possible so as to free the maximum amount of labour for industry. This is vitally necessary at present as, in addition to providing the components for the housing scheme, we must look to industry to produce the consumer goods so essential to maintain a balanced economy.

The proposals submitted by Government Departments and local bodies included works estimated to cost £37,500,000. The availability of manpower and materials is at present far short of such a programme; therefore, all proposals were closely examined and rated so that the more urgent projects would take priority over works of lesser importance. It is estimated that the approved programme for this year, including works financed from loans and from revenue, will absorb public funds to the extent of £25,400,000.

The programme envisages accelerated progress on the most essential works—viz., housing, hydro-electric development, and land-development, including State forests, rehabilitation of ex-servicemen