

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

To provide for prompt handling of films connected with the British Empire Games, a number of alterations were quickly effected at the Miramar Studios, and further alterations are proceeding to provide better studio facilities. Extensive remodelling of the A.B.C. Building, Wellington, is in hand.

RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT

Plans have been prepared for a bus station at Roxburgh, and others are in course of preparation for a traction-control building at Kaiwarra and a station at Naenae.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Extensive alterations to the store at the Physical Laboratory at Gracefield have been completed, and work is proceeding on extension to the Fats Laboratory in Sydney Street. A Magnetic Observatory has been established in the Botanical Gardens, Christchurch, while a commencement has been made with the erection of glasshouses and a store for the Agronomy Division at Lincoln.

STATE HYDRO-ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

At Roxburgh, No. 3 Camp is now under construction and plans are well advanced for Community Buildings, Shops, Y.M.C.A., Diesel generator building, and permanent staff housing. Additional office accommodation has been constructed for Head Office staff in Sydney Street, and a new substation is under construction at Invercargill North.

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS

The provision of fire-escapes and alterations to the kitchen at the Franz Josef Hostel are practically completed, while work on the erection of fire-towers and extensions to the store at Chateau Tongariro are well in hand. Proposals for the reinstatement of Milford Hostel following the recent disastrous fire have been prepared. Plans are also in hand for new lounge bars at the Chateau and Waitomo, together with improvements to the lounge at Te Anau.

GENERAL

In addition to the foregoing, a considerable volume of building Services' work has been undertaken. This has taken the form of new mechanical and electrical installations in existing buildings, together with the provision of fire-sprinklers, fire-escapes, alarms, and fire-fighting equipment of all types. This aspect of building-work has developed considerably of recent years.

The extent of work handled by the Division during the year is shown in the following summary :—

	£
Expenditure on building operations	1,399,713
Works completed and under construction	2,784,025
Working drawings completed or in hand	3,814,857
Sketch plans prepared for projects	5,239,846
Workshops	403,883

Many difficulties have been encountered in the execution of this work, mainly due to the fact that the building industry has not been in a position to meet the demand for construction expeditiously. The rate of progress has been seriously limited by large shortages of both labour and materials. In many trades, particularly in the more skilled, the number of experienced men available has been inadequate, and conditions have been such that the few available have not been prepared to work outside the main centres. Attention must be focused within the industry on trade training schemes capable of providing a continuous flow of competent manpower.