

APPENDIX F.

ANNUAL REPORT ON BUILDINGS BY THE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT.

The GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT to the Hon. the MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 1st July, 1912.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the various building-works throughout the Dominion carried out by the Department during the year ended 30th June last :—

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

The work connected with the scheme for the erection of these buildings was commenced in March last, and the foundation-stone was laid on the 23rd of that month. As the accommodation to be provided in the portion of the building first to be erected was very extensive, including House of Representatives, the Council Chamber, the lobby, Ministers' suites of offices, Cabinet suite, Speakers' suites of rooms for both Houses, offices for the permanent officials of both Houses, Committee-rooms, waiting-rooms, and several members' rooms, it was necessary to occupy a large area of ground and at the same time not to interfere in any way with the temporary wooden Parliament Building (old Government House), nor to encroach on the lawn and garden areas beyond the front of the old Parliament Buildings. It was resolved, therefore, to close Sydney Street so as to permit of the new building extending over it, leaving sufficient space for air and light between the new and the old Parliament Buildings, provision being made also for setting the building well back from Bowen and new Museum Streets. The spoil from the foundation-trenches, the street-widening operations in Bowen Street, and the new Museum Street formation was used to fill in Sydney Street in front of the position of the proposed new building, and also to fill up the low-lying parts of the grounds. These operations occasioned the destruction of picturesque shrubbery, and many trees, most of which were, however, old dingy pines that screened and gave privacy to Government House. The best of the shrubs and trees were either saved in position or are being transplanted, and the result will, when complete, be an open park-like extent of grounds in front with a few selected trees, several clumps of shrubs and flower-beds disposed in a manner suitable to the surroundings of a great national building and in full view for public enjoyment. The close, high fences will be removed, and the whole of the grounds surrounded with a low wall which will not obscure the view of the grounds or of the building. The foundations and basement walls are being erected by day labour under the direction of the Department, and these will be carried up uniformly to the level of the terrace carriage-drive in front. The low level of Sydney Street compared with the grounds on either side affords facilities for extensive fireproof basement cellage for storing State and departmental papers and for heating-chambers. &c. The building as planned will provide all the accommodation required and a few spare rooms additional. Provision has also been made for future extension of the seating-accommodation in both houses should such be required, and for further additional rooms for any required purpose, without in any way disturbing the appearance of the building when completed, or without causing inconvenience during full occupation of the building.

The plans provide for an absolutely fireproof structure throughout, due regard being paid also to resistance to earthquake-shocks. None but the most durable materials will be employed, and these will be obtained within the Dominion, if possible.

Every effort has been made to design a building which should endure, and which should become an historical record wrought in stone and steel for the interest and benefit of many generations.

GENERAL.

Government House, Auckland.—Alterations were made to the interior of the building, and repairs and maintenance-works attended to during the year.

Departmental Buildings.—A contract was let during the year for the installation of May-Otway automatic fire-alarms in the Customs Building and Post-office, Auckland; Post-office, Supreme Court, and Magistrate's Court, Christchurch; Post-office building and law-courts, Dunedin.

Departmental Buildings, Hamilton.—A contract was let in April for the erection of departmental offices (in brick) at Hamilton, and the work is in progress.

Public Works Workshop, Auckland.—A brick workshop of two stories was erected on Beach Road, Auckland.

Drill-hall, Auckland.—Plans for drill-hall, stores offices, barracks, and stables at Point Resolution for the accommodation of the new Territorial Artillery have been prepared.

Departmental Buildings, Gisborne.—Plans have been prepared ready to invite tenders.

Government House, Wellington.—Some minor improvement-works and fencing were carried out during the year, and necessary outbuildings provided.

Meteorological Observatory, Wellington.—A building was erected on Thorndon Esplanade.

Stoke Industrial School.—A contract was let for the erection of residence and laundry, and the work is now in progress.

Hokitika Public Buildings.—A contract was let in January for the erection of buildings in brick, and work has been commenced.

Public Trust Office, Greymouth.—A contract for the erection of a brick building was let in March, and the contractor has the work in hand.