

The Clock

The Tunet or Bracket Clock and systems of clock dials shown in connection with the New Zealand Insurance Building was imported and erected by A. Kohn (F. L. Diddams, manager), 178 Queen Street, Auckland. It is one of the most up-to-date systems of time keeping that is possible to obtain, and should be eventually adopted by all business houses where correct time is essential. The great advantages connected with these clocks are uniformity and accuracy with every clock in the building. No winding whatever is required. Effectiveness, reliability and independence are assured. There is little or no variation where a number of clocks are needed. The original outlay is no more than the old style of clock. The clocks consist of an electrically driven pendulum, called a master clock, which operates any number of dials. The pendulum is combined with a simple switch so that both the time keeping and switching functions are performed automatically, and in an ideal manner. Each dial has a "one wheel" movement behind it, yet this simple mechanism secures uniformity and accurate time-keeping without winding up or any other attention. The clock shown on the building has two dials placed "V" shape, to enable it to be seen the full length of Queen St. Each dial is 6 ft. in diameter, clock over all being 8 ft. Case is composed of antique bronze and weighs over a ton. The lighting is automatically turned on and off according to the season of the years. The power is derived from the city mains through the master clock erected in the board room. In case of failure of the city supply, the power is derived from the ordinary dry cells. The firm of A. Kohn have also in hand another order for a similar system to be erected for a well-known Queen Street firm.

Electrical Installation

The electrical installation is of a most comprehensive character, comprising over 500 lights and 150 heating plugs. Power is supplied from the underground mains of the Auckland City Council, and is led to two main switch boards in the basement from whence it radiates to 29 distribution centres throughout the building. All distributing pipes, telephones, wires, etc., are led up two conduit wells located on either side of the main stairway which extend the whole height of the building, providing an easy means of extending and altering circuits. The main offices and corridors are lit with indirect fixtures giving an even and restful illumination. Lighting and heating points are provided in each tenant's office, so arranged that any combination of rooms may be grouped for metering purposes at the switchboard with a minimum disturbance of connections. A private intercommunicating system of 20 lines capacity is installed between various parts of the main offices. Conduits radiate from each room in the building to the two conduit wells, permitting the easy installation of exchange telephones without interfering with the internal decorations. The two main elevators are of the Smith Stevens makes, having three speeds, the maximum being 300 ft. per minute. A smaller automatic elevator is provided for goods service. Messrs. Tolley & Son,

Chews Lane, Wellington, are responsible for the successful carrying out of the above installations with the exception of the elevators which were installed by The Electric Construction Coy., Auckland.

The Stairs

The stairs to the mezzanine floors are all in solid oak, and were built by Mr. Geo. Stevenson, who, in addition to giving a first class job, has faithfully carried out the artistic design which is the hall mark of the professional workman. Mr. Stevenson, who has for 20 years been building stairs exclusively, says that he is seldom given such scope as he had on the stairs at the New Zealand Insurance Building. No skimping or economy was required, everything is massive, solid and substantial, yet these stairs, although beautiful in appearance, are not over-burdened with enrichment. The beautiful straight lines with plain faces and bold curves showing off the inimitable grain of oak, give at once the impression of chaste design, substantial construction, and artistic workmanship. The stairs are a credit alike to the building and to the builder, and one would go a long way before finding such a combination of beauty, strength, and artistic merit as are found in these stairs.

Australian Boring Beetles

Some correspondence has passed through the Christchurch papers regarding the alleged danger of importing Australian boring beetles of a large size in timber used for telegraph poles. The matter was referred to Mr. E. Shrimpton, engineer to the Post and Telegraph Department, who said he had noticed the tunnels bored by beetles in the timber used for poles, but he had never yet been able to find the living beetle, though he had looked for it carefully. He considered that so far as the South Island was concerned, and the colder parts of New Zealand, there need be little fear of an Australian beetle living, as the climate would kill it. In the Auckland district, however, insects such as white ant had been imported from Australia, and damage had been caused by it, and in this climate boring beetles might survive. Mr. Shrimpton thinks that the holes in the poles were probably made when the tree was in its living state. Enquiries made at the Christchurch museum regarding the matter elicited the fact that Australian beetles of the boring variety had been found as far back as 1873. There was one labelled as having been found "in Tully's cowshed" in February, 1873, in the Wakefield collection, but, generally speaking, an insect of imported species was rarely found. On the other hand, New Zealand has a large native family of beetles ranging in size from a fraction of an inch to nearly two inches long, which all bore in timber during the larval stage, but in many cases these beetles do not attack the living tree, but chiefly confine their attention to dead and rotten wood. The opinion was again expressed by our informant at the museum that the cold climate of Canterbury and the South Island was more than likely to kill Australian insects.