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THE MANZONI REPORT  
ON THE  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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# THE MANZONI REPORT ON THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

## Introduction

Sir Herbert Manzoni, City Engineer to the Birmingham Corporation, was appointed in 1956 with the following terms of reference:—

“To inquire into the question of the separation of the Roads Branch from the Public Works Department from the point of view of efficiency, economy and administration, bearing in mind the possible decentralization of road work to suitable local authorities.”

His report was received and published in the latter half of 1956. This Paper presents the views of the Government on Sir Herbert Manzoni's report.

## 2. Background to Sir Herbert Manzoni's Report

The immediate occasion for the decision to commission Sir Herbert Manzoni to make his investigations was a request by the Road Authority for the separation of the Roads Branch from the Public Works Department, but very similar problems of organization, management and finance are posed by the existence of the other specialist Branches within the Public Works Department and Sir Herbert Manzoni was inevitably led into concurrent problems of the overall organization of a Works Ministry. Sir Herbert Manzoni's report has, therefore, dealt with the organization of a Government Works Ministry as a whole and not exclusively with the future of the Roads Branch of the Public Works Department, but is the more valuable and welcome in that it pursues recommendations on immediate issues of the future of the Roads Branch to their logical conclusion and in their bearing on the future of other Branches. The Government is very grateful to Sir Herbert Manzoni for his valuable report.

## 3. Sir Herbert Manzoni's General Comments

Before turning to the detailed recommendations in the report, the Government directs particular attention to the fact that Sir Herbert Manzoni did not find the Public Works Department to be inefficient and, on the contrary, made this comment:—

“It is true that many possible elements of inefficiency exist, poor and unsuitable premises, shortage of staff, poor quality of some of the staff, discontentment with conditions of service, and bad personnel management and establishment control, but there is little evidence that these are affecting the quantity or the quality of the works produced.”

Sir Herbert also makes the following general comment on the issue of breaking a unitary department into specialized components:—

“the theoretical arguments against separation into a number of independent departments are unanswerable; they are based upon flexibility, economy of supplementary services, the maintenance of size and variety adequate to attract responsible personnel and the benefits of unified control. These arguments have been examined again and again by responsible persons and bodies of persons and almost invariably the conclusions have been against separation. It is unfortunate that the theoretical arguments do not always encompass the human factors which invariably govern such an organization.”

#### 4. Summary of Sir Herbert Manzoni's Recommendations

In summary, Sir Herbert Manzoni recommends a composite Ministry responsible for Roads, Buildings and Townships Water and Drainage, organized into separate departments which will, under "Authorities" of laymen, be responsible to the Minister. The Director of Public Works and the Deputy Director of Public Works disappear and staff employed on water conservation and irrigation pass to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Water Resources Authority ceases to be concerned with administering the water law or with the promotion and conservation of rural water supplies and, by inference, the Authority as it now exists is disestablished and its present powers and duties pass to the Minister for Agriculture. Details of the organization of common services between the separated Branches of the reorganized Public Works Department are to be agreed and worked out by the Civil Service Heads of these Branches.

#### 5. Summary of Government's Conclusions

The Government's conclusion is that Sir Herbert Manzoni's diagnosis of the difficulties which for some years have faced its Director of Public Works and more recently the Minister for Works is generally correct and that his recommendations for greater autonomy for Branches, increased status for Branch Heads, centralized direction through a Ministry providing common services and a progressive devolution and shedding of activity through greater recourse to local authorities; contractors and consultants are basically right and acceptable. It is, however, unable to accept them entirely in the forms described or implied by Sir Herbert Manzoni, partly for reasons of cost and economy, partly because some of the recommendations will not make for greater efficiency or savings and partly because some of the recommendations are difficult to accommodate with ministerial government and with the healthy development of an executive accountable to the Legislature. The detailed conclusions of the Government on Sir Herbert Manzoni's numbered recommendations at page 10 of his report are given later in this Paper.

#### 6. Separation of Branches

Sir Herbert Manzoni did not conclude, neither does the Government believe, that the Public Works Department is too big a unit for economy and efficiency. Nevertheless, the Government has decided that the Hydraulic Branch should be separated from the Public Works Department and should become an organization of its own under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources during the post-1960 planning period. The Government intends to increase the autonomy of the three main branches (Roads, Buildings and Water) but considers that outside Nairobi the unitary all-purposes Divisional Engineer system is for normal operations on an ordinary scale still the most economic and efficient organization. Many Public Works Department projects involve the advice of all branches; and work in provinces and districts is not so specialized as to make it possible to dispense with the Divisional Engineer as the local managerial executive head. The general trend in the Government of Kenya is towards closer integration of departments and Ministries and the extension of common pooled services such as accounts, establishment, stores.

