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Editorial Comment

Town Planners Misunderstood.

Wellington's City Engineer, Mr. W. H. Morton, has returned from a trip to England and America fully alive to the importance of the Town Planning movement. The announcement of his conversion was so quaintly put that half the Town Planners in his city are laughing, and the other half are taking him up very seriously over his suggestion that "town planning is not generally understood in this country." What Mr. Morton should have said was that he had not previously troubled much about the New Zealand Town Planner, and had therefore not understood what are his ideals. However, travel always broadens the mind, and the local enthusiasts should rejoice over the influential disciple they have won at last. Mr. Morton has quite failed to follow events in New Zealand if he really believes that Town Planners are merely enthusiastic simpletons who think that they can persuade municipalities to cause revolutions in bricks and mortar, so as to provide the public with expensive boulevards. Their main text has been to prevent the recurrence of former past mistakes, by proper planning of new areas. One of the points most earnestly advocated has been the extension of the right of official control over sub-divisions. Wellington City is the only municipal body which possesses this right in New Zealand, and no doubt this advantage is due to the City Engineer having some enterprise and foresight, and being well backed by his Council. He was thus a Town Planner without knowing it. His view of Town Planning may possibly have been warped by local experiences, for the movement for some years has been bound up in Wellington with a ratepayers' association—and ratepayers' associations are more fond of negative than helpful criticism. Though Mr. Morton has taken up quite a superior attitude in regard to the New Zealand town planner, he does him unintentional justice by carefully outlining, in a report to his Council, a large number of Town Planning ideals which, fortunately for the reputation of New