

# NEW SAVINGS BANK

## AN ATTRACTIVE BUILDING

DIGNIFIED AND DISTINCTIVE.

ASSET TO NEW PLYMOUTH.

NOVEL IN STYLE; MODERN FITTINGS.

For the past four months the citizens of New Plymouth have watched with interest the steady construction of the Savings Bank building, till to-day, completed, it stands in Devon Street, one of the most attractive premises in the town. With its milk-white face, strengthened in physiognomy, as it were, by four granite pillars, two quaint lamps, big gold lettering, and other architectural embellishments, it arrests attention when seen from any part of Egmont Street, and simply demands a favourable impression. An eye for beauty would never deny praise and admiration.

It is most fitting that the new Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, is to perform the opening ceremony of the new bank on June 13, Friday next.

While not ambitious enough in height to be stately, the building is undoubtedly dignified. Its pure whiteness in a less bright setting allows it a distinctiveness that is emphasised by its unusual construction architecturally. It is in perfect keeping with the bank's progress and soundness. At once it gives an assurance of security.

The directors made an excellent choice of locality, and were careful not to mount the spot in an inappropriate house for their future business. Their wisdom is revealed in every line of the new bank. They thought of posterity; not of to-morrow. And in looking so far forward they did not totally ignore fickle fashion in architecture; for the building embraces solely no set style of a recognisable period, but in many respects is novel, and likely to remain so.

### Imposing Frontage.

Firstly, there is ample room, a point too much stress cannot be laid upon. The dimensions are 130ft. by 26ft. When closely inspected, the frontage is both imposing and inviting. The building's face is of terra cotta blocks, effectively arranged in the English Renaissance style. The relief given by the darker material used in the joints is excellent, even from a distance.

A striking entrance is provided by a portico, the floor of which is laid down in terrazzo, which adds character to the general design. Four handsome Doric columns of Balmoral granite, highly polished, add further tone. Their perfect lines carry the eye uninterrupted and voluntarily upwards to the balcony above, then smoothly on to the building's handsome top.

Immediately inside the portico, attached to the main wall, on each side of the doorway proper, are suspended from brackets two quaint lamps of no definite type or pattern, but most attractive, especially when lit. They are cast-



THE NEW PLYMOUTH SAVINGS BANK.—This new building, an acquisition to the architecture of the town, is to be officially opened next Friday by the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe.

—Photo by J. A. Austin.

ried out in brass and bronze, the material and shade again toning with the general scheme. Even the glass is beveled and polished to create effect. The lighting is automatically controlled, and requires no attention whatsoever.

### Lights automatically controlled.

At a certain time every evening the lights come on, and later are switched off, the controlling machine making its usual alteration in the time according to the seasons. The lamps, as well as the brackets, and grilles, balusters, kick-plates and blocks within, and the gold lettering, were executed by the Cambrian Engineering Company, Ltd., and are a permanent tribute to the company's excellent work.

The entrance doors are massive, of dark green wood enamelled; they are ornamented and set off by heavy handles.

Flanking the doors and behind the lamps are windows, headed in sections. Directly within the doors is the vestibule, with a deeply coffered ceiling, but not so deep as to preclude quiet decoration. The walls also are modestly ornamented with elegant panels. This absence of garish embellishment, of anything blatant or exotic, is appreciated

throughout. From one side of the vestibule a wide staircase of terrazzo leads to the board room on the first floor. This room is spacious, beautifully furnished, abundantly lighted, comfortable and cosy. Its front opens by three glass doors, constructed in small sections to enhance appearance, on to the balcony, from which a wide view is obtainable.

### Attractive Entrance Doors.

Wide swing doors of Tasmanian blackwood, choice in colour and glassy of polish, and glazed with bevelled plate glass, give access to the waiting lobby, which is conveniently large, being 22ft. by 18ft. The walls and ceiling of the lobby are designed appropriately. From the lobby are the doors opening into the president's and manager's rooms, which, though compact, are by no means small, and serve their respective purposes excellently.

