

APPENDIX B

ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF WORKS

The COMMISSIONER OF WORKS to the Hon. MINISTER OF WORKS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Ministry of Works for the year ended 31st March, 1948.

In the light of post-war conditions, I deem it advisable at the commencement to quote the functions of the Ministry of Works as outlined by you at the time the Ministry of Works Act was introduced in March, 1943 :—

- (1) To ensure that during the period of the war and the post-war reconstruction era all proposals for construction (whether or not these involve the direct expenditure of Government moneys or carry Government subsidies) are ranked in order of essentiality from the point of view of man-power and materials available. In other words, to ensure that, whilst the building and constructional potential of the country is limited by war and immediate post-war conditions, it is assembled and utilized in the most efficient manner from the point of view of the national interest.
- (2) To ensure that all schemes for construction involving expenditure of Government funds are thoroughly examined, independently of the source from which they originate, both from an economic and technical point of view. In this connection not only to examine proposals coming to Government Departments, but also the proposals of local bodies or of private interests where such carry with them Government subsidies.
- (3) To ensure that projects approved for construction involving the direct expenditure of Government moneys or Government subsidy are executed efficiently and economically, whether such works be carried out by the Government itself or by the subsidized authority.
- (4) To ensure that no work is undertaken in conflict with the national interest ; or, in other words, to relate proposals for construction to an established national plan.

It is very appropriate that I should refer to these functions, as the setting-up of the Ministry of Works was virtually dictated by post-war conditions as envisaged at that time. Conditions within the building and construction industry which have prevailed during those years, such as insufficiency of man-power, excess of demand over supply of key materials of both local and overseas production, non-availability of suitable plant, and accumulation of deferred works, State and private, are in keeping with the difficulties foreseen and have demanded the exercise of the over-all control vested in the Ministry of Works and referred to above. Without doubt, the setting-up of the organization has been justified, and the necessity for its continued existence is even greater to-day than at any time hitherto.