

members of the National Government. If private enterprise could have found a reasonable return from the building of dwellings, the shortage would not have been so pronounced, but the time has come when State aid is required in the provision of this necessity of life. Only in this way will the gap be bridged between prices which "pay," and those which not show a self-supporting basis. What has to be now included in the balance sheet is the national value of decent housing for the hard-pressed wage earner.

#### A Town Planner's Mission

With the object of getting to know the inner working of garden cities and industrial villages in the Old Country, Mr. Hurst Seager is about to leave New Zealand for an extended trip. He will make himself acquainted with developments since his last visit to England about ten years ago, and he is particularly anxious to collect particulars of the working of communal kitchens and similar devices to reduce the difficulties of house-keeping owing to the labour scarcity. It may be that future city dwellers will decline to burden themselves with separate cooking arrangements for each family. Cooking makes more work in the average house than anything else connected with the establishment, and if the drudgery could be concentrated, more efficient methods could be adopted and greater economy secured. Sydney has a half dozen flats with restaurants in the basements. Wellington needs this kind of building badly, as an alternative to the overcrowded boarding-houses, and the make-shift apartment house contrived out of a large dwelling which has been deserted by a former owner for better surroundings in the suburbs or country. If Mr. Hurst Seager's inquiries will induce a few New Zealand capitalists to invest in restaurant flats, or inspire the organisation of a communal kitchen or two in the cities, he will have done further service to the movement he has so vigorously pushed for many years. As the housing question is being thoroughly tackled in the Old Country, no doubt the New Zealand town planner will not wait for return to the Dominion, but will endeavour to assist the movement here with information he will send out in special articles. We heartily wish Mr. Hurst Seager well in his mission, which will not only be educative to himself—well planned as it has been—but will be of great advantage to New Zealanders generally, for the solution of many troublesome problems will be presented through the vision of one who knows the local conditions, and the special difficulties to be overcome.

#### Labour-Saving in the Home.

It is often alleged that in the designing of houses the architect pays too little attention to the requirements of the housewife. This may be true, but our experience of modern designs goes to show that where the owner can afford the necessary outlay the New Zealand architect has quite risen to the occasion in the way of providing ample cupboard room and good kitchen conveniences. This important phase of house design was considered in England by a special committee of twelve practical women of wide experience, under the presidency of Lady Emmott. The committee, in reporting to Dr. Addison, the Minister of Reconstruction, laid special emphasis on the importance, from the housewife's point of view, of a cheap electricity supply. Attention is drawn to the vast amount of labour, dirt,

and destruction entailed by open coal fires and their smoke. "With electricity," says the report, "half the domestic work now necessary will become unnecessary." Central heating for individual houses is sympathetically discussed, as are also different methods for obtaining adequate hot water supplies—a need of special importance to the household. The report goes on to emphasize the necessity in working homes of an ample scullery. The combined cooking-range and open fireplace usually provided in the living room might be superseded by a cooking-stove in the scullery which would also heat water for bath and sink. The need of a second fire in the living room during the winter might be met either by the use of radiators (as suggested earlier in the report in a paragraph on central heating) or by the use of improved fuel-conserving types of stoves. Experiments are now being made to produce a "cooking machine," with hot water system attached. As to communal kitchens, which will be the subject of inquiry by Mr Hurst Seager during his forthcoming visit to England, the women's committee does not approve without some qualification. The report suggests that it does not seem probable that communal kitchens, to which women could come and cook for themselves, will find favour. The solution of communal cooking would seem to lie in the supply of varied and wholesome-cooked foods at reasonable prices either by municipal corporations or by private enterprise.

#### Water-Power Schemes

During the last few weeks negotiations have been actively going on between the Minister of Public Works and the Waihi Gold-mining Company for the purchase of the Horohoro power installation which has provided the Waihi mines with electricity for some years. Possibly the purchase will have been concluded by the time this issue is published, as we understand there was a good chance of coming to an agreement regarding the price without the necessity, as provided in the Company's licence, to fix the purchase price by arbitration. This shows that the Government is at last quite alive to the necessity of doing something to develop the hydro-electric resources of the North Island. The Horohoro plant will be able to serve the Waihi mines, and also a large area of good productive country along the power line, as well as some portions of the Waikato. About 3,000 horse-power has hitherto been taken for Waihi, and there remains 6,000 horse-power for general industrial purposes. Six miles higher than Horohoro, at Arapuni on the Waikato River, is the site of the Government's proposed electric station. It is ideal for the purpose, as a dam across a gorge about a chain in width will back up the water for about twenty miles, thus providing a fine storage and good fall, while Lake Taupo, from which the river runs, gives a storage which will never fail. Between 150,000 and 160,000 horse-power will become available from this station, so that the needs of Auckland and the Waikato will be fully provided for. County Councils on the East Coast of the North Island are showing activity from Gisborne down to Hawke's Bay, and it is quite possible that their local schemes, dove-tailing with the general scheme laid down by Mr. Evan Parry, will soon reach a practical stage. Two Otago schemes to be run by local bodies have been financed by loans arranged in London by Sir Joseph Ward, so that if the labour supply is equal to the demand, the future of cheap power for the Dominion is a bright one.