

be allied the need for works planning, physical and economic planning, town and metropolitan planning. Comprehensive investigations as would be involved would enable the Government to prepare a long-term programme of work.

The nucleus of the required organization to undertake such functions already existed at that time and was under the direction of the Commissioner of Defence Construction. Having in mind the long period of great stress to which the building and construction industry would be subjected, it was very clear to the Government that it would be unwise to remove the existing central control vested in that office. Therefore, as is generally known, the Government decided to establish the Ministry of Works, and appointed Mr. (now Sir) James Fletcher, then Commissioner of Defence Construction, to the position of Commissioner of Works, who at a later date was succeeded by the present Commissioner, Mr. E. R. McKillop.

During the past three years the Ministry of Works has made a most valuable contribution towards the formulation and implementation of the Government's post-war construction policy. However, there is a very strong case invariably for an organization charged with investigating and planning functions to face equal responsibility in execution. For that reason the Government saw the necessity for merging the Ministry of Works and the Public Works Department into one organization. It is the considered opinion of the Government that the combined organization will make a greater contribution towards accelerating the implementation of the Government's works programme than would be the case if these organizations continued as two separate Departments. The combined organization, with Mr. McKillop as its Permanent Head, will be known as the Ministry of Works.

CONCLUSION

I submit with my statement the annual report of the Commissioner of Works (Appendix B), together with annual reports prepared by the Engineer-in-Chief (Appendix C), the Government Architect (Appendix F), and the Director of Housing Construction (Appendix G). In addition, there are submitted, in compliance with section 24 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, the annual report of the Main Highways Board (Appendix D), and also, in accordance with section 33, subsection (2), of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, the annual report of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council (Appendix E), for the year ended 31st March, 1948.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I desire to place on record my personal appreciation, and the Government's of the loyal and efficient services rendered by both staff and workmen during another difficult year, and to assure this House that the needs of all districts will receive equal consideration and that works approved by the Government will be included in the annual works programme only after the relative demands of the various districts are appraised in the light of the most satisfactory and economical development of the Dominion as a whole.

R. SEMPLE,
Minister of Works.
