

### The Open Sleeping Porch.

Every year sees more open-air sleeping porches added to suburban homes, and even to city homes in more isolated instances. This may be taken as an indication that the "fad" of open-air sleeping is taking hold of the imagination of the people. Of one thing, at least, there is no doubt what ever, and that is that no one who has given open-air sleeping a fair trial, and has overcome the initial wakefulness which the night noises and sense of openness may have induced, ever desires to return to the practice of sleeping indoors. Going to bed and going to sleep in the open, with the stars shining and the air cool and refreshing, become delights to be looked forward to during the day's work, while sleep under these conditions is a hundredfold more beneficial than that obtained in partly-aired rooms, where the sleeper, if sleeping alone, is constantly re-breathing a portion of his own vitiated breath, or if sleeping in a room with others, is inhaling a fair proportion of the air expelled from their lungs in breathing. To the practice of two or more persons sleeping in one room, is attributed practically all the infection during the recent epidemic. Scarcely a person who habitually sleeps in the open air contracted the influenza. In fact, the principal of Solway Girls' College in her annual report stresses the fact that not one of her numerous pupils suffered from influenza though the malady was rampant in the adjoining Masterton district; and this immunity she attributed to the practice of sleeping in the open air which is followed at the College. It may be objected that if everyone wished to sleep outside, a revolution in residential architecture would be caused, yet it would seem that a simple solution of this problem would be to build as many sleeping porches as possible and to make the bedroom windows of a type which would lift bodily out, and which could be replaced without difficulty should bad weather make this necessary.

### Present Prices of Roofing.

The greatest problem which builders of homes are confronted with at present is the question of finding a suitable and economical roofing material. It is frequently said that to-day it is not possible to roof a small cottage at a less cost than £40. And though this may appear exaggeration, when the cold facts are faced, it will be found that material and labour will soon run the cost up towards that figure. Galvanised iron may be dismissed at once as unprocurable. A recent inquirer at the headquarters of a firm which usually specialised in galvanised iron roofing received the rather surprising reply; "No, we have no iron, but I'll sell you some salt." Salt, however, though it be a valuable food adjunct has yet to prove itself as a roof-covering, and the inquirer moved on to make inquiries about tiles and bitumen-soaked coverings. These last-named are usually regarded as

temporary roofings, the idea being that when iron comes down from the clouds, or other remote places to which it has flown, the tarred roof may be covered with corrugated iron, and a snug, warm covering thus secured. But even temporary roofings are costly. Where double skins are laid, the first one stuck to the sarking with bitumen and the second skin similarly stuck to it, the cost is fully two-thirds of that of tiles. Never in the history of the world has one had to pay so much for the "roof over his head" as at present; and it is noteworthy that while many local roofing substitutes have been produced of good quality, not one of these offers any relief to the luckless home-builder as regards price. Forty pounds for a roof may read like a romance, but it is cold, staggering fact nevertheless.

### Sanitation of New Zealand Cities.

If a visitor to any of the four cities or principal towns of New Zealand was to approach a citizen and tell him that his city or town was dirty, the chances are that there would be a casualty in that neighbourhood. "This is a clean country," is a frequent statement by New Zealanders. It is not for us to say that it is not a clean country, as God made it and in those parts which remain so, it is one of the sweetest places of the world. But the clean winds cannot wholly eradicate the closeness of a back street; nor can they altogether remove the street dust and sweepings; although, in Wellington at least, the winds often have a really good try. If, for example, a Wellington man was told that Sydney is cleaner than Wellington, an Auckland man that Brisbane is sweeter than Auckland, they would wrathfully deny the statement. In such matters, words are vain. The only way to prove these claims would be to visit places outside New Zealand, keeping an open mind the while, and since it is not given to every man to travel as he wills, the best that can be done is to strive to keep our cities and towns so clean that they will be above reproach. It is needless to point out that in our cities there is a great field awaiting the workers in this realm of hygiene in New Zealand. The application of motor power for instance is simply revolutionizing the labour saving appliances that are used by all up-to-date cities for cleaning purposes. The motor water cart is already seen in most of our towns, and horseless road brushes and machines which will automatically and at the same operation sweep and pick up dust is being tested out in America. Even the necessity of washing roads at all by this method is almost obsolete in Paris, where roads with big contours are constructed to give a good fall for rain. The water cart is largely done away with, the hose being substituted in many instances. The advent of the cement road will again help to minimise the dust nuisance so common in our towns, and no doubt the City Engineers are watching developments in this direction.