

69. *Hon. Mr. Paul.*] Do you not think, Mr. Blow, that it would be a great convenience to the public if the Government offices were situated close together?—Yes, I do not think they should be very far apart.

70. And that your first objection that it would be safer from fire if they were built separately would be overruled by the convenience to the public?—I do not think anything would overrule the first objection. Safety is the very first consideration, but it could no doubt be got over in another way, as it is possible to erect an entirely fireproof building.

71. Then, it would be better from all points of view if the Government offices were close together?—Yes, they should not be far apart; but it is a question of degree, I think: the Departments could be close together without being all under the one roof.

72. But we have to deal with the sites we have?—You have a site on which you could erect detached buildings.

73. You think that the present system of Departments being in different parts of the city is neither convenient nor wise?—There are some Departments that could not be housed in the Departmental Buildings. I think the Tourist Department would have to have a separate building. If you removed that Department it would be inconvenient to tourists, as most of them arrive by sea, and the offices therefore require to be near the wharf.

74. But do you think it is a mistake to house the Departments in different parts of the city?—Yes, they should not be scattered all over the city.

75. In giving that answer you recognise that that had to be done under the circumstances?—Yes.

76. But now that it is proposed to make a clean sweep, would it not be wise to have as many of the Government offices as possible on the one site?—Yes, I think so.

77. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] In the event of the present Departmental Buildings site not being fixed upon as the place for future extensions for the requirements of the public service, how would you suggest that the present block should be utilised? I understand that you have gone into the matter, and I should like you to give the Committee your views?—Yes, I made a suggestion. In the first place, I should hope the Government would not sell the site. I prepared a sketch-plan showing how the site might be divided into building-allotments. There are alternative plans. [Plans produced and put in, marked "No. 1" and "No. 2".] Personally I prefer the proposal indicated on plan No. 1. The only point of difference is that in one plan I have provided for Stout Street being produced into Featherston Street: at present it is practically a blind street. Now that the railway-station for both the Manawatu and Government railways is to be erected on land close to the Railway Offices, it is important, I think, to produce Stout Street straight through to the station, and the allotments available on both sides of the street for leasing would be very valuable. The other plan shows that street omitted. Whitmore Street is 86 ft. wide, Bunny Street 80 ft. wide, and Featherston Street is 96 ft. wide.

78. On this plan No. 1 it is proposed to put a new street from Lambton Quay to Featherston Street—a street 66 ft. wide right through the present buildings?—Yes. If the Parliamentary Buildings are erected on the Government House site there would be a good view of them from this new street.

79. So that your suggestion is that, according to Plan No. 1, on the present Departmental Buildings site there should be a street 66 ft. wide running from Lambton Quay to Featherston Street, and that Stout Street should run right through to Bunny Street?—Yes, I think that would be the best; but, of course, if you omit the extension of Stout Street the amount of land available for leasing would be increased a little. That is the only difference between plan No. 1 and plan No. 2. The land would realise a little more money on plan No. 2 as compared with the other.

80. And in plan No. 2 it is proposed that there should also be a street 66 ft. wide from Lambton Quay to Featherston Street, but with no extension of Stout Street?—Yes.

81. What is the size of the allotments that would be available for leasing purposes?—They vary considerably.

82. How many allotments would there be?—I have prepared an estimate of what I thought they would produce by sale. I think this land if offered for sale according to plan No. 1 would realise £196,580, which is made up as follows:—

Plan No. 1.

	£
Lambton Quay, 360 ft. at £200	72,000
Bunny Street (not including side frontage of corner lots facing Lambton Quay and Featherston Street), 150 ft. at £100	15,000
Section at corner Featherston Street and Bunny Street (30 ft. to Featherston Street, at right angles), at £150 per foot	4,500
Stout Street, 330 ft. at £100	33,000
„ 131 ft. at £80	10,480
Featherston Street, 120 ft. at £80	9,600
Two sections at corners Featherston, Stout, and new streets	4,000
Section at corner of Featherston and Whitmore Streets	3,000
Whitmore Street, 150 ft. at £100	15,000
New street, 300 ft. at £100	30,000
	196,580