

Inspection and Testing.

Owing to the extra work involved in the preparation of new forms, licenses, &c., the inspection of magazines and registered premises has not been as complete as could be desired, but with the exception of those districts in the far north and south all the magazines and most of the registered premises have been inspected once during the year.

General.

The work of the Explosives Branch has been considerably hampered by shortage of staff due to the war, and many matters that should have received attention have had to be held over indefinitely. It will be impossible to bring the new regulations completely into operation until the war is over.

J. S. MACLAURIN,

Dominion Analyst and Chief Inspector of Explosives.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington.

IV. REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF THE DOMINION MUSEUM.

Dominion Museum, Wellington, 20th April, 1916.

THE MUSEUM AND THE WAR.

As a result of the war the number of visitors to Wellington has greatly increased, and the increase has been reflected in the Museum attendance. Unfortunately, the neglect in the past to provide a suitable building and the present call for economy have prevented the Museum from taking full advantage of this opportunity of increasing its usefulness to the State. It was hoped to obtain and exhibit collections relating to the war which would not only serve as historical collections in the future, but would also help to bring home to the people the fact of a state of war at the present time, but neither by private donations nor in response to official requests has the necessary material been forthcoming in the way of war trophies. The lack of space and of adequate staff has prevented the formation of collections, such as are being shown in England, designed to inculcate national economy and to show how it may be effected. The war has left the Museum much where it was except for a reduction in its spending-capacity.

The existing building is not only slowly decaying, but is unsuitable in design and lighting arrangements for the proper display of any collections, and is totally inadequate in floor-space for the existing material. So long as it is in use the Museum must not only come far short of its full usefulness to the present generation, but is losing many opportunities of becoming the storehouse of material which will be unobtainable in the future. As a national institution, visited by most of the travellers to these shores, it must surely undo much of the reputation for enlightenment and efficiency which the Government of the Dominion has so successfully created. It may therefore be questioned whether the postponement of a new building is a true economy.

BOARD OF SCIENCE AND ART.

The principal event of the year was the meeting, in January, under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. Russell (Minister of Internal Affairs), of the Board of Science and Art, which was set up by the Science and Art Act, 1913, to manage and direct the Dominion Museum, Dominion Art Gallery, and Dominion Library, and for other purposes. The following are the more important of the resolutions adopted which relate to these institutions:—

- “That this Board recommends that the present Museum-site is the most suitable for the proposed new Dominion Museum, Art Gallery, and Library.”
- “That Cabinet be recommended to erect a fireproof building to house the national collection of historical records, the more valuable Maori specimens, and the Art Gallery, the proposed building to be ultimately part of the new Museum Buildings.”
- “That the following committee be appointed to consider the question of collecting historical material now in private hands, and to take such action as is possible—namely, Dr. Thomson and Mr. C. A. Ewen; and that the following gentlemen be asked to associate themselves with the committee: Hon. Dr. R. McNab, Messrs. A. Turnbull, T. L. Buick, and C. Wilson.”
- “That the expenditure of the vote for the collection of historical and other matter relating to the Maori race, and for the establishment of a historical collection regarding the early history of New Zealand, be left in the hands of the committee set up to consider the question of collecting historical matter.”
- “That Messrs. Morgan, Ewen, and von Haast be a committee to advise and assist the Director of the Museum in the purchase and collection of specimens.”
- “That Dr. Thomson and Mr. Morgan be a committee to formulate a scheme for the disposal of the geological specimens belonging to the Geological Survey and now in the Museum, such scheme to be then submitted for the formal consent of the Hon. the Ministers of Mines and of Internal Affairs.”
- “That it is desirable that the number of members of the Board to be appointed by the Governor in Council should be increased.”

It is regretted that for private reasons Mr. A. Turnbull has been unable to act on the Historical Collections Committee, which has already met under the presidency of the Minister. The collection of material has already begun.