

N.Z. BUILDING PROGRESS

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Architecture, Building, Engineering and Industries

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Editorial Comment

Rent Regulation

Parliament's efforts to restrict high rents—the trouble seems to be confined to Wellington—seem likely to end in a provision that the rent must not exceed 8 per cent. gross on the capital value of the property. That is the conclusion of the Prime Minister after listening to numerous suggestions from labour members and others, proposals so difficult to put into practice that he almost lost patience, threatening to throw the Bill overboard. This 8 per cent. proposal will suit some landlords splendidly. It will actually favour the most undeserving class, those who permit wretched little shacks to remain on high-priced city allotments. They can charge 8 per cent. on the gross value. The house might be worth £200 and the land £1000. So far as the tenant is concerned, his chief advantage lies in the house-room he gets for his rent. The landlord, regarding the inadequate dwelling only as a means to an end—a little assistance in holding on for high land values—can legally charge up to £96 per annum for the shack, which if it stood on a £200 suburban section, would only carry a legal maximum rent of £32 per annum. It seems to us that this belated attempt of the National Government to deal with war profits is not going to give much satisfaction even to the class they seek to assist.

Farmers' Economics

We would have imagined that the last people in the world to condemn importations of American motor cars would be the farming community, yet a resolution on those lines was brought before the recent annual conference of the Farmers' Union. If New Zealand was running into bankruptcy as a consequence of the war, something could be said for such a motion, but the plain fact is we are prospering to an unexampled extent through the part we are able to play in assisting to feed the Allied Army. Some of our profits go in motor cars, most of which are used as much for business as for pleasure. Who will seriously argue that because farmers blossom