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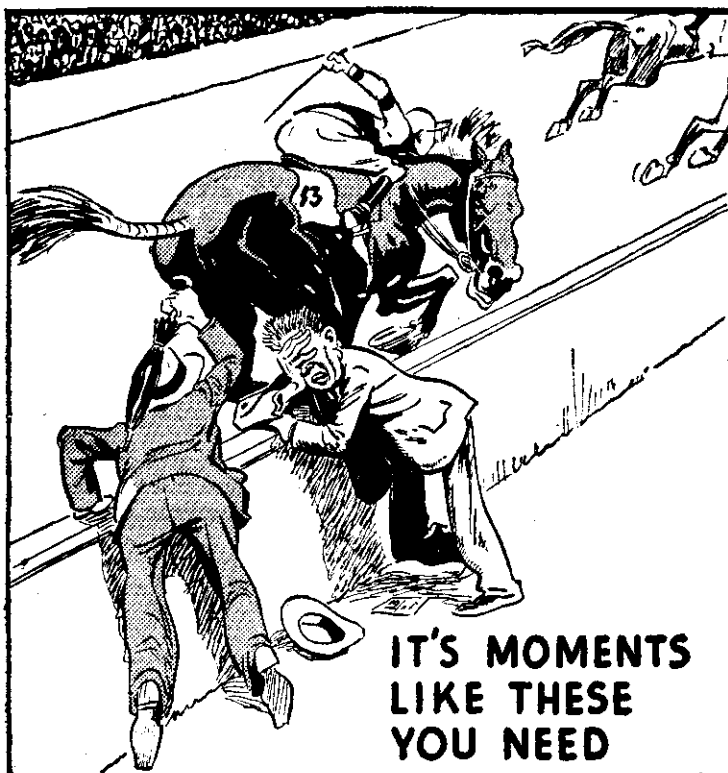
# ANDREWS

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## "TE ARO REBUILT"— The Story of an Exhibition

THE replanning of Wellington's business area has been discussed often enough, but students of the Wellington Architectural Centre's Summer School carried the matter a stage further in their recent exhibition, "Te Aro Rebuilt," by expressing their ideas in plans and models. The importance of their work is discussed in the accompanying article, written for "The Listener" by E. A. PLISHKE

THE purpose of the Wellington Architectural Centre Summer School in preparing their Exhibition "Te Aro Rebuilt" was to put before the people of Wellington a problem, and to indicate that a solution, though possible, is by no means easy or obvious.

The problem, by means of charts, photographs and models, is stated thus: How can the business quarter of Wellington be designed and built so that its technical functioning and its architectural order and appearance will be as near perfect as possible? The aim of the students has been to create public discussion, and their Exhibition has been a challenge to the intelligence and public spirit of the citizens as well as to the efficiency of the city's administration.

Elsewhere, in a more detailed discussion of this problem, I pointed out that a town planning architect should have complete understanding of the present and future needs of a modern town. And from these requirements he should, if he has vision and foresight, create a world of order and dignity; an aim which takes us far beyond the sphere of civil engineering. It demands the interest and support of the whole community. The appearance of a town reflects the state of mind of its inhabitants in the way a house, a garden or a room does.

Modern towns as we know them are the result of uncontrolled growth. In a young country such as ours the history of urban settlement is simple. Most of the larger settlements in New Zealand adopted from the first the gridiron pattern, at that time used all over the world, as a layout for their streets. This was an easy way out, for the pattern could be extended indefinitely, and growth did not demand any readjustment of plan. It was neither particularly imaginative nor very thorough. Such a "master-plan" could be applied to any town anywhere in the world. And the

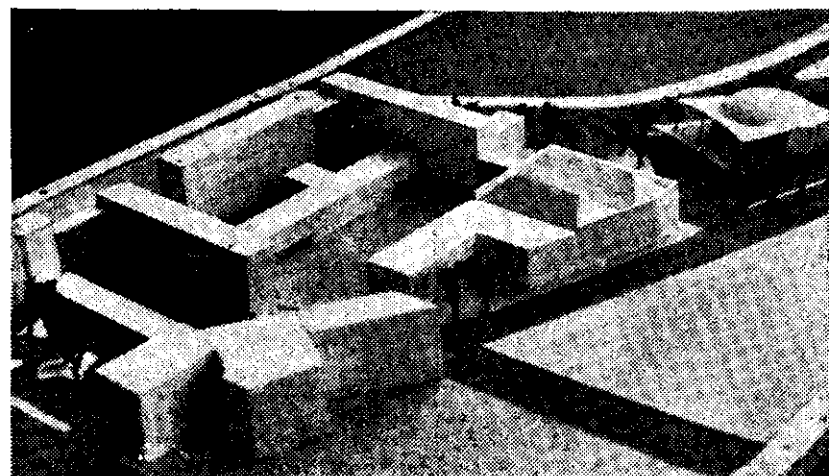
business quarter of Wellington, Te Aro, is an example of just such a plan which developed haphazard and uncontrolled.

### Awakening the Imagination

The proposal by these young students for designing and rebuilding the business area of Wellington is the first of its kind in New Zealand to give the public a lively and well-portrayed idea of modern town planning trends abroad. It tries to show the people of Wellington how beautiful and exciting their town could be. A dream? Not altogether, I think. At any rate, it is not a sleeping vision, but rather a day dream, a musing on what might be, forgetting the uglinesses that are. These architectural students have been able to walk through the streets oblivious of the ugly buildings, seeing already in front of them clean big buildings, open spaces, fine vistas. The dream is not entirely their own, and of course they have never pretended it was. They use freely photographs and ideas from Europe and America to help express and supplement their vision of what a modern metropolis should be.

Other members of the Architectural Centre with practical experience in planning or design were somewhere in the background. We made suggestions and gave advice when we saw that in their boundless enthusiasm the students were laying themselves open to the shafts of unfriendly criticism.

It has been said that the proposal is too general, too ambitious in scope and conception. But such criticism misunderstands the meaning and purpose of the exhibition. The idea has been to waken the imagination and ambition of the citizens of Wellington; not to deal with politics and economics. The political and economic aspect is only the short-term day-to-day view. Ad hoc considerations and decisions are by no means the most practical, and certainly don't get the best results. One has only to look at the haphazard and inefficient



THIS model, made by Wellington architectural students, shows a possible development of the city's Civic Centre. The present library building (centre left) is shown, flanked by higher civic buildings and facing the extended Town Hall block across a paved court