Passing through the lobby (and in so doing even the most casual observer cannot miss the bank's monogram worked into the carpeting pattern), the spacious banking chamber is entered. This splendid chamber is 56ft. long by 28ft. wide. Its appointments are modern and faultless. The great care taken in its design is evidenced at

every turn. The walls and ceiling are designed in the best architectural manner, effect without loss of dignity, and quietness being again a characteristic. The finish is in white plaster, and reflects much credit upon the contractor (Mr. A. Morrison), who did all the plain and architectural plaster work (except two fibrous plaster ceilings) throughout the building.

Ample lighting and ventilation are provided by six large glazed leadlights in the ceiling, and six wide ones high up in one side wall. The latter set are opened and closed by a series of easily manipulated levers, instead of hanging cords. The principle of the lighting is direct, there being no borrowing or reflection.

### Ample Electric Lighting.

For night work, 12 handsome white globes, dustproof and throwing a clear, comfortable light, are suspended from the ceiling; and they are far enough hung from the floor not to deceptively rob the chamber of its true height and defeat the ends of the fine tall panels. Also there are eight wall bracket lamps, those in the public compartment of the banking chamber being wrought in the same material and design as those at

the building's entrance. Five special swivel lamps, in green, and adaptable to any desired position, are provided in the tellers' boxes. The chamber, though big, is sufficiently heated by electric radiators, which are designed and placed to keep proportion with the rest of the fittings.

On one side of the banking chamber are ranged the tellers' boxes, the counters French polished, and the fronts grided. They show a very effective and businesslike front. Tables and chairs for the public are arranged opposite along the wall. At the far end is the ledger section, which is divided from the main portion by a blackwood screen to match the tellers' desks, and relieved with leadlights of brilliant-cut, exquisitely-patterned glass. The Tasmanian blackwood, in which all the screens and fittings are carried out in the banking chamber, lobby and vestibule, allows a very fine polish; and the material is hard enough to stand any amount of endurance without showing signs of wear.

### Rubber Carpeting.

The floors are covered with rubber carpeting, neatly designed and serviceable of colour. Unseemly noise is eliminated on such floors. In the banking chamber and lobby the bank's monogram is displayed in the floor design.

At one side of the ledger room is the large strong-room, securely guarded by the latest in safe doors, and equipped with an iron gate. The inside is automatically lighted. Opening off the ledger room is a passage leading to the stationary room and conveniences on the ground floor, and from the passage access is gained by a staircase to the social hall and lunch room. In the latter every facility is provided for the comfort of the staff. The passage mentioned also leads down to the basement, which contains a vault and store-room.

At the front on the first floor the board room is notable for its panelled walls and ornamental plaster ceiling. The three bronze casement windows make a perfect finish as well as adding light. The floor is also covered with rubber carpeting. Off the adjoining landing is the cloak room and lobby for the use of board members, and on each side of the room a recess is provided for reporters. The board room contains a handsome table in horse-shoe shape, finished in New Zealand wood, and equipped with 18 large, comfortable, leather-covered chairs. A table for the president is also provided.

The whole building is of reinforced concrete, and is constructed in three sections. The front portion is two stories high; the middle (banking chamber) one story, with continuous glazing along the roof; and the rear section is three stories high. The lighting and ventilation of every part of the building are on the most modern lines.

The architects were Messrs. Messinger, Griffiths, and Taylor. They designed the building, all the interior and exterior fittings, the bronze work, and the arrangement of the furnishings. They may well be proud of their work, which has been the subject of much complimentary reference.

It is pleasing to note that local contractors were prominently represented in the construction work and the supply of fittings. The directors' faith in local industry was fully justified and rewarded. The contractors responsible for the erection of the building, including the fixing of the terrazzo blocks, were Messrs. Jones and Sandford, Ltd., who also made their own fittings.