National Service "Hangs Fire."

National service has come in New Zealand, on paper, and the community are awaiting action from the Government to bring the ideal into actual practice. We gather, however, that the National Government is in no hurry over the matter. No doubt a radical scheme for the State control of essential industries, the reorganisation of labour by diverting it from unnecessary occupations, would have to be well thought out beforehand, and the need become thoroughly apparent before any complete scheme, upsetting ordinary business activities, would be acceptable to the public. The Government, by showing no haste, is admitting, it seems to us, that the conditions do not call for anything drastic just at present, so that worried business men may breathe a little longer, free from State interference. While on this point of State control, we would like to bring under the notice of our professional readers an illuminating little episode which occurred at a sitting of the Defence Expenditure Commission. The dentists of New Zealand, thoroughly organised under the aegis of the New Zealand Dental Association, patriotically volunteered at an early stage of the war to undertake dental treatment of recruits on a scale little, if anything, above "cost." They were officially recognised by the Government, their services resulted in hundreds of men who would otherwise have been classed unfit, being made dentally perfect, and suited for active service. Out of this grew the Dental Corps, an institution which has won golden opinions from those who know the value of its work. When the Director of Dental Services, Lieut-Colonel Hunter, appeared before the Commission, he was duly congratulated on the efficiency of the dental services, but was asked why dentists called up under the Military Service Act, and taken out of the ranks of private soldiers for the work of dentistry in camp and at the front, were paid ten shillings a day "professional allowance," as well as given commissions. The Director's answer was that they were professional men, and as national service was not truly national—in that it did not cover men of all ages—it was unfair to dentists to take them away from practice, giving their confreres who remained an unrestricted scope for private work owing to their absence. "Yes," said the very alert Chairman of the Commission, "but we found eminent lawyers, and eminent engineers in the ranks, and they were not getting the professional allowance!" Colonel Hunter could only suggest in reply that these eminent professional men had not had their special services utilised by the military. The Commission, however, had instances in which these professional qualifications had been utilised, but not paid for at the special rate, and the Chairman summed up the position in words which should strike home to the professional men who read these columns: "Does it not show that there are energetic people at the head of the doctors and dentists who have got something for their people?" A word to the wise is sufficient!

Hutt Concrete Road.

The Wellington City Council has informed local bodies interested, like itself, in the proposal to form a concrete track on the Hutt Road, that its engineer will go ahead with this important work as soon as finances can be arranged. We are glad that this experiment is not to be held over until the war comes to an end, as it is in the highest degree necessary that a start should be made in up-to-date roading in New Zealand. The development problem will at once become vital when the country begins to commence to recover from the troubles of the war—troubles due in New Zealand mostly to the suspended activities of development in a young country. The existence of such an object lesson as the Hutt concrete road will be immensely valuable. The war has thrown into great prominence the tremendous national value of efficient transport, nowhere of course, more than in the areas close to or included in the war zone. England had commenced, prior to the war, a splendid national system of maintaining and improving arterial roads, but moneys earmarked for the upkeep of the roads have been taken for other purposes during the war. Big sums are still being spent on their upkeep, but because of the wear to which they are being subjected and the shortage of labour, raw materials for repair, and money, they are deteriorating very quickly, and it is now recognised that millions of pounds must be spent in order that the roads may be put in passably good condition after the war in the interests of commerce and industry. In Germany and Austria the situation is said to be very acute, and in the United States the roads are being used to an increasing extent to relieve the congestion on the railways and to economise coal. The British Government and the Board of Trade have recently appointed a Road Transport Board to consider the working of the British roads in wartime, and a transport Committee has also been appointed for Scotland. The motor industry must welcome this new interest in the road problem.

Trading After the War.

The amount of attention given in English trade journals to discussion of after-the-war development of business within the Empire is a refreshing sign of a wakeful and receptive attitude. Before the war, it was hard to get an English pleasure car fully suited to all colonial conditions. In luxury, mechanical perfection and reliability English vehicles reached a high standard, but on muddy colonial roads, luxury of finish and completeness of equipment involving heavy weight are out of place. However, the war must have given English makers an idea of how bad roads may become, so that it will now be possible for a colonial agent to adequately picture to his principals the sort of ordeals a car must stand in the Dominion if it is to command wide acceptance. Leading English manufacturers are considering a comprehensive scheme for catering to the colonial buyer. They propose to adopt standardisation in cars, enabling spares to be cheaply provided.