

No. 7.

Our Industries: P. Hutson & Co., Ltd. Wellington.

THE expansion of our industries and manufactories is the best evidence that the true and lasting prosperity of this colony is assured. When it can be shown that locally manufactured articles—for the supply of which we were once dependent on importation—are ousting the foreign article, and making a name for themselves for their quality, durability and cheapness, it is a matter for congratulation. In no local branch of industry can the awakening of the public to the financial gain in supporting our fellow-colonists be better shown than in the business of Messrs. Peter Hutson & Co., whose reputation as manufacturers of pottery, bricks and tiles has arisen to such an extent as to have kept the Wellington works busy night and day since 1901.

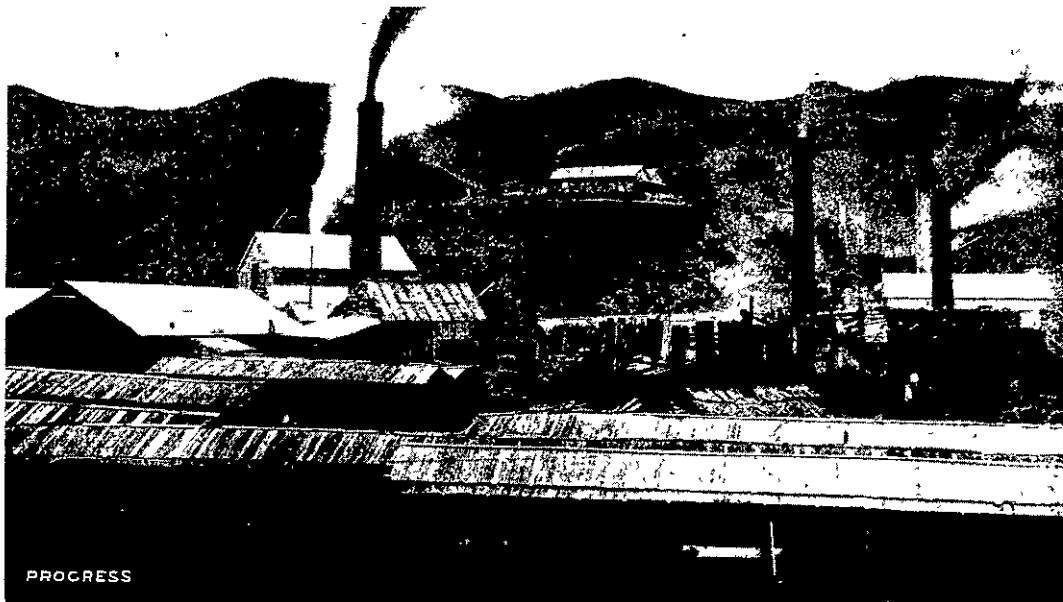
In a little beginning lies the foundation of most great enterprises, and this is true of the industry now under the consideration of PROGRESS, an industry which was originally established about thirty-four years ago. Fifteen years ago the works were taken over by Mr. Hutson. They were then upon a very primitive scale. There were only one brick machine and three small kilns; pottery was unheard of in the establishment; and to carry out the work only eleven employees were necessary. The works then stood alone in that part of Wellington; there was one villa in the background, and the hills were bare of habitation. Five years saw a remarkable change. The machinery was greatly increased, buildings had gone up where open ground was before, and in the vicinity signs of settlement had appeared. There were then thirty men employed; and as yet many parts of the establishment presented the appearance of broken-down tenements, or mere primitive shedding. A leap of ten years brings the reader to the present time, when the buildings, including handsome brick offices and store rooms, neatly and substantially constructed drying and modelling rooms, large brick kilns, etc., make an imposing show covering a total area of an acre and a half of ground.

At the time Mr. Hutson took over the factory it possessed only one small hand pipe machine, and one pug mill. Now there are three pipe machines, some of them of tremendous capacity, and the principal plastic brick-making machines are capable of turning out 2,000 bricks an hour, whilst another makes 1,200 an hour. The principle of construction is simple, and yet it has taken many years of labour and thought to bring brick-making to its present pitch of perfection. It is interesting to mention that many improvements and ingenious contrivances have been introduced into the manufacture by Mr. Hutson himself, and that he has been throughout his own engineer and architect, designing the whole of the buildings and plant.

To give briefly an idea of the process followed we must take the reader first in imagination two miles distant from the factory, where the Company

has a considerable area of ground which is utilised to procure the clay or raw material for brick and pipe making. No less than ten teams are constantly employed in conveying the clay from the pits to the factory and delivering the goods to customers, etc. Entering the premises by a wide roadway from Wallace street, the clays are deposited in two distinct sections, one for the pipe clay and the other for the brick clay. Here the material is soaked and matured, after which it passes into

space all over the building, and the main drying floor is scientifically arranged to admit any quantity of air from any direction required. It may be here remarked that Mr. Hutson devised an idea which has since been taken up by pottery manufacturers in Germany. This consists in the introduction of revolving shutters on the "weather" side of the drying room, which have proved of immense value. Shutters on every side and in the roof are capable of being opened and closed in a very short time in order to admit or shut out the air as desired. For the burning process there are four large brick-built kilns, of great substantiality and thickness. They are constructed on the down-draught system, and three of them are equipped with ten furnaces, whilst the fourth, which is the newest and largest, has twelve. This last kiln is capable of accommodating 30,000 bricks. The brick-and-tile-making plant includes one machine which should not be passed without notice. This is a large pipe machine which turns out the

