

## Building Costs

### Discussion in Christchurch

An interesting discussion occurred recently in Christchurch regarding the increased cost of building. The matter arose over a hospital for Oxford County, which was estimated, presumably by the architects, at £3200, but when the tenders came in the lowest tender was £4300.

At a meeting of the North Canterbury Hospital and Charitable Aid Board the Chairman, Mr. F. Horrell, said that eight tenders had been received ranging from £4300 to £6700. Added to that were £400 for lighting, and the cost of furnishing and other details, and, on the basis of the lowest tender, the total cost would be close on £5000. Since the plans of the hospital had been sent in to the department, the Inspector-General had made certain alterations in them, so increasing the cost, and the prices of building materials also had risen. The matter affected the finances provided by the Oxford people, as well as the Board's finances, and the Finance Committee recommended that the position be placed before the Minister-in-Charge of Hospitals. It was now for the Minister and the Oxford people to say what should be done.

In the discussion which followed it was stated that the Board's estimate of the cost was prepared about six months ago.

Mr. O. Bradley advocated waiting until the war was over, being of opinion that, with the resulting increase in manufacturing activity, the prices of materials, apart from timber, would decrease.

Mr. H. J. Otley advanced different views. He pointed out that prices are rising "every day," and that the shipping difficulty, not only now, but also in the future, had to be considered. When the war was over, there would be a strain on shipping space, because of so many thousands of men having to be returned overseas to their homes. Again, an enormous amount of material would be required for the rebuilding of the devastated portions of Europe. He could not see any hope of prices falling appreciably for some considerable time after the war ended. Timber certainly would not get cheaper unless they could get cheap freights from America.

"What about the West Coast?" interjected another member.

Mr. Otley replied that the West Coast people could get more for their timber in Australia than it could be retailed at in Christchurch, but they were loyally keeping Christchurch merchants going. Unless the Oxford people could wait for five or seven years, he could not see that anything was to be gained by waiting until prices decreased, and he took it that proof of the real need of the hospital was provided by the fact that the Oxford people were so willing to provide their share of the cost. Mr. Otley added that earlier in the war he had advised his clients who wished to go in for building to wait, but now he regretted that advice, for people who could not wait any longer had had to build at greatly increased cost.

After further discussion it was agreed to place the position before the Minister, and that the Finance Committee should wait on him when he is next in Christchurch.

Curiously enough, the tender for the new morgue at the Christchurch Hospital, accepted a few minutes later, was found to be £170 below the estimate, but no statement as to the date of the estimate, or other explanation, was given.

### Builder's Estimate of Increases

A discussion arose at the meeting relative to increases which have resulted to the prices of building materials. Just what the advances during war period really mean can be realised from the following figures which have been supplied by a well-known builder:—

	Increases per cent.
Red pine .. .. .	50
Nails .. .. .	300
Linseed oil .. .. .	250
White lead .. .. .	175
Glass .. .. .	200
Galvanised iron pipes and fittings ..	200
Labour .. .. .	10
Spouting .. .. .	400
Lime and cement .. .. .	20
Laths .. .. .	125

Average increase on these lines .. 173

## Manufacture of Dyes in Britain

The High Commissioner for New Zealand, in London, has been informed by the British Board of Trade that in the last two or three years considerable progress has been made in the manufacture of artificial dyestuffs in Britain, and it may be taken that, generally speaking, British manufacturers are now in a position to meet the demand both of the United Kingdom and the Dominions for about 75 per cent. of the dyestuffs which they are likely to require under normal conditions. The remaining 25 per cent. are largely dyes of a special character, the manufacture of which can only be undertaken as the necessary raw materials and technical skill become available. Up to the present the progress has been most marked with regard to those dyes required for the woollen industry, particularly those used for woollen-piece-goods dyeing, and there is therefore reasonable hope that it will shortly be possible to meet the whole of the requirements of the New Zealand woollen industry for dyes from British sources of supply. In this connection it may be stated that during the year 1917 licenses were granted for the export to New Zealand of 7 1-5th tons of dyes.

Applicant: "And if I take the job I'm to get a raise in salary every year?"

"Yes, provided, of course, that your work is satisfactory."

"Ah! I thought there was a catch somewhere."—  
"Life."