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President:

E. W. J. Ashford, FIQS, FRICS, FCI Arb

Editor

M. A. Wilkins, P/PIQS, ACI Arb

Assistant Editor

W. J. Edge, MSc, FIQS

Advertising Agents

T. G. Scott & Son Limited,
30-32 Southampton Street,
London WC2E 7HE
Telephone: 01-240 2032



Published by the Institute of
Quantity Surveyors,
98 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AT
Telephone: 01-935 5577

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IMPORTANT DATES

19th June 1981—AGM.

COMMENT

Concern has once again been expressed at the time taken to achieve completion of construction projects. Clients, it is claimed, are asked to wait too long while the various

traditional stages of the construction process are laboriously enacted, each stage at sometime incurring further delay. Finally, the client, not only receives his building later than necessary, but inevitably pays more than was at first envisaged.

As reported elsewhere an investigation has commenced to look into the reasons for the delays. The construction industry seems to lend itself to dividing into numerous camps—the design team—the contractor—the sub-contractors—the operatives—the suppliers—to mention but a few. It is no surprise that one usually has a satisfied client on contracts where these various camps work as a team under an able captain. While the various members are contractually linked it is often forgotten that they do have one other common factor of all working for the client. How often is this apparent?

Contractual procedures, we suggest, have got to change to allow the client earlier consultation to his team. This may be resisted in some quarters but it is becoming more evident that many clients now find it to their advantage to turn to the contractor direct for a negotiated package. This has proved most attractive where structures are of a straight forward nature or where phased alteration work is required, but this could easily spread to all types of construction over the next few years.

Quantity surveyors have considerable involvement throughout any project and tend to play some part in all the individual camps involved. Many have questioned the advantages of the various forms of SMM and many more have actively canvassed rejection of the 1980 JCT Form of Contract. It is not our purpose to take sides but surely the time has come to reconsider the SMMs and forms of contract, the former as we know it to-day may disappear sooner than we care to think. (We suggested the possibility in October 1978, re-considered the thought in January 1980 and do not apologise for saying so again). The wide acceptance of micro-computers with programmes adaptable for use by all concerned in the construction team will speed the necessity for change. Contractual arrangements must be simplified yet probably more legally drafted. Documents must not be committee compromises.

Let us not sit back and await the findings of the investigation. Most of us know only too well where time and money can be wasted. Clients rightly demand a team that can produce the best results, we can at least see that our involvement is suited to that need.