

6. BUILDING

A number of applications for industrial and commercial building permits were deferred during the year because of the strain which would otherwise be imposed on our national resources. The importance of devoting available building material and labour to the most deserving national purposes, particularly housing, is fully recognized, but it would seem that serious consideration will have to be given to a greater allocation for construction of factories, storage, and office space.

Despite the increased commercial activities, the continued growth of our population and the encroachment on storage space for factory purposes in recent years, there has been no substantial addition to storage or office space. The cramping effect of lack of storage facilities on our already strained transport system is well known and it is obvious that in the interests of national efficiency, the need is one that should be met as soon as possible.

Many factory buildings to-day are most unsuitable for their present purposes and require replacement, renovation, or extension. The high costs of building are undoubtedly one factor preventing an improvement, but it would seem that in the interests of efficiency and the comfort and health of the workers, a greater allocation of our building resources for this purpose should be made. To alleviate the position, every effort is made to arrange for the allocation of surplus Government space for industrial and commercial use.

7. DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRY AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The labour situation still appears to be acute in the main centres but is easier in a number of the smaller towns. Manufacturers continue to set up branch factories wherever labour can be found and this Department has supported many applications for permits to build premises in such areas.

With a view to assisting in the relocation of industry and to provide necessary services and employment near to home, certain localities are being developed by the Crown for industrial use. The principal areas are at Taita, Naenae, and Seaview in Lower Hutt, at Tamaki, near Auckland, at Prosser's Block, near Porirua, and a block of 13 wartime stores in Hutt Park Road. The intention is that sites in the Taita, Naenae, Seaview, and Porirua areas should be allotted to selected suitable industries on renewable lease under the Land Act, 1948. It is understood that the holders of such leases may have the option of acquiring the freehold.

Development work at Taita industrial area will be completed shortly, and the preparation of subdivisional survey plans and valuations will be undertaken to enable annual rentals to be fixed. Interest in this area has been only moderately keen due, no doubt, to the difficulty of obtaining a building permit for any but essential enterprises and the acute shortage of labour in Hutt Valley. Sites applied for exceed slightly the acreage of the Taita industrial block and it will be necessary to make a selection between the applicants. A further 14 acres approximately remain to be allocated as soon as possible.

At Naenae progress has been held up pending completion of discussions between the Lower Hutt City Council and the Ministry of Works concerning the proposed roading and subdivisional plans and the provision and maintenance of certain plantation reserves. The portion of the area which will be unaffected by the eventual decision on these points has been recommended to the Lands Settlement Board for allocation, and the Lands Department is now negotiating with the allottees as to rentals and conditions of lease. These sites are intended for the accommodation of local-service trades and although the total area available for allocation has not yet been finally determined it will, including roads, amount to 26 acres.