

APPENDIX C.

ANNUAL REPORT OF 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 Department for the year ended 30th June, 1931.

During the period plans were prepared for forty-one new works, of a total estimated value of £329,460, of which sixteen contracts, to the amount of £56,250, have been let. In addition, thirty contracts, to the amount of £188,801, for buildings designed prior to the 30th June, 1930, have also been let, making the total works completed or under construction £245,455.

The latter total includes £73,126 for secondary-school buildings.

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 showing a downward tendency, and the standard of workmanship has been satisfactory.

Earthquake.—The Hawke's Bay earthquake of the 3rd February subjected buildings to an exceedingly severe test, which Government buildings, generally, on account of their more substantial construction, withstood remarkably well, there being no cases of collapse other than the clock-towers of Hastings and Wairoa Post-offices, and no reported injury to persons except those resulting from the falling of the Hastings tower. The Post and Telegraph Department, to obviate this danger, has for several years discontinued the practice of building clock-towers.

The departmental building at Napier and Port Ahuriri Post-office were totally destroyed by the combined effect of earthquake and fire.

The new post-office at Napier successfully withstood the shock without structural damage, but was completely gutted by fire.

All modern brick buildings and additions erected by the Government in the area embodied earthquake protection (uncalculable), and some came through the ordeal unscathed, others with minor damage only, while some show large cracks and extensive damage, which serve to prove that Government buildings were not, as has been repeatedly stated, unnecessarily strong, and that comparatively little more earthquake protection would have been sufficient.

In view of the lesson learned in Hawke's Bay, steps are being taken to provide additional stiffening in existing buildings where such is deemed necessary.

In recent years all State buildings of over three stories in height have been designed with steel frames definitely stiffened to withstand the horizontal forces of a very severe earthquake.

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

VICEREGAL RESIDENCES.

Auckland.—Improvements were carried out to the kitchen, including tiling-in of the large gas range. General maintenance was also carried out during the year.

Wellington.—General maintenance was carried out during the year. Four fireplaces were dismantled and modern grates with tiled surrounds were installed.

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Sundry renovations were carried out as required during the year.

POST-OFFICES.

Whangarei District.—Additions were made to post-offices at Kaitaia and Kaikohe. Extensive alterations and additions in brick and concrete were completed at Whangarei Post-office. Alterations, repairs, and renovations were carried out to four other offices.

Auckland District.—At Upper Symonds Street, Auckland, a new three-storied post-office, with steel frame and reinforced-concrete walls and floors, has been erected and is practically ready for occupation. At Mount Albert, Auckland, a one-story brick post-office has been erected. Extensive additions in brick have been carried out to Newton Post-office, and in wood to Papatoetoe Post-office. Extensive alterations have been made to Auckland Central Post-office. Additions, alterations, repairs, and maintenance have been carried out as required to twenty-seven post-offices and residences.

Taumarunui District.—A new post-office, in wood, was erected at Te Anga. Renovations and repairs were carried out to eight offices.

Tauranga District.—Extensive renovations, &c., have been carried out to Rotorua Post-office. A new roof was provided for Mokai Post-office. Repairs and renovations were carried out to four other offices.