



The Atkinson Building

TWO VIEWS of the Atkinson Building: above from Devon St. and, below, from the air.

The view of the front of the building from Devon St provides interesting contrasts of architectural lines with patterns of light and shade.

The wide canopy and the wood-finish foyer form an impressive entrance to the building.

Five stainless steel vents on the eastern side of the roof are for the gas-fired heating and hot-water boilers, while the one at the other end is

for the incinerator.

The location of the Government Departments is: GROUND FLOOR: Labour, Internal Affairs, Lands and Survey (part). FIRST FLOOR: Audit, Forestry, Agriculture. SECOND FLOOR: Lands and Deeds, Valuation. THIRD FLOOR: Lands and Survey (part). FOURTH FLOOR: Lands and Survey, Ministry of Works (part). FIFTH FLOOR: Ministry of Works.

The big spenders

The Ministry of Works could be dubbed: The Big Spender. But to justify this, the ministry can show plenty for its spending. The Atkinson Building is just one example. The Ministry planned the building, supervised its erection by contract, and has to pay for it.

State highways and bridges, the new airport at Bell Block, associated work with the Auckland-Wellington Kapuni natural gas pipeline—and still to come—work in connection with the New Plymouth Port suits you can see. And big money is spent in planning and "back room" work which the public never sees.

In recent years the ministry has spent about \$3 million annually in Taranaki, but with commitments for the next few years will substantially increase.

Staff

The ministry's staff of 56 now in the new Atkinson Building has the working conditions more suitable than such an important Government department. Previously staff were inadequately housed in second-floor offices on the eastern side of Egmont St. just down from Devon St.

The ministry has only been in New Plymouth since shifting from Stratford in 1952 when Mr Kelly Roberts, now with the New Plymouth City Council, was resident engineer.

In 1908 when the horse and buggy was the popular mode of transport and road ing was being provided for the road department Awakino Gorge in the north centred at New Plymouth and the Public Works Department at Stratford were State Highway 45 via Opuake and parts of SH 40.

The New Plymouth office was closed as the big era of railway development had reached a peak of 130 in the river, and for the next 20 or so years Stratford was a strategically placed town for the department. In a nutshell the ministry is broadly responsible for plant.

all Government engineering construction activities. The Taranaki activities are under the district commissioner of works, Wanganui Mr Charles Beale. The ministry advises the Minister of Works, Mr Allen on all local projects sponsored by the local authorities which require Loans Board sanction or qualify for subsidies.

It organises and issues subsidy money as agent of the National Roads Board for coal-fired power station and construction and maintenance of State highways and re-organises the administration of the National Roads Board Act.

The ministry's mechanical workshops look after Government vehicles and plant and a heating gang maintain all primary and some secondary schools' heating and power installations.

Some engineering construction work is done for the Education Department—such as playing fields at the NPBHS and Spotswood College and new stormwater drainage at the NPBHS. The ministry approves school swimming pool sites and carries out some engineering works for the Post office and the maintenance of such things as standby power plants for various departments.

Site development works for the State Housing Division is another activity.

Highways

On top of all this, some of the ministry's 100 outside staff work on the construction reconstruction or maintenance of the network of State highways from the north to the south. This includes the Manawatu Bridge in the south. This includes State Highway 45 via Opuake and parts of SH 40.

The outside staff this year reached a peak of 130 in the winter, with extra men engaged to help with the stacking of pipes for the gas pipeline at the Bell Block gas treating and wrapping treatment plant.

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THREE INCHES from the eastern side of the Atkinson Building, the old Post Office building. This is why the building will still be incomplete when it is officially opened tomorrow morning. The finishing of the building, including the fitting of sun screens on the lower floors, cannot be completed until the old building is demolished. Demolition has been deferred pending a decision on the fate of the adjoining Bell Block gas treating and wrapping treatment plant.