

standing. The adjudication should also be taken out of colonial hands. To overlook this important point will be to cramp up the whole business within the limits of accepted colonial comprehension. The appointment of an English architect as adjudicator would remove all possible suggestions of bias, conscious or unconscious, towards any particular type of planning or design. Though there is no haste in regard to the building, there is need to put the plans in hand, and it would be a decided advantage if our best architects were able during this time of comparative slackness, to give their thought and skill to a national project.

Restricted Trade.

The Imperial Government's embargo upon a number of lines of imports and exports shows that the economists are pretty wide awake, and that their ideas have to be put into practice under the stress of national need. The protectionist school seems to have enjoyed a good deal of satisfaction out of the changed plans of the administration, and the sight of Free Trade ministers abandoning temporarily at any rate, their fast-held doctrines. The Commonwealth Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, who got to London just in the middle of a lively discussion on the subject, was hailed by the protectionist school as a heaven-sent champion of Imperial wisdom, but by this time we should imagine that the canny Colonial statesman has discovered that British politics and British journalism will give points even to the Commonwealth in partisanship. War time does not soften controversy in England, and Mr. Hughes, with his virile and audacious speech, has helped the protectionist school to prevail over the men who, at the moment, under national stress, are obliged to abandon the old "free market of the world" idea. We suspect that the embargo on paper pulp imports into England was a mild, bloodless weapon adopted by the British Government in its controversy with Sweden over the extensive trade which that country has carried on with Germany during the war. Ships carrying paper and paper pulp to England have taken back goods badly wanted by the Germans, but consigned to Sweden. The difficulty has been to prevent leakages into the Hun country. To cut down sea tariff between neutrals and England is one way, and this restriction of imports also has the good effect of improving the balance of trade. Britain has become a big importing nation. The goods it formerly exported to pay for its imports (and to earn profits a good deal in excess of the cost of those imports) are now going into the firing line. The nation has to be forced to live more upon its own resources, and keep down its growing indebtedness to outsiders, hence the strong hand of the Government has had to be exercised upon imports and exports. We feel it at this great distance from the Homeland, and if it means further sacrifices by the community, these will be cheerfully faced. Our readers may have noticed that "Progress" has had to come out in diminished bulk. Paper supplies are so uncertain that we count ourselves fortunate in being able to come out regularly, without sacrificing the high quality of paper so essential for reproduction of half-tone work and fine line drawings used in illustrating the letterpress. Running necessarily under short sail, we can keep up our steady association with a wide circle of readers, who, like ourselves, are only waiting the lifting of the war-cloud to launch out into full activity.

Town Planning

Last session a hopeful deputation of town planners interviewed the Hon. G. W. Russell, Minister of Internal Affairs, in order to urge upon him the need of a comprehensive Town Planning Act in New Zealand. The ministerial answer, which we recorded at the time, was quite satisfactory, but many months have passed since the minister undertook to have a Bill prepared, and not a word has been heard of any official activity. It was recently decided by the Wellington Town Planning and Municipal Association to jog the ministerial memory, but we expect to hear that the Hon. G. W. Russell has been so busy on the useful work of making adequate provision for returned wounded and convalescent soldiers, that town planning has passed out of his mind. It is a ministerial privilege to get other people to do what they are told. Cannot the Minister find a competent authority to whom he may delegate the duty of preparing such a measure for his approval and amendment? He has had so much to do with local government that it would take him very little time to sketch in outline the main lines of such a measure, or he could do even better by calling to his councils a small committee of men interested in the subject, and actively concerned in municipal matters and the architectural profession, who could fill in the details with ease and ability. At least two of the Australian States are legislating this year on Town Planning, their opinion being that this is the kind of preparatory work which can usefully be done while constructive undertakings involving large expenditure are out of the question. Mr. Chas. C. Reade, who visited New Zealand under the auspices of the English Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, is still in Australia engaged on the work of preparing legislative machinery to put town planning ideals into practice. The Tasmanian Government has enlisted his services in compiling a Bill to come before an early session of the Tasmanian Parliament and we learn from a recent communication that the South Australian Government will introduce a Town Planning Bill into its legislature early in June. Unless our town planning enthusiasts show their zeal and capacity, a Town Planning Bill in the New Zealand Parliament will appear in the successive Governors' speeches as a kind of annual parliamentary promise which never materialises—a make-weight on the regular programme of promises put forward at the beginning of every session to dazzle the populace with a vision of the all-embracing wisdom and energy of the Government in power.

Petrol Prices.

One hardly knows from hour to hour what he must pay for petrol. The position must be extremely difficult for taxi owners and the ever-growing number of commercial vehicle users. Many of the charges they make to the public are fixed by local by-laws, but under the exceptional conditions they are surely entitled to make up for heavily increased running costs by a proportionate rise in taxi-fares and transport rates. They have no Arbitration Court to fix a ten per cent. rise for them! Naturally, when prices soar, we suspect monopoly and market-rigging, but the Pacific freight rates prevailing to-day explain everything. If further consolation for our troubles is required, we find it in the fact that English motorists are paying 2/2 per gallon for their spirit, which is on a par with what we pay here.