

Royal Engineer Office,
Auckland, 29th June, 1859.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward herewith for transmission to the Colonial Government the Estimates for works and repairs to Barracks and Civil Buildings proposed to be carried on by the Royal Engineer Department in the New Zealand Financial year commencing 1st July proximo, and I beg to submit a few remarks with reference thereto. (Enclosure.)

The Estimates for new works amount to £10,820 12s. 2d., those for Barracks amounting to £9087 3s. 8d., and those for Civil Buildings to £1733 8s. 6d. The Estimates for repairs to the two classes of buildings being respectively £3232 2s. 7d. and £228 15s. 7d., making a total of £3460 18s. 2d.

These amounts are large, as was also stated in the correspondence covering previous Estimates, which arises partly from the circumstance that for two or three years, pending the arrangements for transferring the obligation of the repair of Military Buildings from the Imperial Government to that of the Colony, nothing but casual repairs were executed, and thus the Buildings have sensibly deteriorated, and partly from the necessity of providing additional accommodation for the Troops, to carry out the Regulations recently promulgated, with a view to their sanatory condition and consequent increased efficiency. Further, it is my duty to bring forward every service that is demanded by the several Military Departments, or which may appear to me to be requisite for the convenience, health and discipline of Her Majesty's Forces, and the necessary requirements of those Departments, leaving it for the consideration of the authorities who grant the necessary funds, whether they will execute the whole of the works and repairs in the year for which they are proposed, or will postpone those least pressing, so as to spread the expenditure over a more extended period.

On the presumption that the latter proceeding will be adopted I beg to indicate so far as regards new works, those services that should take precedence of others in execution. Under the head of Barracks, the provision of a new Regimental Guard-room with a Military Prison attached, is a service of primary importance, in consequence of the very limited size of the former, and the inadequacy of the present wooden building termed the "Temporary Military Prison," to carry out suitably the punishments awarded by Courts Martial. The enlargement of the Main Guard-room at Britomart Point provided for under Item 11, is also a very necessary service, in consequence of the confined area and unwholesome condition of the present Guard-room. The erection of a Hospital with its appurtenances at New Plymouth, provided for in Items, 32, 33, and 34 is recommended as an economical arrangement, in order to save the rent of buildings, which will probably have eventually to be met by the Colony; for a similar reason Items 37 to 40 are proposed, and if the services provided for therein at a total cost of £480 are carried out, an annual saving of Lodging money, which is to be paid by the Colony, will be effected to the extent of £164.

Items 52, 53, and 54 were services included in a special Estimate forwarded for consideration on the 21st December last, to meet the requirements of the service when the lease of the Buildings occupied by the Commissariat expires, which will happen on the 30th September next. For these Buildings, including those occupied by the Royal Engineer and Military Store Offices, an annual rent of £450 has been paid, and though premises less extensive will suffice for the Commissariat alone, the Engineer Department being accommodated without expense elsewhere, and the Store Department being removed from the station, yet it is not probable that suitable premises, if hired, will be obtained for less than £250 per annum. This rent, being a fresh taking, will most probably have to be borne by the Colony, hence it will be for the interest of the Government to execute the services referred to. Cogent political reasons require that Wanganui should be sufficiently occupied by a Military Force, hence at least 200 men are posted there, but the Barrack accommodation, according to the scale laid down of 500 cubic feet per man, is only sufficient for 135, the consequence is the Barracks are unhealthily overcrowded, and additional accommodation is most requisite. To meet this urgent want I have introduced Item 56 into the Estimate, providing for accommodation nearly sufficient to make up the deficiency.

In the Estimate for Civil Buildings, Item 1, for an Armoury to contain small Arms retained for the special use of the Colony, is a service of pressing importance to relieve the overcrowded Storehouses and to admit of the stores being properly arranged according to the Regulations. The deficiency of store accommodation was represented by Colonel Wynyard, late Commanding the Forces, to the Secretary of State, and this Item (which has already been brought forward) together with Item 5 and also Item 17 of the Barrack Estimate, are included in pursuance of the instructions in your letter of the 1st instant No. 1721, which covered the correspondence on the subject, copies of which are attached to the Estimates.

As respects the ordinary and current repairs, I have to remark generally, that they are requisite in consequence of decay and wear and tear, or are services due according to the Regulations at stated periods. The only Items that call for special observation are Nos. 63 and 64. These services have been repeatedly brought forward in the Estimates submitted both to the Imperial and Colonial Governments, but have hitherto been postponed for want of funds. The present condition of the fences is such, that they are not susceptible of the defence for which they were constructed, being in a most decayed condition and partially fallen from that cause, thus the Stockades are not secure in case of an attack from the Natives, and Wanganui, the most important Military post in the Southern part of the Island, is comparatively useless as a defensive position.

I have sent with each of the detailed Estimates, abstracts thereof in duplicate, two of which I propose should be retained by the Government for the use of the Finance Departments, and the