

### PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT

(a) *Building Permits.*—In May, 1948, full details of the Trust's building proposals were submitted by the architects to the Building Controller, together with estimates of costs based on then-current price levels, and approval in principle of the proposed building projects was asked. Provisional approval for the bar and lounge in the Cosy Building and the Empire Hotel conversion and annex was given, a permit being later issued for the Cosy Building work. Approval of the erection of the bar and lounge unit on the "Northern Approach" site, however, was deferred, and although this matter has been the subject of repeated applications and deputations, it has not been possible to obtain a definite decision. In view of the fact that the "Northern Approach" plans represented so great a development and has received the approval of the public, and had been favourably commented on by all Ministers of the Crown to whom they had been submitted, and in view of the known special circumstances (paramount in which was the Trust's declared policy of providing higher standards) and in view of the relative size of the works, the Trust confidently expected that the issue of an authority for this new unit would be justified. However, the proposal in each instance has been "deferred," and the Trust must record that inability to obtain consent, or even a final refusal, has been a major embarrassment to the Trust and has held up, and is continuing to hold up, the planning of development, and may seriously interfere with the existing plans for the restoration of the full sale of liquor and development of additional hotel accommodation. Apart from the Trust's desire that the sale of liquor in bars and lounges should be under conditions of comfort, service, and hygiene far higher than the average standard, all the information available to them, including the expert advice of the General Manager, shows that it is unlikely that the facilities available in the reconstructed Cosy Building will be sufficient to cope with half the expected normal peak demand. The simultaneous opening of a minimum of two bars has been, and remains, the considered policy of the Trust, and they are greatly concerned at their inability to obtain a final decision on this proposal to provide for minimum requirements.

(b) *Tenants.*—While the auditorium of the Cosy Building had been vacant for some years, the front portion was occupied by three business tenants. The Trust was advised by its architects that in order to carry out earthquake reinstatement and conversion it would be necessary to dispossess the tenants. As no suitable alternative premises were available, negotiations took place over many months in an endeavour to solve this problem with the least possible disruption.

Of the ground-floor tenants, one has been provided with temporary premises erected by the Trust, but this was not possible in the other case, and the business was of necessity closed for an indefinite period. Both these tenants will return to improved premises immediately the front portion of the building is completed. The first-floor tenant was permanently dispossessed, as he required an area greater than can be made available. It was necessary, therefore, for the Trust to meet compensation claims where tenants' businesses were interrupted or discontinued.

(c) *Building-materials.*—In planning their building policy the Trust has been concerned to avoid drawing from building supplies required for housing. For this reason and to ensure that no delay occurred when contracts were let, the Trust has placed orders for steel, cement, and timber from available sources overseas. In some instances steel orders were placed for immediate shipment at prices then ruling in Europe, and which have since fallen. The Trust balanced the then difficulties of supply and the urgency of making progress against varying market reports, and decided that the factor of certainty of supply was paramount. Much of the steel required is to hand or on the water; orders for cement and timber have been confirmed.