

N.Z. BUILDING PROGRESS

(With which is incorporated "The Scientific New Zealander")

A Journal for Progressive men interested in the development of New Zealand's
Architecture, Building, Engineering and Industries

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Incorporating the Journal of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

PRICE 6d. per Copy; 7s. 6d. per annum post free.

(Note: 1s. Discount allowed if paid in advance).

WELLINGTON, AUCKLAND, CHRISTCHURCH, AND DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND, FEBRUARY, 1917.

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Editorial Comment

Business and Pleasure

The new year is commencing well in the building trade, though it would be hard to predict what will develop later, with the prospect of more and more men being taken for what, after all, is the only work to be considered at this time, the winning of the war. And that seems definitely reaching finality. The economic struggle, though a long one, requiring more patience than dash, is clearly telling in favour of the entente. The British Navy's strangle-hold on the central powers is surely throttling them, and the leading authorities on the war now say that this year should see the end. New Zealand presents a remarkable spectacle for a nation at war. Never were its money accumulations so large, never has the general population spent so much on luxuries. The building trade itself would not be so flourishing, in spite of many difficulties, but for the fact that freezing works, hotels and picture theatres have supplied architects and contractors with ample work. Some professional men and builders have unfortunately not been able to share in the good things, as they had specialised mainly in dwellings, which have not been built in such numbers as before the war, when materials were cheap and money readily obtained. We hear much criticism of the expenditure on theatres during war-time, but cannot sympathise with those kill-joys who would materially lower the cheerfulness of the community, and its consequent resistance to the trials of the period, by putting the nation into sack-cloth and ashes. Money is pouring into New Zealand and it is a sign that it is being well distributed when the picture theatre has to cope with more patrons. Motor cars for the wealthier classes, and picture theatres for the masses, are in the same category. Nobody can throw stones at luxuries in New Zealand nowadays and none of the pained critics can even hint that we have failed to do what we ought in regard to helping the Mother Country in the crisis. We shall go on building theatres, as well as freezing works.