

The plans, specifications and contract are so made, as to ensure the completion of the main building, and one wing within the amount appropriated for that purpose. This will be sufficient, as is supposed, for some time to come, and the other wing can be added at any future time if it becomes necessary. Since the purchase of the property, the dwelling-house upon it has been destroyed by fire, but care had been taken to have it insured so that the loss will not be so great as it would otherwise have been. The amount of loss has not yet been recovered upon the policies of insurance, but no serious difficulty is apprehended in regard to it. The erection of the first of these two buildings was confided to the members of the Board of Public Works, and of the latter to the Board of Public Works and the Attorney General, and the inconvenience of frequently convening such a number of State officers, all having their time occupied with other duties prescribed by law, has been sensibly felt. Institutions outside of the State had to be visited, in order to obtain proper information, and a large number of grounds offered for the purpose, had to be examined, necessitating more delay than we desired, and involving considerable personal expense to the parties entrusted with the erection of the building. As much time has been devoted to the supervision of the work, as could be spared from the duties of the office, but those duties are such, that very little time could be so spared without detriment to the public service. I submit that so far as the Comptroller is concerned, the imposition of duties which can only be performed by absenting himself from the office, and which are not necessarily connected in some way with the revenue of the State, is hardly compatible with the public interests.

NEW ASSESSMENT.

The long period of time since the last assessment was made, and the fact that it was made just after the close of the civil war, when values can hardly be said to have been in a normal condition, have occasioned a very general desire for a new assessment of the property of the State. A bill was before the Legislature at its last Session, which although I had no part in its preparation, I think was well calculated to have ensured a more equal and uniform valuation of the property of the State, but by an unfortunate amendment, the bill although passed into a law, was rendered inoperative, and was so declared by the Court of Appeals, in a cause instituted expressly to obtain a judicial decision on that subject. The large falling off in the amount of the assessable basis in the State, and the inequalities known