

### Construction

Fully realising the importance of construction, the building has been erected in steel and concrete, and thus is monolithic and built for all time. Strong and fireproof it certainly is, and will bear the inspection of those whose limited opportunity of going abroad and seeing what can be done, are rather pessimistic regarding fireproof buildings. The Queen Street facade which is expressive of the construction is finished in Kairuru marble quarried in the Nelson district, and this is the first building to be completed in this stone. Something should be said of this Kairuru marble, one of the finest of the stones of its kind. Many

830 tons per cubic foot; weight, 191 pounds per cubic foot. By way of comparison between marble and other building materials it is worth noting that Oamaru stone has a crushing strength of 40 to 90 tons per cubic foot, and Mount Somers limestone 180 tons per cubic foot. New Zealand marble is as strong as most granites. These tests of resistance under crushing strain are regarded as most important in building materials, where the strain is mostly that of dead weight. Kairuru marble is coarse-grained, highly crystalline, and bears a strong resemblance to the marble obtained by the Greeks from the famous quarries of Naxos and Paros Islands, in the Aegean Sea. From this material the glorious buildings of ancient Greece



N.Z. Insurance Co.'s Auckland Branch and Trustee Offices (on Mezzanine) looking to Main Entrance

attempts have been made to place this stone on the market as a building material, but ten years of effort and many thousands of pounds sterling have been expended in attaining success. There are great quantities of Kairuru marble in the Sandy Bay district, but to get the marble out a £5,000 tramway has had to be constructed to the head of a deep ravine 1,130 feet above sea level.

A committee of experts was set up by the Government to deal with the important question of the durability of this stone, and samples of marble from Kairuru were tested for the committee's information at Canterbury College, by Professor Robert Scott, with the following result:—Crushing strength, 760 to

were constructed. Coarse grain is a quality of value. The finer the grain the more dead the polished surface. Kairuru marble, with its coarse crystals, gives a beautiful lustrous polish of a creamy depth as illustrated in the main corridor and side entrances to the N.Z. Insurance. As to the weathering quality of the marble, the aspect of the stone provides reassuring evidence. It is well known that certain qualities of Italian marble have stood well in a sulphur-laden atmosphere—in fact the beautiful national memorial to Queen Victoria, erected in London, contains 1,000 tons of Italian marble. It was, however, selected with the greatest care, only 25 per cent. of the quantity cut being used in the memorial.