

make important work for themselves each session in straightening out legislative tangles of previous sessions—a kind of very expensive "round game," in which the taxpayer has the privilege of footing the expenses-sheet.

Housing of the Workers

It is at least a hopeful sign that in the principal centres, the municipal election candidates have been almost unanimous in advocating improved housing facilities for the working man. Revelations of overcrowding were made as a result of the influenza epidemic, and the public conscience has been awakened thoroughly to the need for better houses and lower rents, so as to avoid over-crowding. If our national politicians could divest themselves of the restrictions of the National Government truce, and present their programmes to the electors, we believe they would be quite as unanimous as municipal candidates of all shades over this serious problem of housing. Even conservatively-minded municipal candidates are prepared to waive their prejudice against municipal trading so far as the field of housing enterprise is concerned, because the problem is too big for the individual. In our opinion it is so vast and so vital that the State, as in England, must take its responsibility. We would like to see the municipalities become the active agents of the housing policy, but it should proceed on national lines with State assistance to the extent of financing on the bed-rock terms available only to a Government. If money could be provided for municipal schemes at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., plus half per cent. for sinking fund, this would be a great improvement on private efforts to fill the need. Building operations could be undertaken on a big scale, instead of going through all the expensive preliminaries to build a single dwelling, and contractors could tender on better terms if they saw a chance of keeping their plant busy for a long period. Better terms could be made for the big supplies of materials. In fact, there would be money saved at every turn. Local authorities, as a rule, could best control the building and administration, as they are closely in touch with local needs, and there would be more personal interest taken in the success of the movement. If the housing scheme is based on the co-operation of the Government and municipalities, the Government being the financing medium, there is no reason why, in a few years, the repayments on dwellings purchased by tenants should not suffice to maintain an expansion of the scheme without further borrowing. This question should receive careful attention at the forthcoming Town Planning conference.

New Zealand Industries

The report of the Parliamentary Committee, which during the recess has been investigating questions connected with New Zealand industries, will be a valuable guide to legislators when the tariff next comes under consideration. It will be impossible to deal with the Customs' duties in a thorough fashion in a Parliament so divided as the present, where the Government holds office precariously on a war-time truce, but after next general election we may expect tariff revision, for it is many years since this heavy and intricate task was undertaken. The consequence of our out-of-date schedule is that many useful articles which

are largely imported, but were not known some years ago, come under the "not otherwise enumerated" category carrying a heavier duty than is equitable. These anomalies will be removed, and we can predict that the agitation for protection for developing industries in New Zealand will gain strength from the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee, though its report is not yet framed. Protection has hardly justified itself in most industries, if we are to judge by the price of the manufactured article and the growth of output, but a promising field is now opening up for factory enterprise in Canterbury, where cheap power from the Coleridge scheme is available, involving the very small cost of motor installations. The North Island seems likely to have its turn in the matter of hydro-electric power, though labour shortage is likely to make the development of the schemes in the Manawatu and Aratiatia rapids on the Waikato a slow process. New Zealand thrives to-day on the production of raw materials, but given population, cheap power and enterprise, we should be able to work up our own products, and send away cargoes even more valuable than those we now export. The fact that high wages have to be paid is not such a serious handicap as might appear at first sight, for English manufacturers have now been obliged to come more into line with the colonial standard of hours and wages, while we see in America a successful example of industries paying high wages, but producing at a price capable of competing in the world's markets, thanks to the aid of a good home market, and great skill in organising large outputs of standardised lines.

Training Apprentices

The Victorian Master Painters' Association having rejected the Architects' Institute proposals for compulsory training of apprentices, the decision was criticised in a recent issue of "The Australasian Painter and Decorator," by Mr. J. Lee, President of the Master Painters' Association of Christchurch. Mr. Lee's opinion is that technical school training during working hours, which we have often advocated, is quite a success in Canterbury. "The Christchurch Association adopted the daylight instruction and established the system over two years ago, with gratifying results," he states. "This was done successfully, notwithstanding we had every impediment in the shape of military and labour laws, unlimited suburban area to cope with, and a school in many instances remote from the employer's place of business. We overcame the two-hour session objected to by the Association in the only sane way possible, namely, by making it of four hours duration. The "clean up" argument has never interfered with the boys attending school smartly dressed and equipped with a clean suit of overalls for the class work. In the departments covering administration, scientific research, manufacturing and distributing, money has not been spared to command brains and energy. Money has been spent lavishly in machinery for perfecting scientific and modern material, yet when it comes to craftsmanship, they adopt this attitude. We are at a loss to account for the Association's rejection of the Architects' very laudable proposal. Surely when everything connected with material is fostered, the "human element" of the trade should not be neglected."