

necessary to serve approximately 1,000 acres is almost completed, so that the water will be available during the ensuing irrigating season. The supply for this scheme is from the Otekaike River, in which the water disappears under the shingle for many months in the year. In order, therefore, to insure a supply during the period required, it was decided to bring the main race from a point some miles above the land to be irrigated where the river is confined in a rock-bound gorge. Even there the bottom of the gorge is covered with over 10 ft. of shingle carrying much water. Here a coffer-dam was constructed and the shingle excavated down to solid rock, and a concrete diverting-weir built so that all the water flowing might be available. This was a work of considerable difficulty owing to the very porous nature of the shingle and the large quantity of water flowing therein. The water now runs freely from the intake to the end of the furthest distributary, even when only one Government head of water is turned through the intake sluice-gate. There are some splendid areas of land admirably situated for irrigation at various points along the Waitaki River which are well worth consideration.

In connection with irrigation generally, accurate gaugings of the Taieri and Manuherikia Rivers have been taken at high, low, and mean levels of the rivers, and, in the case of the Taieri, at many intermediate stages.

The expenditure last year amounted to £7,980, of which the expenses in connection with the Steward Settlement and Otekaike schemes, amounting to £6,418, were charged to the Lands and Education Departments, and £1,562 spent in survey-work in connection with the Ida Valley and other schemes to the special vote for irrigation and water-supply. The vote proposed for the current year under this latter heading in the estimates now submitted is £30,000.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The total expenditure on public buildings last year amounted to £432,750, being a considerable increase on that of the previous year. This was owing to the great expansion of business throughout the Dominion. The amount is made up as under :—

	£
New buildings (Class XX, Public Works Fund)	325,613
Maintenance-works (Class V, Consolidated Fund)	49,566
Maintenance-works (Schools), (Class XV, Consolidated Fund)	57,571
	£432,750

For the current year the following appropriations are proposed :—

	£
New buildings (Public Works Fund)	449,000
Maintenance-works (Consolidated Fund)	53,977
Maintenance-works (Schools), (Consolidated Fund)	90,300
	£593,277

GENERAL.

Under this head provision is made for continuing work on the Christchurch and Invercargill departmental buildings; for new Government Buildings at Hamilton, Gisborne, New Plymouth, and Masterton; for the completion of the Government Buildings at Hokitika; for new offices for the Stamps and Native Departments in Wellington; for making a commencement with the new Parliament Buildings; and for sundry other items.

In connection with the new Parliament Buildings, competitive designs were invited from architects practising within the Dominion, and four premiums, ranging from £1,000 to £200, were offered. The invitation met with a spirited response, and by 31st August, the closing date of the competition, thirty-three designs of a high average order of merit were received. In accordance with the conditions governing the competition, the Government secured the services of Colonel W. L. Vernon, formerly Government Architect of New South Wales,