

Established 120 years ago

Two Government departments in the new Atkinson Building were established in Taranaki more than 120 years ago—yet the general public knows little about them.

They are the Audit Department, first established in New Plymouth in about 1832, and the Lands and Deeds office, established in 1856.

The Audit Department covers all Government activity, some 80 statutory bodies such as the Dairy Commission and its overseas companies and about 2200 large and minor local authorities throughout New Zealand.

It has a branch in London and is responsible for the audit of New Zealand posts overseas.

The New Plymouth area extends from Taurarunui to Hawera. With the question of further amalgamation of local bodies being discussed, it is interesting to note that just between Taurarunui and Hawera, the department audits accounts of 11 municipalities, nine county councils, three power boards, 75 minor boards, four hospital boards, one harbours board and six other boards.

AUDITORS

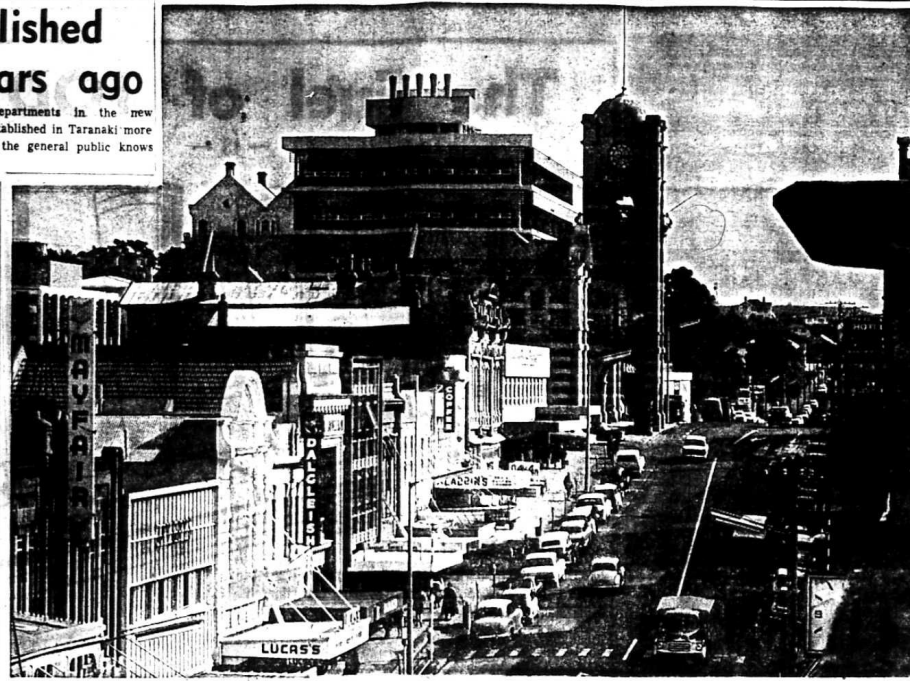
Two auditors who worked in Taranaki and later became Controller and Auditor-General were Messrs J. H. Fowler and A. D. Burns.

The boundaries of the Taranaki Land Registration District extend between the Moku River, Taurarunui and Patea.

The Land and Deeds Department provides a system whereby the ownership of land can be legally evidenced and dealings can be effected and recorded.

Since the first land transfer certificate of title was issued in New Plymouth 87 years ago, more than 65,000 certificates of title have been issued, involving the registration of more than 250,000 documents and the deposit of almost 10,000 survey plans. Almost all of these are now in the Atkinson Building.

The office has several functions which include operating as the former Stamp Duties Department.



The Atkinson Building

Taranaki Herald Special Feature

Watchdog against diseases

With New Zealand's economy based so heavily on agriculture, the Agriculture Department is a Government department of major importance.

It is the watchdog against the introduction of diseases from overseas as well as being responsible for the control of established diseases and anything else which may pro-

hibit agriculture development.

The department also operates an intensive network of research and allied extension services as well as inspection, advisory and information services to improve New Zealand farming activities.

The department in New Plymouth has moved from the old New Zealand Insurance building into the Atkinson Building.

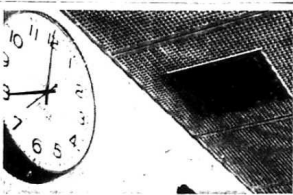
Obscure

Prior to 1915 the location of the department in this city is obscure, but in that year it was housed in the Taranaki County Council office.

The office of the inspector of stock at Waitara was closed in 1913 and he transferred to New Plymouth. Later in that year the department shifted into the State Insurance building in Egmont St.

It is interesting to note that the department is now

THE ATKINSON BUILDING, from King's Building in Devon St. The top floors of the new building offer a panoramic view of New Plymouth and the view from the lower floors will improve if and when the old Post Office is demolished.



sharing the first floor of the Atkinson Building with the Audit Department which 35 years ago, almost to the day, took over the premises in the county council building when the Agriculture Department moved out.

The Agriculture Department moved from the insurance building in October 1948 to Bates' Building in King St and 21 months later moved to the second and third floors of the New Zealand Insurance building.

Statement

A department statement for the Herald's supplement

Various office accommodations over the years could be described as somewhere between satisfactory and most inadequate. With the opening of the Atkinson Building, the Agriculture Department will for the first time in New Plymouth be accommodated in premises which are new, spacious, well-lit and specifically designed for the particular needs of the department.

Public space

"Particular emphasis has been placed on the area being used as public space, features of which are the two pleasantly furnished interview rooms."

With the increasing ser-

VICES being offered to the farming community by the department's various instructional and advisory services, these rooms will no doubt be in constant use and will afford pleasant and comfortable surroundings for the public as well as for the departmental officers," concludes the statement.

History

A brief look at the history of this department shows that the Provincial Governments operated a few agriculture laws, mainly concerned with stopping the importation of diseased cattle and the control of sheep scab.

With the abolition of Provincial Governments in 1875, the department was under the Lands and Survey until the Department of Agriculture was established in 1892.

At that time, the Secretary of Agriculture had under him a chief inspector of stock, and eight clerical officers, 30 stock inspectors, 28 rabbit agents, three dairy instructors and one nurserman.

Veterinarians were employed from 1894, poultrymen 1896, meat inspectors 1899, apirarists 1904 and dairy graders 1908.

In 1909 the divisional organization was established under a director-general. The divisions today are administration, animal industry, dairy farm advisory, horticulture, sheep and wool, research and post agriculture service.

THIS screened ceiling duct is for air ventilation which is mechanically injected into each floor near the centre of the building to supplement natural ventilation.



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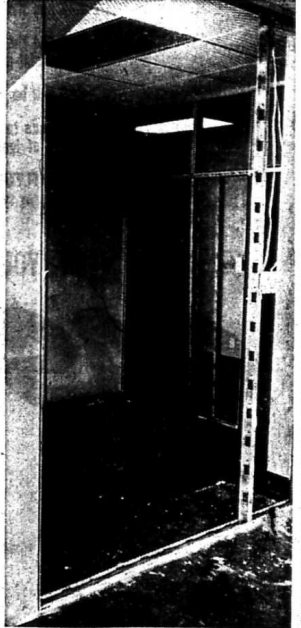


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THE ADVANTAGES of the movable partitioning in the Atkinson Building is illustrated by this picture. In this case the partitioning was left incomplete to allow the occupiers of this floor to move in large items of office furniture. It can easily be seen how this method of non-permanent subdivision gives great flexibility to meet changing needs for office space. The metal framework holds two facings of hardboard which sandwich fibreglass insulation. The outside surface of the hardboard throughout the building is finished either with mahogany or vinyl.

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