

DEPARTMENTAL.

Auckland Law Court Buildings.—Alterations have been carried out to the first floor to accommodate tenants transferred from the third floor.

Christchurch Customs Offices.—The erection of this building in Carlyle Street has been commenced, and will shortly be completed.

A contract has been let and a commencement made with the erection of the Wanganui Native Land Court Building; and the Greymouth Explosives Magazine has been completed.

COURTHOUSES.

New Courthouses are urgently required in several places, but in view of the present financial conditions only urgent repairs and necessary maintenance work of existing buildings have been carried out.

PRISONS.

Progress in building-construction during the earlier part of the year was delayed to a considerable extent through shortage of timber and cement. Subsequently, when materials were more easily obtainable, a curtailment of expenditure hampered the building programme. At Auckland the expansion of quarrying operations and the erection of staff cottages were the principal works carried out. The installation of pneumatic drills, &c., has enabled the output of crushed metal to be greatly increased. Additional crushing-plant is being obtained, and bins and improved loading-facilities are to be installed. The erection of additional cottages and quarters for single officers was proceeded with at Waikeria. Similar work was carried out at Wi Tako (Trentham) Prison, where cottages removed from the Wellington Prison Reserve were re-erected, and a new residence for the officer in charge completed. The manufacture of bricks on the Mount Cook site having been discontinued some time ago, advantage has been taken of the presence of extensive clay-deposits on the Wi Tako Reserve to establish the industry there. The work of excavating and preparing the site for the brickyards, as well as the erection of plant, with the necessary buildings to house same, has been completed. A temporary kiln has been constructed in which a large proportion of the bricks required for the permanent kiln have been burnt. It is expected that this kiln will be completed and in working-order by the end of the year. Roadmaking between Waimarino and Tokaanu ceased during the year, and the prison camp was removed to Erua, where a start has been made with the reconstruction of the Ohakune-Waimarino Road—a section of the central main arterial road. At Templeton the construction of the new institutional buildings and officers' residences has been carried on, and a large supply of concrete blocks and tiles has been manufactured for use in this work, as well as for the erection of workers' homes under the Labour Department's housing scheme. The works carried out at Invercargill Borstal Institution have again been on a comprehensive scale, and in the development of the reclaimed area much work has been done in roadmaking and drainage. A massive embankment, a mile and a quarter in length, enclosing an area of 270 acres of estuary land required for a rifle range, has been completed. This area is being used for agricultural and pastoral purposes also. The erection of cottages and the new kitchen and infirmary block at the Borstal Institution has also proceeded satisfactorily.

POLICE-STATIONS.

Owing to the high cost of erecting new buildings, expenditure in this respect was confined to such urgent works as could not be postponed. New police-stations were erected at Dannevirke and Hokitika, a residence for the Senior Sergeant at Palmerston North, a lock-up at Te Araroa, and a new stable at Eketahuna.

In many cases where the Department's tenancy of rented premises was terminated, or where departmental buildings had become beyond repair and unfit for habitation, suitable properties were purchased when offered at a reasonable price. As compared with the estimated cost of erecting new buildings, this was found to be the more economical means of providing the necessary accommodation without undue delay. Such properties were purchased for use as police-stations at Rongotea, Woodhaugh, Lower Riccarton, Levin, Portobello, Port Chalmers, Seatoun, Ashhurst, Millerton, Belfast, Upper Hutt, Otira, Palmerston North (Cuba Street), Fortrose, Wanganui East, Green Island, St. Kilda, Ravens-