

*Departmental Buildings, Nelson.*—The Board inspected the departmental buildings at Nelson in April last, and visited—(1) old Provincial Buildings, (2) old Post-office Building, and (3) Post-office and Customs Buildings.

(1.) Old Provincial Buildings: These buildings were erected as long ago as 1858, and, having regard to their great age, are in a very good state of preservation. They cannot be expected to last much longer, but with careful maintenance and small renewals they may have a further effective life of, say, ten years. The present arrangement or grouping of the departmental offices is about as inconvenient as it can be, but in view of the cost that a general rearrangement would involve, and the risk of injury to the building by cutting out partitions and making other structural alterations which such a rearrangement would require, it would probably be best to leave the grouping of offices as at present, and not to attempt any rearrangement during the life of the present building. The building should be maintained and repaired as its age requires, so that the official information it contains may be amply protected.

(2.) Old Post-office Building: This building, notwithstanding it was erected in 1874, is in an excellent state of preservation. To meet the requirements of the Departments the Board has recommended a rearrangement of the premises. At the date of inspection it was found that—(a) Additional accommodation was required for the District Agent, Public Trust Office, and that negotiations were then in progress with the Government Life Insurance Department to obtain the use of one of the rooms occupied by it; (b) the approach to the Labour Department, particularly the women's branch, was not good; (c) no convenience existed for the women employed in the building.

As the grouping of the offices was capable of improvement, the Board has been enabled to suggest what it considers a very excellent reallocation, which will be of particular advantage to the Labour and Public Trust Departments.

*Blenheim.*—An inspection was made of the Government Buildings at Blenheim in March last. It was found that the accommodation provided for the Post and Telegraph Department was totally inadequate, and recommendations have been made to the Government for an extension of the present premises which, when carried out, should meet the needs of the Departments for several years to come. In the matter of the other Departments a rearrangement of the offices has been effected to the mutual advantage of the Departments concerned.

*Christchurch.*—The Board visited Christchurch in September of last year and made an examination of (1) the new Government Buildings, (2) the old Provincial Buildings, and (3) the Post-office Buildings.

Prior to the visit of the Board a tentative allotment of the rooms had been made in the new building. An inspection of the plan showed that no accommodation had been provided in it for the Old-age Pensions, Agriculture, Lands and Survey, and Lands and Deeds Departments—or a total of seventy officers. It was also evident that the allotment of the offices which had taken place was based upon the original requisitions for accommodation made by Departments prior to the erection of the building, and had not been subjected to an independent analysis. For example, in the case of one Department, accommodation of a total of over 2,000 superficial feet, comprising five rooms, had been set apart for a staff of four officers. It was also evident that the convenience of the public had not been fully considered, as certain Departments with whom a large number of the public were in daily touch were located on the upper floors of the building.

As a result of the inspection of the buildings (new and old), the Board was able to, subject to some structural alterations in the new building, arrange for the accommodation of the Old-age Pensions, Agriculture, and Lands and Survey Departments.

In reallotting the offices regard has been specially paid not only to the present but to the prospective requirements of Departments, and attention has been given as far as possible to the convenience of the public.

Provision has been made in the new buildings for placing a room at the disposal of the Public Service Association—for a library and a luncheon-room—and also a retiring-room for the convenience of the women employed in the building.

The Board also directed that particular attention should be given to the protection of the walls of the new building, and the cleaning of the rooms occupied by the various officers. It has been arranged that all notices which may be required to be posted for the information of the public, either in the rooms or in the corridors, shall be done in a fitting manner and on suitable boards, and also that all notices shall be removed when they become obsolete.

It has been suggested in the refurnishing of any new building that the question of reasonable standardization of the furniture should be taken into account.

We have, &c.,

R. TRIGGS, Chairman.

H. J. H. BLOW, } Members of the Board.

J. HISLOP, }

The Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington.