

It is, however, not only a question of unfairness to the competing architects. It is unfair to the community and the country. No Board, or, indeed, no individual has any right to spend money—however much it may be his own—on a building which is not a work of art. He has no right to spend large sums of money unless good value be received for it in every way.

Considered from a business point of view it is not good unless the best possible value be received for the money spent, and design is of equally great importance as first rate material and workmanship.

If, then, a poor design be adopted the money is not wisely laid out. We have before hinted that there is a moral aspect to the question.

It may not be apparent to all that morality has anything to do with architecture, but morality is far reaching and whatsoever a man says, does or builds is good or the reverse. As we said, this point may not at first be apparent but meantime we shall be satisfied if all those who build will set themselves to think it out. It is especially important that all bodies—Governments, Boards and Trusts—having large sums of money to expend in important buildings should leave no stone unturned in order to secure that the buildings erected under their auspices be good and beautiful.

In the competition directly under notice, namely for the Dilworth Ulster Institute for boys at Papatoetoe, the procedure adopted does not appear to have been exceptional.

It is true that the conditions stated that a competent architect would be employed to assist the Board in judging the merits of the various designs, but the selection was to be made by the Board. We understand on good authority that what actually took place is as follows:—

All the designs sent in were sorted by the Board into two classes. Those adopting a more or less closed type of plan, and those having plans of an open or hospital-like type. The Board then considered whether the closed or open type should be chosen, and having decided in favour of the latter they calmly set aside all those of the former and selected what in their opinion was the most suitable sets of plans after consultation with the headmaster of the school. Then, and not till then, was the consulting architect called in and asked to report on the selected designs. His report, which was of a purely private nature, is not available for publication. If this account of the procedure adopted be accurate it must be apparent to all that it was treating those whose designs the consulting architect did not see in a very unfair manner. At the most he only had an opportunity of saying which was the best of those designs selected by the Board. It by no means follows that they were the designs which best fulfilled the requirements of the school. Manifestly the Board at the outset ought surely to have stated that only one particular type of plan would be considered.

The truth is that no Board or layman has any idea of the vast amount of work expended on competitive plans for a large building else they, even in

their ignorance of purely architectural matters, would realise the unfairness of their actions and hesitate before consigning, unconsidered by a competent assessor, many solutions of the problem which, for all they know to the contrary, may have been masterly designs.

We are surprised that the Institute of Architects, a body of which we have heard much of late, did not make an effort to have the conditions for this competition revised and improved.

There are a number of points in the conditions to which we should have expected the Institute to object—namely that the Board was to select the designs, that the name of the competent architect who was to assist the Board was not stated, and that the Board did not bind itself to employ the author of the design placed first.

We understood that the Institute always asked its members to refrain from taking part in any competition when the conditions were not satisfactory but it appears that this competition had the Institute's approval, and that even prominent members of the Institute submitted designs.

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The Motor Bill has created a vast amount of criticism from all and sundry. Telegrams from various Motor Associations protesting against the Government's proposal of levying the tax have been the order of the day.

It does seem absurd to tax the horse power alone of a car. Is it not right that those vehicles which do most damage to the roads should contribute the most to the upkeep? If this is a fair assumption, then why not tax at a fixed rate per horsepower and also at a fixed rate per cwt. of the weight of the car? The 20 h.p. light car weighing say 8 cwt. would then not have to pay the same as a 20 h.p. car of say 25 cwt. Suppose the rate be made 2/6 per h.p. and 2/6 per cwt. tax, it would pan out as follows:—

20 h.p. at 2/6 per h.p. per annum	£2 10 0
8 cwt. at 2/6 per cwt. " "	1 0 0
	£3 10 0 full tax
20 h.p. at 2/6 per h.p. per annum	£2 10 0
25 cwt. at 2/6 per cwt. " "	3 2 6
	£5 12 6 full tax

Here the car that does the most damage pays the most, and a fairer result is obtained.

The framers of the Act have lost sight of (or have been ignorant of) the fact that both horsepower and weight have to be taken into consideration if the tax is to be a fair one. Horsepower because it has a direct bearing on the pace, and weight for obvious reasons, and common sense shows us that when an irregularity in the road is struck by a heavy car going fast, the maximum damage to a road takes place.

The question of the taxi-cab which continually uses the roads and is to pay least of all (according to the Act as at present framed) is also occupying the minds of many.

The Government will have to thrash these questions out in Committee before making the Bill law.