

The new courthouse at Blenheim is almost completed and will probably be in occupation by the time this report is presented. This building will be noteworthy for its up-to-date heating and air-conditioning plant. This was found desirable owing to the exceptional range of the seasonal temperatures at Blenheim.

One of the principal events of the year was the laying of the foundation stone for the new Law Court Building in Christchurch to take the place of the existing inadequate buildings. A contract has been let for a new courthouse at Invercargill, and the foundation stone was laid on the 31st May last. A small courthouse is now in course of erection at Matainui.

During the year fairly extensive alterations and additions were carried out to the courthouses at Levin and Dargaville.

A number of improvements to heating and acoustic properties in existing courthouses has been carried out during the year. This almost completes a minor programme of the past three years. The principal work carried out under this head during the year was at Gisborne, where complete heating of the courthouse was installed, and at the Magistrates' Court, Wellington, where improvements by means of circuit boosters were carried out. At Timaru improvements to the acoustics of the courtroom have been effected.

The programme of rebuilding courthouses will engage attention for several years to come. The following are the main works in contemplation: At Whangarei a site has been acquired and a commencement will have been made on foundations of a new building before this report is presented; at New Plymouth and Nelson negotiations are in progress for enlargement of the present sites, and it is hoped that plans of a new building for New Plymouth will be in preparation by the end of this calendar year, and that plans for Nelson may be undertaken during the next year; at Thames a new site has been acquired and plans are being prepared, and at Napier a courthouse is under consideration for the near future.

At Wellington there is considerable inconvenience at both Head Office and the Supreme Court through inadequate accommodation. It is frequently necessary for Judges to share rooms. Extensions to the Law Library are also essential. It is proposed to provide additions to the Arbitration Court building, which was designed for such extension. This will enable more suitable accommodation to be provided for the Judges and will relieve the congested staff accommodation at Head Office.

#### AGRICULTURE.

During the past financial year it was not possible to proceed with the erection of the proposed new building at the Wallaceville Veterinary Laboratory, but its erection is now in hand, and when completed will provide the Veterinary Research staff with the facilities which are essential to the development and performance of the exhaustive programme of research into live-stock diseases which the Government has initiated.

Laboratory accommodation is also being provided at the Mamaku Experimental Farm for the use of the research officers who have been detailed to undertake a special and exhaustive investigation into cobalt and its relation to health of stock.

The investigation and research work being carried out at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction into matters associated with animal husbandry, facial eczema, weed-eradication, and pasture work necessitates the erection of suitable laboratory buildings to house the Chemist, Animal Physiologist, Botanist, and Veterinarian. Provision has therefore been made in this year's estimates for an item to cover the cost of the proposed building.

Other work of major importance that is contemplated is the erection of new staff quarters at Flock House, Bulls. Plans have been prepared, and it is anticipated that the building will be completed during the current financial year.

#### PRISONS.

The continuance of reduced numbers at all institutions enables existing accommodation to meet the Department's needs. Expenditure during the year, apart from maintenance, has been confined mainly to mechanization of industries, improvements to plant and buildings, and erection of staff cottages. These cottages meet the needs of additional officers appointed consequent upon the introduction