

The Board has endeavoured to determine the general requirements of District Offices in order to evolve a plan which will serve in its general features as a standard for all buildings erected by the Department in future.

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING OFFICES.

Alterations to existing offices have been carried out at Auckland, Christchurch, New Plymouth, and Nelson. The work was in each case necessary to afford the staff proper accommodation and facilities for the performance of their work.

The alterations have enabled the staffs to be grouped and the controlling officers to take their places in positions where supervision can be properly exercised.

Alterations at Dunedin and Wanganui are also contemplated.

ALTERATIONS TO HEAD OFFICE BUILDING.

Alterations of an important and far-reaching character have been carried out in the Head Office building at Wellington. The marked expansion in the business of the Department had rendered the existing accommodation inadequate, and outside premises had been leased to accommodate the Wellington District Office staff. Some relief was afforded through the vacation of the top floor of the main building by the Government Statistician. As the Board felt that a considerable economy of space could be secured by a rearrangement of the accommodation, conferences were held with the principal officers of the various divisions, and the requirements were fully discussed. It was recognized that any scheme of internal alterations should include the provision of a large and speedy elevator. Plans of the alterations finally decided upon were prepared, and a contract for the work was let.

The top floor of the building has been converted into a tea and luncheon room for the use of officers generally and a rest-room for the use of the women staff. Extensive alterations were made on the first and third floors, and have enabled the staff of the Department to be much more suitably arranged. The new elevator has proved of very great assistance in reducing the traffic on the stairways of the building. A fire-escape has been constructed at the eastern end of the building.

In carrying out these alterations the Board has recognized that the comfort and convenience of the staff must proceed hand in hand with the discipline and organization. The work was carried out with a minimum of inconvenience to the staff and with very little disorganization of the work of the Department.

ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL PREMISES.

It was found that the improved accommodation was still inadequate to contain the whole of the Department's staff. To provide accommodation for the Intestacy Division on its severance from the Soldiers' Division it was found necessary to lease additional premises. The necessity of consolidating the record system also involved the provision of additional accommodation. It was therefore decided to purchase the building at the corner of Stout and Ballance Streets, in order to afford the necessary additional space. The ground floor, on completion of the necessary alterations, was occupied by the Local Deputy Public Trustee, Wellington, and his staff.

When the existing tenancies on the first and second floors of the new building have been terminated the premises will be remodelled. It is proposed to locate the Soldiers' Division on the first floor and to allot the second floor to the Records Staff of the Office. A large room for the typewriting staff and another for the machinists' staff will also be provided. This rearrangement will enable the Intestacy Division to be brought into the main building.

INTERNAL TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

An internal telephone system has been installed in the Head Office building by the Post and Telegraph Department. The exchange has worked satisfactorily, and has proved of great assistance in providing rapid communication between the various divisions of the Office and the public. Arrangements have been made for the extension of the system as soon as the newly acquired premises are brought into use.