

APPENDIX C.

ANNUAL REPORT OF BUILDINGS BY THE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT.

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

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the activities of the Architectural Branch for the year ended 30th June, 1937.

During the period plans were prepared for fifty-one buildings of an estimated total value of £1,905,000, of which eleven contracts, totalling £72,454, have been let. Eighteen other contracts to the value of £222,250, for buildings designed prior to 30th June, 1936, have also been let, making the total of building contracts let during the year £294,704. In addition, contracts for mechanical equipment totalling £40,094 have been let.

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 Offices, and a considerable quantity of furniture and fittings has been manufactured in the Public Works Workshops for various Government Departments.

Working details for buildings under construction from last year have occupied the time of a section of the staff, and additional assistant architects and draughtsmen have been employed to enable the larger volume of work to be carried out with reasonable expedition, but it has been found difficult to obtain sufficient men with the necessary training and experience.

Urgent work involved in the development of civil aerodromes and the National Broadcasting Service, together with staffing and accommodation difficulties, have prevented as rapid progress with the work of relieving the position with regard to departmental office accommodation as you desired, but all plans are now well forward.

The policy of giving preference to New Zealand materials and manufactures is proving very satisfactory, and manufacturers have responded and are producing goods of excellent quality at reasonable prices, and the number of commodities it is necessary to import is gradually lessening.

In most localities builders have experienced difficulty in securing a sufficiency of seasoned New Zealand timber, particularly totara, suitable for exterior joinery, the demand for partially seasoned timber having outstripped the supply.

Complaints of the noise occasioned by the erection of steel-framed buildings in populated areas have led to investigation of methods of eliminating noise, and contractors are now required to make every effort to secure that result. As a means to that end, the use of welding instead of riveting has been thoroughly investigated in co-operation with the departmental engineers. As the buildings to be erected are of considerably greater magnitude than anything of the nature attempted previously in this Dominion, very comprehensive investigation as to methods of design and execution have been necessary. Recognized authorities the world over have been consulted, tests have been made, and specifications are now in course of preparation which I feel confident will enable welding to be the standard practice of the Department.

The increased building activity of local bodies has occasioned a considerable amount of work in examining and reporting upon plans of buildings submitted to the Local Government Loans Board.

Under the improved conditions as to hours and wages prices have naturally increased, but there is no evidence of exploitation. Competition for Government work has been keen, and the quality of workmanship has been well maintained.

Appended is a schedule of works, which includes maintenance work and minor contracts prepared in the various district offices.

VICE-REGAL.

Auckland.—Additions to the orderly's office were completed, electrical heating and power services were installed, and repairs, renovations, and maintenance generally were attended to.

Wellington.—Extensive renovations were undertaken, which included new entrance doors and entablatures between the reception-hall and entrance-lobby, main corridor, council chamber, and drawing-room, also renovations and repairs to their Excellencies' quarters. Three new greenhouses were built.

POST-OFFICES.

Whangarei.—A new post-office was erected at Maungaturoto, and the Postmaster's residence is approaching completion. A new store and garage were erected at Dargaville. Repairs and renovations were effected at nine buildings, and alterations made to one. Electricity was installed in six buildings.

Auckland.—Extensive renovations were made to the exterior of the chief post-office, Auckland. A new garage at Stanley Street, lineman's shed and garage at Takapuna, and garage and store at Te Awamutu were erected. A start has been made to build a new post-office at Thames, and additions and alterations were carried out at Cambridge. Renovations and repairs were undertaken at thirty-eight buildings; alterations and additions were carried out to twelve buildings.