

The following prizes were awarded to New Zealanders:—Third year, 2nd prize: books valued at £15 15s., Mr. H. L. Massey, of Auckland. Among the "mentions" appear the names of Mr. E. W. Armstrong, Mr. A. M. Bartley, Mr. K.M. Driffin, Mr. F. E. Greenish, Mr. H. C. Grierson, and Mr. E. S. C. Millar. In this issue appears a drawing by Mr. A. M. Bartley, A.R.I.B.A., reproduced from the "Architect," August, 1919, and also a design for a provincial Bank by Mr. Hugh C. Grierson, of Auckland.

The following New Zealanders have qualified for Associate of R.I.B.A. held in July this year:—Mr. G. S. Reid of Dunedin, Mr. S. Natuseh of Wellington, Mr. E. W. Armstrong, of Gisborne, Mr. H. A. Brown and Mr. H. L. Massey of Auckland, Mr. J. White of Dunedin, and Mr. E. Reidy of Auckland.

Permission has been granted by the N.Z.E.F. for architectural students who gained scholarships to study at the Pennsylvania University in America, as soon as a diploma has been gained by them in England. It is the intention of Messrs. Armstrong, Morgan and Massey to avail themselves of this opportunity at the end of next year, thus giving 18 months study in America before returning to N.Z.

## A Note Upon Architectural Competitions.

By C. Reginald Ford, F.N.Z.I.A.

Some forty years ago a great English architect, the late Edward M. Barry, R.A., neatly summed up the case against Architectural Competitions. In response to an invitation to enter into a competition for the design of a proposed building he wrote as follows:—

"I have to ask you to express my best thanks to the Committee for this mark of their confidence, and, as I am sure that the invitation was intended as a compliment, I feel it due to them to acknowledge it gratefully. Considerable experience has led me, however, to the conviction that competition is one of the worst modes of obtaining good designs, and that it is bad for the employer, bad for the architects, and bad for art generally. It is bad for the employer, inasmuch as, among other reasons, it prevents that intimate communication of ideas with the architect, during the preparation of the designs, which is necessary to prevent future disappointment, and even to secure a correct understanding of what is ultimately proposed. This is one main reason why so many complaints are heard (when it is too late) that the convenient use of the building has been sacrificed to mere showy considerations, such as it is the tendency of competitions to foster and develop. It is bad for the architects, inasmuch as [several men] are expected to waste their time, labour, and even money, as no architect can prepare competition designs without incurring considerable expense. Nothing of this kind is expected of other professions . . . No

one thinks of asking six lawyers or six physicians to expend their ability and funds in order that one among them may receive professional employment. It is bad for art generally as it induces the preference for showy drawings to really good architectural design, and because it generally ends in disputes and heartburnings."

If the architectural profession were the only sufferer from the competition evil, and architects were foolish enough to go on competing, despite much bitter experience, then, perhaps, nothing more should be said upon the subject. Barry, however, rightly placed first among the objections to architectural competitions the fact that they are opposed to the true interests of the promoters of them. He himself refers to one grave fault inherent in the competition system, that the resultant design is most unlikely to be the best possible solution of the problem set, owing to the necessary lack of co-operation, while the design is being worked out, between those who have to use or control the building and the architect designing it. Very little experience in the planning of buildings, even of those of comparative unimportance, suffices to prove that the evolving of a successful plan is very rarely indeed a straightforward and simple matter—the easy arrangement of certain abstract requirements. In practical design the solution of the problem confronting the designer almost invariably requires the careful consideration of many conflicting and oftentimes irreconcilable claims. In order to gain one desired object another must be sacrificed. This of course is true of purely architectural considerations which the architect alone can decide upon. But especial reference is now made to points in planning concerning the successful functioning of the completed building upon which the advice of those who were to use it would be invaluable. Any architect of experience will readily acknowledge that his most successful works have been those in which he has had the close co-operation of an intelligent and sympathetic client. One sees a point, the other develops it, and this in turn, perhaps inspires some other idea, and so the plan grows. This is not to suggest that the layman does his own planning—the competent architect by his training and experience is alone fitted to cope successfully with the problems of the arrangement of varying spaces with proper means of access and communication, so as to make of a conveniently and economically arranged building an architectural unity. But, as has been suggested above, the planning of modern buildings, particularly those of a more complex nature, means the adjusting of conflicting requirements, and the decision which requirement must give way can best be made by those who are, perhaps, to spend their days in the building, or who have expert knowledge of the processes to be carried on in the same. In the very nature of the competition system this co-operation between client and architect is impossible. The chance fitting together of a nebulous puzzle replaces the skilful working out of a scientific problem.

Whenever a competition is proposed its advocates claim that it will bring to its promoters the