

APPENDIX C.

ANNUAL REPORT ON BUILDINGS BY THE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT.

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

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the activities of the Architectural Branch of the Department for the year ended 30th June, 1929 :—

During the period plans were prepared for seventy new works, of a total estimated value of £571,525, of which thirty-five contracts, to the amount of £132,755, have been let. In addition, twenty-seven contracts, to the amount of £191,327, for buildings designed prior to the 30th June, 1928, have also been let, making the total of works completed or under construction £324,082.

The latter total includes £57,839 for secondary-school buildings, and £6,970 for hospitals, &c., designed for Hospital Boards.

In addition to the above totals for buildings designed in Head Office, a large amount of minor additions, alterations, and repairs, and general maintenance of public buildings has been carried out by District Engineers, and a considerable quantity of furniture and fittings has been manufactured in the Public Works workshops for various Government Departments.

New Zealand materials and manufactures have been used, except where the use of imported material was unavoidable, with generally satisfactory results. Competition for Government contracts has been keen, with prices generally showing a downward tendency, and the standard of workmanship has been satisfactory.

The recent disastrous earthquake put building-construction methods to a severe test, and it is gratifying to report that Government buildings generally suffered little serious damage. Where such occurred the buildings were erected before the use of steel in combination with concrete became known as a building method. The serious damage to the post-offices at Westport and Greymouth is directly traceable to the towers, in combination with bad ground for a satisfactory foundation. In no case has other than minor damage been reported to modern buildings or additions in which reinforcement against earthquakes is provided in accordance with departmental practice, and it may therefore be claimed that reasonable protection is afforded the occupants.

The following is a schedule of the works carried out during the year :—

VICEREGAL RESIDENCES.

Auckland District.—General maintenance-work has been carried out, and electric bells and heaters installed.

Wellington District.—General maintenance-work has been carried out to the main building and various residences, and glazing, &c., of the glasshouse has been completed.

POST-OFFICES.

Whangarei District.—A new post-office has been erected at Herekino and fittings installed. Alterations and renovations have been carried out as required to fourteen offices and residences.

Auckland District.—Contracts have been let for new brick post-offices at New Lynn, Northcote, and Mercer, and the buildings are in course of erection. A new office in wood has been completed at Te Akau. Alterations and renovations have been carried out to sixteen offices and residences; a petrol tank and pump have been erected at Pukekohe, and extensive alterations effected at Hamilton Automatic Exchange.

Taumarunui District.—Renovations, &c., have been carried out to eleven offices.

Tauranga District.—Extensive alterations and additions were made to Rotorua Post-office, and renovations, &c., have been carried out to eight other offices.

Gisborne District.—A garage and storeroom were erected at Tokomaru Bay Post-office, and renovations, &c., carried out to eight offices.

Stratford District.—At Waverley the new post-office in brick and concrete, commenced last year, was completed, and a garage and lineman's store in wood and iron were erected. Very extensive additions in brick and concrete were carried out at Hawera Post-office. At Ohakune a new carrier-equipment building in brick and concrete is in course of erection. Extensive renovations were carried out to six offices, and general maintenance work attended to.

Napier District.—Work on the new Napier Post-office was commenced in October last. The new building is of three stories, steel-frame construction, encased in concrete, with brick panels, the street frontages being faced with Coromandel granite up to first-floor level and Oamaru stone above. Excellent progress has been made, and it is anticipated that the building will be ready for occupation before the time specified for completion—viz., 8th June, 1930. Additions to Waipukurau Post-office in brick and concrete have been completed, and repairs and renovations carried out to seventeen offices.

Wellington District.—A new garage, petrol-tank, and pump have been erected at Featherston Post-office, and a petrol tank and bowser installed at Otaki. Alterations and renovations have been carried out as required to thirty-one offices, &c.