#### 7. Costs of Separation

The question of cost is of the greatest importance. In 1948 the Mayne Report on the Public Works Department estimated the cost of the separation of branches at an extra £100,000 to £150,000 per annum. The figure would now be higher. A careful examination of the cost of separating the Hydraulic Section alone gave a figure of approximately £53,000 per annum and a capital requirement of about £68,000.

### 8. Long-term Consequences of Devolution and its Relevance to Separation

The process of devolution is well under way and it will be the aim of Government to continue with this and with the development of agencies. If breaking down into branches is to take place the implications and cost and the organization required are more closely assessable if the probable residual size of the organization remaining after devolution is first decided or discernible. A separated Roads Branch might well turn out to be of uneconomic size if a substantial part of its duties were subsequently to pass to local authorities.

### 9. Devolution to Local Authorities and Use of Consultants and Contractors

On the subject of increased devolution and of recourse to agencies, the Government agrees this to be natural and advisable. The use of local authorities is dealt with later in paragraph 10 (10). Consultants have been used by the Public Works Department for many years for specialized work or for work beyond the Department's capacity. The greater part of Government's building and much of its engineering programme is already carried out by contract. For the future use of consultants to design and contractors to execute, the Government proposes to maintain the principle recommended in the Mayne Report of 1948, which was that the Public Works Department should be directly responsible for enough planning and construction to remain a unit of the right size and diversity for its normal commitments. It should avoid expansion for what might be only a temporary scale of activity, but not run down to a mere maintenance unit incapable of meeting urgent demands, or incapable of producing work of quality and consequently unattractive to competent officers. There has been a notable increase in the number of consultants, private architects, etc., practising in Kenya and such developments can relieve Government of the necessity of carrying the size of professional establishment necessary when Government's building and works programme formed a major part of the Colony's total engineering and building output. Each year Government's share of that activity grows relatively less.

### 10. Detailed Comments on Sir Herbert Manzoni's Recommendations

#### RECOMMENDATION (1)

*Formation of Composite Ministry for Roads, Buildings and Township Water Supplies.*

Recommended for acceptance subject to no immediate alteration in the present responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources.

#### RECOMMENDATION (2)

*That water conservation and irrigation shall remain the responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources, to be implemented by the staff of his own Department with suitable transfer of personnel from the Public Works Department.*

It is also Sir Herbert Manzoni's recommendation that the Water Resources Authority should cease to be answerable to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources and should only be concerned with Township supplies. The major interest and value of the Water Resources Authority is in water conservation, apportionment and the development of the beneficial use of water resources for productive purposes, and the Government does not accept the recommendation that it should be converted into a body responsible only for urban water supplies and sewerage schemes.

This particular recommendation was probably made under a misapprehension. The Water Resources Authority is not concerned with drainage in the sense of urban sanitation and is only remotely concerned with town surface drainage.

As for township water supplies, the Government does not consider that the Water Resources Authority can or would wish to exercise executive responsibility for works. On the issue of water development and conservation policy, apportionment and the general administration of the Water Ordinance the Government has decided that the Water Resources Authority should continue to be responsible to the Minister for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources.

Sir Herbert Manzoni recommends that urban water supplies should be the responsibility of the Minister for Works; but the Government is doubtful whether an exact classification of water supply schemes into urban schemes and rural schemes is practicable. Furthermore, the likely effect of transfer of various undertakings to local authorities is that, in any one area, those which are not so transferred would be of a size uneconomic for breaking up between two Ministries. The Government has itself examined this question in very great detail, including the capital and recurrent cost of the various possibilities. The immediate cost of breaking up the Branch is known to be higher than the Government feels ready to accept. The Government considers, however, that the co-ordinated development of its water resources by schemes of conservation, augmentation and improved distribution, especially for the acceleration of agrarian and pastoral development, is of the utmost importance to the Colony's future; and that such projects should come under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources. This Ministry which is advised by the Water Resources Authority already controls the Dam Construction Units and the technical water services of the Land Development (Non-Scheduled) Areas Board. The Government accepts in principle that the Hydraulic Branch should be separated from the Public Works Department and should become an organization of its own under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources during the post-1960 planning period.

