

N.Z. BUILDING PROGRESS

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Architecture, Building, Engineering and Industries

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Editorial Comment

Regulations—and More Regulations. The building industry is now regulated from one end to the other. Possibly the latest series of official restrictions will have some effect in concentrating effort along the most useful channels, but it seems to us that the great bulk of building has already been done for highly useful objects connected either with the housing of the people or the development of our industries. It will not make for cheapening of building to create any preferential atmosphere around any class of work, and we have yet to see how officialdom will conduct itself now that it has been given a further large slice of power. Everything depends on the interpretation of the regulations which we print in full in this issue. Every building job worth £20 and over has to undergo the scrutiny of the Board of Trade officials, or the local bodies who will represent them, deciding whether work is essential before issuing a permit. Houses for the wage earner are admittedly most essential, but buildings for carrying on business are almost equally needed, and unless trade is encouraged, there will be no way of paying the high rents for the dwellings—for even State and municipal dwellings are not marvels of cheapness nowadays. For five or six years the country's business firms have been putting up with cramped accommodation, and warehouses and stores have been congested with the primary products of the country. The need for extension of business premises cannot be overlooked, and it will be necessary to watch very carefully the official decisions regarding priority of permits. After all, regulation will be nothing but a very inadequate palliative. How can dwellings be provided if materials are doled out in small quantities, and jobs are held up for days through non arrival of supplies? An increased output of timber, cement, bricks and similar products is the real crux of the position, and if the Government will direct its regulating activity into some practical channel for the improvement of shipping services in respect to coal and timber, the building of houses will receive