

1946
NEW ZEALAND

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT

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

MR. SPEAKER,—

In accordance with the provisions of section 8 of the Public Works Act, 1928, I submit my report for the year ended 31st March, 1946, together with a statement of expenditure certified by the Controller and Auditor-General.

The past year has been a transition period of planning and reorganizing to a peacetime basis in preparation for the programmes of works which will require to be undertaken during the next few years, and of which some indication has already been made public. I have, following my usual practice, visited various parts of the Dominion, in order to gain first-hand information and to discuss with those concerned the various problems and proposals which come within my jurisdiction as Minister of Works.

Honourable members will recall that in my report last year reference was made to the functions and activities of the Ministry of Works, particularly in regard to co-ordinated planning of constructional and developmental projects contemplated by the State and by the various public authorities in the post-war years. At that time it was not practicable to convey, in other than general terms, the nature and extent of the planning operations which were being carried out at my direction by the Commissioner of Works, but I have since obtained from the Commissioner a report in which these operations are reviewed. This report has been tabled so that honourable members may be informed upon the vitally important considerations which arise in connection with post-war planning. The report also provides a summary of the important work, some of which has not previously been published, undertaken by the Commissioner of Defence Construction during the difficult war years and the subsequent developments which led to the appointment of the Commissioner of Works and the creation of the Ministry of Works.

With the resignation of Mr. W. L. Newnham as Permanent Head and Engineer-in-Chief on the 31st March last, it was decided the time was opportune to reconstitute the Department in four separate Divisions responsible to the Commissioner of Works, who thus now assumes overall administrative control of the Department.