#### RECOMMENDATION (3)

*That the Road Authority shall continue in its present form; that the Water Resources Authority shall be responsible to the Minister for Works for township supply and drainage, relinquishing responsibility for water conservation and irrigation; and that a new Authority be set up to control building works.*

##### (i) Road Authority

The Government agrees with Sir Herbert Manzoni that the excision of the Roads Branch from the Public Works Department would not be economical or advantageous.

##### (ii) Water Resources Authority

Government's views have been expressed under Recommendation (2) above.

##### (iii) Buildings Authority

Although the Government has recognized the need for the existence of the Water Resources Authority and the Road Authority, in its opinion no comparable reasons exist for creating a Government Buildings Authority. The exercise of control over private buildings by such an Authority would, in Government's view, be both unnecessary and an undesirable invasion of the responsibilities of local authorities. If intended to supervise Government's own building, whether

directly executive like a Municipal Works Committee or advisory on day-to-day executive decisions by Ministry Officials, it would tend inevitably to impede progress. The Government also finds itself unable to accept this recommendation in that it is inconsistent with Government control of its own routine affairs, and difficult to reconcile with responsible ministerial government and the discharge of a Minister's duties to the Legislature.

#### RECOMMENDATION (4)

*That the Chairmen of these three Authorities should constitute with the Minister for Works a Cabinet of Policy Control.*

This does not arise if no Building Authority is created, but the Government is in any case opposed on the grounds that Ministerial responsibilities and the powers of the Government itself would be diluted by the establishment of such a body.

#### RECOMMENDATION (5)

*That a Secretary shall be appointed to the Minister for Works, who shall also be Secretary to the three Authorities and to the Minister's Cabinet.*

This recommendation does not arise if the three Authorities suggested in the Report are not appointed and no Works Cabinet is created. The position of the Permanent Secretary generally is dealt with in the next paragraph.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS (6) AND (7)

*(6) That each Authority shall have as its instrument a separate Department, one for road works, one for water schemes, and one for buildings.*

*(7) That these three Departments shall be formed from and operate with the present personnel, plant and premises of the Public Works Department, and that the details of the division shall be worked out by the Heads of these three Branches.*

Subject to the views expressed under Recommendation (2) on the future of the Hydraulic Branch after 1960 and as stated above, apart from questions of substantial extra cost, the Government cannot recommend creation of three separate and independent departments receiving what are now common services. It considers that a practical solution which reflects the separate entity of the three branches, without sacrificing the undoubted benefits of centralization, lies in preserving a single Works Ministry with resources at the disposal of the branches as integral and component parts of the Ministry. This would mean that specialized and unspecialized elements in the Works organization would all be part of the Ministry and function in the name of the Ministry. Divisional Engineers would be Executive Officers of the Ministry in the field.

As for the abolition of the posts of Director and Deputy Director of Public Works recommended by Sir Herbert Manzoni, the Select Committee of the Legislative Council in its Report on the Public Works Department Estimates for 1955/56 (Ref. Leg.CO/N/13/34/69/2 of 6th June, 1956) has already indicated its belief that "the qualities required in the head of a Public Works Department must be primarily those of a first rate administrator, and that technical experience and professional standing, though desirable, are of secondary importance". The Government agrees and recommends that the senior officer of the Ministry should be a Secretary for Works, who might or might not be an engineer, but who would be put there primarily to ensure that the organization runs smoothly and

efficiently. The Secretary would be responsible to the Minister for the execution of policy and for standards, procedure, and the provision of common services. He would also exercise an accounting officer's responsibility for financial control. Branch Heads would, subject to the ultimate responsibility of the Secretary as Accounting Officer, be executive responsible for—

- (i) design and execution of new works whether for the Ministry or other bodies;
- (ii) adaptation and maintenance of existing works;
- (iii) provision of professional and technical advice to all parts of the Ministry and to other Ministries and Departments.

The Branch Heads would thereby become the senior men within the Ministry on their subject. Here also the Government accepts the views of the Select Committee on Estimates which said in its recent Report that "technical experience and professional standing were of primary importance in technical branch heads who were responsible within the administration framework to be provided by the Head of the Department and his administrative organization for the efficient planning and execution of all the works committed to the Department by the Government and that while the status and emoluments of the Head of the Department should be equivalent to those of the Officers on the higher administrative level, those of the Branch Heads should be commensurate with their qualifications when compared with those of several officers bearing similar professional responsibilities."

