

WELLINGTON.

Inquiries made in Wellington go to show that during the past year the position of the building trades generally has been quite as good as ever it has been, and that the New Year, so far as the prospects can be gauged at present, promises to be equally good.

Owing to the war, there has been during 1916 considerable difficulty in getting men and materials, and it is thought that the same difficulty will be experienced in 1917. In fact, the labour difficulty will very possibly increase owing to more men going to the front. Builders fully expect that it will increase. Steel construction is practically at a standstill on account of the difficulty of obtaining the necessary material. Reinforced concrete buildings are going on to a limited extent, but the excessive cost of iron and steel has caused some of the projected larger jobs to be postponed.

House-building it was stated, has been surprisingly busy throughout the city during the past year. The work that is being done is mostly for people who are building for themselves on account of the great difficulty in securing or retaining rented cottages and the excessive rise in rents. "There is not much speculative building going on at all," said a well-known builder. "People come along and pay a deposit for a house, buying it over the tenant's head; and after a couple of experiences like that, he decides to build if he can by any possibility do so. And the reason the people pay the small deposit is because they have been turned out themselves, and can only secure a house in that way."

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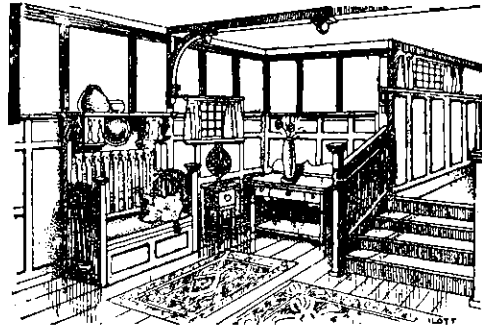
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