

1949
NEW ZEALAND

MINISTRY OF WORKS STATEMENT

(BY THE HON. R. SEMPLE, MINISTER OF WORKS)

MR. SPEAKER:—

I submit my report for the year ended 31st March, 1949, together with a statement of expenditure (Appendix A) certified by the Controller and Auditor-General as provided under section 8 of the Public Works Act, 1928.

Unprecedented demands are still being made on the building and construction industry, and, as was anticipated, this excess of demand over supply has necessitated continuance of the Building Control Emergency Regulations. I am satisfied, despite criticism from some quarters, that the Government's policy in this matter is in the best interests of both the industry and the nation as a whole. To have permitted unrestricted competition in the industry would have created a very undesirable situation, in that the man-power and materials available would have been used regardless of the importance or desirability of any particular work from a national or local viewpoint. The unrestricted competition which would have resulted from complete relaxation of control as advocated by some people and organizations would have also resulted in construction costs taking a further upward trend, a factor which the Government is most anxious to prevent.

However, as stated in my annual statement presented to Parliament last year, it is not the desire of the Government to continue control any longer than necessary or to any greater extent than is clearly essential, and for this reason during the past year building-control policy was kept under constant review. In conformity with this policy, controls were relaxed to the extent that authority was decentralized by delegating to local bodies wider powers to authorize building permits of various classes without reference to District Building Controllers. Wider powers were also given to District Building Controllers to facilitate decisions on applications for certain classes of work which hitherto it was necessary to forward to the Building Controller in Wellington. Local bodies are now authorized to issue permits for houses up to 1,300 square feet, while private garages and sheds of limited floor areas are permitted provided only certain classes of materials are used, and permits for these buildings are issued by local bodies without reference to District Building Controllers. During the coming year building-control policy will be