The Government agrees and in recognition of the responsibilities which Branch Heads would carry with the reorganization proposed, will later suggest that they be raised to the same level of salary as the present Deputy Director of Public Works and Deputies in other Departments, i.e. £2,500 per annum. As for the post of Deputy Director of Public Works, the Government proposes to create in its place the post of Chief Engineer (General Services). For the present a salary differential would be kept between this post and Branch Heads in consideration of the seniority and position of the present Deputy Director. Subsequently, the post would rank on a par and carry the same salary as that of the other Branch Heads. A diagram appears as Appendix A showing the organization chart of the reorganized Ministry.

The Minister for Works is also investigating certain other regradings of senior posts which are considered justifiable.

#### RECOMMENDATION (8)

*That these Heads of Departments shall be wholly responsible to the respective Authorities and through them to the Minister for all matters concerning the work of their Department, including accounting.*

It follows from the above that Government cannot accept that Heads of Branches should "be wholly responsible to the respective authorities and through them to the Minister for all matters concerning their work".

The Road Engineer and the Hydraulic Engineer would continue as now, to be the Technical Advisers of the Road Authority and Water Resources Authority.

#### RECOMMENDATION (9)

*That the Materials Laboratory and organization shall remain a separate unit acting on an agency basis and that the Secretary shall be responsible for its functioning other than in technical matters.*

Under the reorganization proposed the Materials Laboratory would come under the Chief Engineer (General Services).

## RECOMMENDATION (10)

*That as much responsibility and work as possible shall be passed over to Local Authorities who shall thereby be encouraged to develop their resources.*

It has been, and remains, the policy of the Government to devolve responsibility on to Local Authorities and increasingly to use them as agents even where it may itself retain an immediate responsibility. The Government also recognizes that the capacity of Local Authorities to take on new duties largely depends on their ability to build up staff and to diversify their organization and that, in view of the limited expansion possible from their own independent financial resources, this build-up is only likely to be accelerated by a liberal policy of Government using Local Authorities as agents on the basis of reimbursement of cost from the Central Exchequer. Sir Herbert Manzoni's precise recommendation was, however, to the effect that the pace and manner of development should be determined solely by the technical and material capacity of Local Authorities to do work now falling to the Public Works Department and, by inference, to other departments. This cannot be accepted entirely as it stands, without qualification, in that Local Authorities in Kenya vary widely in constitution and resources, and the Government must always take account of the degree of national interest in any given service. The Government must also take account of the effect of delegation and agency arrangements on the cost to the Government of the whole particular service at the centre and at the Branches through a possible attenuation of overheads and the less economic dispersal of Government's own organization. Within those limits, and with such considerations in mind, the Government will wish to agree with Local Authorities on a programme of devolution and the development of agency arrangements. Roads and Water Supplies are the main fields where this can occur, but there are other services such as housing, construction of certain public buildings, various aerodromes other than international airports, and electric power. On the subject of water supplies, it is relevant to point out that all Municipal water undertakings, except Nairobi, began as Government supplies and were subsequently handed over to the Local Authority. The Government is at present in process of planning for the handover of various undertakings to certain Local Authorities. The view of the Government is that a Local Authority must take the rough with the smooth and accept all the public supplies in its area, profitable and otherwise. It is also likely that the extraction from the present organization of the Hydraulic Branch of the Public Works Department of the core of major undertakings will tend to raise the cost to the Government of operating the remainder through obvious and practical causes and, in fairness to the Ministry responsible in future years, this point should be made and understood.

On the subject of roads, the direct responsibilities of the Public Works Department are for the maintenance and construction of the Colony's main roads and important subsidiary roads. Excluding the Northern Province and lesser roads in African areas, the distribution of responsibility is at present as follows. Some 4,500 miles of secondary roads are maintained by Local Authorities. Of the Colony's trunk roads, 607 miles are maintained by Local Authorities, mostly County Councils, and some 2,000 by the Public Works Department, of which more than half are in the African areas or the Coast Province. All Class A trunk roads are maintained by the Public Works Department. Subject to the concurrence of the Road Authority the Government policy will be to help Local Authorities to build up their technical facilities to enable them to be accepted as the Road Authority's agent for construction and maintenance of various trunk roads at present the responsibility of the Public Works Department. In Government's view, it should, however, for the present retain responsibility for inter-territorial trunk roads of national and security importance. Even in countries