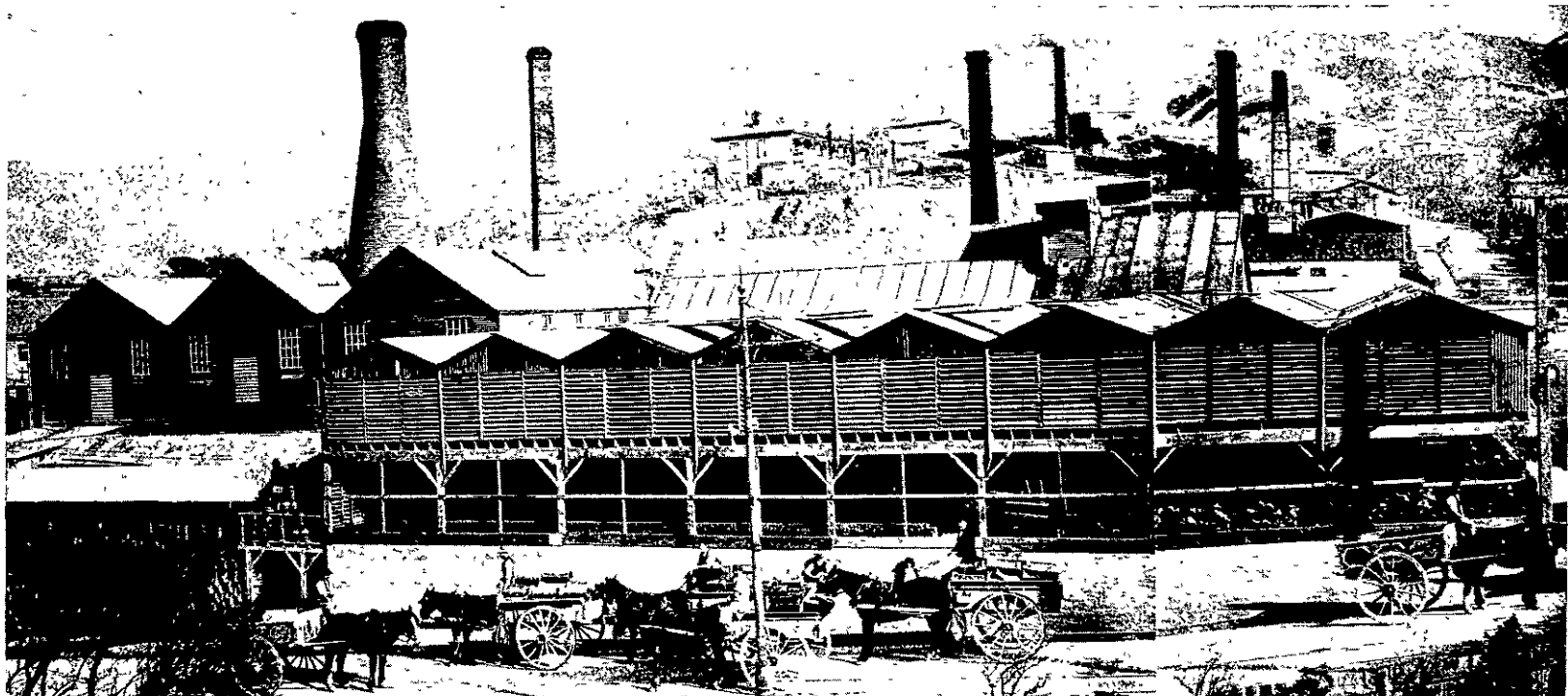


THE SIZE OF THE WALLACE STREET WORKS WHEN MR. HUTSON TOOK THEM OVER IN NOVEMBER, 1892.

the pug mill and afterwards into the machines. From the brick machine the moulded articles in plastic form pass across rolls to the cutting machine which delivers nine bricks at a time, and, as before related, the chief machines turn out no less than 2,000 an hour. The manufacture of the pipes is a still more interesting study, for it is amazing to see large six-inch pipes made in a few seconds. We carefully noted the time, and observed that, discounting preliminary work and delivery, the actual process of making these pipes takes about eight seconds, whilst the inclusion of the former only brings the time occupied up to fifteen seconds, so that the machine really turns out about 240 6-inch pipes per hour, or about 360 4-inch pipes in the same time.

The next process is that of drying, and then comes the final one of burning. There is drying

pipes up to twenty-four inches in diameter (the largest made in the colony) and it can be worked by either steam or hydraulic power. Of these large pipes this machine can turn out 20 in an hour. There is also another pipe-machine wherein 100 twelve-inch pipes can be made in sixty minutes. It is interesting to note that Mr. Hutson was the first to introduce the roller principle in brick-making machines. He had ball bearings sent from America, but they proved ineffective, and the Firm is now using roller bearings. On the upper floor, immediately over the brick-making section, is a department devoted to the manufacture of pottery and sanitary lines in plaster-of-Paris moulds. The articles here made include chimney pots, gully traps and like manufactures. The main pottery section is at the southern end of the buildings, and is separated from the brick and tile depart-



THE WALLACE STREET WORKS AT THE PRESENT DAY.