

# Practical Town Planning Hints

In a series of six public lectures at Canterbury College, Mr. S. Hurst Seager, F.R.I.B.A., dealt with Town Planning in such an interesting and helpful manner, that considerable public attention was drawn to the subject. We have pleasure in reproducing some of the points made by the lecturer, of direct application in every New Zealand town.

Those perambulating advertisement hoardings, the city tramcars, were caustically mentioned by Mr. Hurst-Seager in one of the lectures. He went into the arithmetic of the wretched bit of commercialism to show that tram passengers got scarcely any advantage through tolerating these eyesores.

Some exquisite views of the inns of England and some of which had lately been renovated or erected after the old style, in connexion with garden cities were displayed. Showing one which was especially beautiful, the lecturer said: "Who would think of getting drunk in such a place as that?" He then flashed on the scene one of those squat, straight-lined hotels with which the people of Christchurch are all too familiar, and across it ran in 6-ft. letters, "Drink Blank's Beer." "No one," said the lecturer, "could help getting drunk in a place like this." (Laughter.)

The contrast was most telling, and was greeted with applause, a member of the Workers' Educational Association crying out: "Oh, comparisons are odious!"

"I have to work by comparisons," said Mr. Seager; "it is often the only way in which to bring the matter before people."

## THE VALUE AND BEAUTY OF TREES.

A special point was made of the need for the encouragement of tree-planting in the streets. Tree-planting, said Mr. Hurst-Seager was not alone to ornament or adorn the city or to provide shelter in winter and shade in summer, but from a health point of view should be encouraged. The leaves of the trees inhaled the poisonous carbonic acid exhaled by human beings and, re-converting it into oxygen, gave it out to the world again in a pure state. Nor did the popular conception that the trees obscured the light altogether hold good. The light might be directly checked by the leaves, but there was a wider diffusion of light than if it had been shot, as a motor-lamp projects it, into a blinding stream of concentrated light. That trees did not impede traffic was proved by the Continental cities, in whose leading thoroughfares trees formed a most beautiful aspect.

These remarks led to a great deal of discussion, and a "Press" reporter made it his business to interview certain gentlemen interested in tree-planting and municipal work.

A member of the City Council stated that his sympathies were with tree-planting. There was no doubt that it did make the city beautiful, and greatly improved the appearance of the town. But unfortunately, he added, there were many reasons against them. For instance, the roots of the trees tore—or rather, lifted—up the asphalt of the side-

paths and injured the road. They also greatly interfered with traffic, while in autumn the leaves of the deciduous trees made a great mess of the streets. The City Council had decided to issue no permits for further street-planting till they had received answers to letters written to many well-known municipalities where tree-planting had been done, advising them of the results of tree-planting as carried on by them.

Mr. H. G. Ell, M.P., honorary curator of the Christchurch Beautifying Society, said he was a believer in tree-planting in the city streets. It was a recognised fact in all the great cities of the world that tree-planting in the streets was productive of more good than harm. He would not, of course, plant trees in such a busy thoroughfare as, say, Papanui road, but he would confine his attention to the side streets, which mostly served residential quarters of the town. He pointed out that in these quarters there was no need of a macadamized road from footpath to footpath. As an example of what should be done, he quoted the cutting up of Mr. Charles Clark's Torrington Estate. Here the footpaths were 16 feet wide, with about four feet in grass. This could be planted and the effect would be very pleasant. He would have trees planted, not on the footpath, but some two feet away from the side-channel. In Auckland there were several beautifully-planted streets, and the trees in these were planted some 18 inches from the sidewalk.

Mr. Hurst-Seager interviewed with regard to the objections raised by the members of the City Council to tree-planting, stated that he could only quote Mr. Thomas Mawson, the eminent architect in England, who, in his works, gave tree-planting in cities a most prominent part. For instance, Mr. Mawson states: "The importance of trees in the general view of a city cannot be over-estimated," and he devotes a whole chapter in his valuable work on civic art to the best manner in which to plant and assist trees to grow in what to so many is an unnatural environment." The Mayor of Christchurch (Mr. Holland) stated he was very partial to trees, for he loved them, but he had to admit that there were certain roads which should not be planted. He would not plant any street running east and west with trees. In these streets the shade of the trees in winter made the roads very slippery and nasty, and they remained muddy much longer than unplanted streets. As regards the light, he did not think that trees should be allowed to wreck a lighting scheme that cost £22,000 to install. There were also the telegraph and telephone wires to think of. The matter required a good deal of consideration.