like South Africa and Southern Rhodesia with well-developed Local Government this is still the practice. Of roads traversing County Council areas this would mean the road from Mombasa to the Uganda border, the road from Namanga through Nairobi and the two roads to the Northern Province. There are, however, other trunk roads which, following on developments already started, can be transferred on an agency basis. Again, it will be the object to apply tests of relative costs in that, for example, the responsible authority must possess adequate resources of plant and staff and the Government must take into account the spread of the roads for which it would be responsible after transfer. The Government would not wish, for example, to be in a position of being left with uneconomic and dispersed lengths of road away from its centres of administration and maintenance. The Government hopes that an understandable and clear arrangement can be worked out which will not only enable Local Authorities to build up staff, but give stability of commitments to the Roads Branch. The Government favours Joint Works Committees of two or more Local Authorities as a means of developing local capacity to take on more duties. The Government recognizes that where a fully competent Local Authority exists, suitable road and water services should be handed over to it; but that, where no such Local Authority exists, Government should continue to carry the responsibility for those services until a competent Local Authority is established.

#### RECOMMENDATION (11)

*That the carrying out of works of all types by contract shall be encouraged.*

This is accepted policy and the Government agrees it should be extended where this can be done at no greater cost than present arrangements. It is, however, necessary to point out that many projects are not attractive to contractors by reason of size or locality and that Government must retain an organization capable of undertaking them, of seeing to routine investigations and maintenance, and of serving Government in an emergency such as that of recent years. At the present stage of the Colony's development it is not possible for the Government works organization to contract to one of maintenance and planning only.

#### RECOMMENDATION (12)

*That the arrangements for personnel management and recruiting shall be overhauled and shall be the responsibility of the Secretary with the help of a competent Establishment Officer.*

The Government agrees and has put in train a scheme for devolving Establishment responsibilities on Secretaries for Portfolios in other Ministries as well as in the Ministry of Works.

### 11. Interim Measures Already Taken

The present position is that the substantive Director for Public Works went on leave pending retirement in March and has not been replaced pending consideration of Government's recommendations by the Legislative Council. An Acting Secretary for Works, with the powers and duties of the Director of Public Works, has been appointed and the Minister has moved his own office and organization to the Public Works Department Headquarters. If the Government's proposals are approved a substantive Secretary would be appointed and in recognition of the integration to be achieved and change of status, the title of

Ministry of Works would replace that of Public Works Department. The title of Public Works Department is a survival from the days when the Government was the sole organizer and provider of public works and logically inconsistent with the growth of other public works agencies, notably Local Authorities. Following the history of other developing countries, the title should, in spite of familiarity and long usage, be given up.

## 12. Conclusion

The changes proposed by Government are not radical because Government does not consider radical changes are required. The new forms are, in fact, a consequence of changes in the nature of the traditional Crown Colony departmental pattern brought about by constitutional developments and economic progress as well as a result of studying Sir Herbert Manzoni's recommendations. They are not, however, so rigid that modifications cannot be made and experiments undertaken, and as circumstances and policies change so should in consequence the content and practices of a Ministry of Works, which is primarily the executive and agent of policy-making Ministries. It is, for example, reasonable to expect that the Provision of Services side of the Ministry may expand, in particular the management and care of Government housing estates and property. As the Colony's building industry expands so should the Ministry develop an engineering and building intelligence and information service on the lines of similar Ministries in other countries.

It is the hope of the Government that this period of reorganization, adaptation and experiment will be undertaken in an atmosphere free from controversy and recrimination. The department contains professional men of notable qualifications, experience and achievement and has good reason to take pride in work which is of first rate quality by any standards. Sir Herbert Manzoni has himself emphasized the difficulties and disturbing influences under which these officers have laboured. The Government believes that the constant singling out of one department for criticism, much of which is inaccurate and ill-informed, must have a most serious long-term effect on the efficiency of that department. The Government considers that these proposals offer a prospect of stability and efficiency and that their adoption will give a hard working and able body of men a fair opportunity to use their organization and their capacities to the fullest advantage of the public. It wishes to repeat, with gratitude, Sir Herbert Manzoni's own comment that "It is quite remarkable that under these conditions of unrest these same persons have achieved results of which they have no need to feel ashamed and this is undoubtedly a reflection of the high vocational discipline which is such a feature of British professional conduct".



APPENDIX A

ORGANISATION CHART OF PROPOSED MINISTRY OF WORKS

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