

NEW ZEALAND ARCHITECTS' SUCCESS.

Big things are being done in housing in England, and it is very gratifying to find that two young New Zealand architects, Messrs H. L. Massey and A. P. Morgan, (Associate members of the N.Z. Institute of Architects) are in the midst of the movement. They are engaged on a scheme for mass production of houses. It is proposed to erect 2,000 to 3,000 houses straight away. The ideal in planning will be labour-saving. Most of the houses will be of five rooms, with kitchen, scullery, and conveniences, and it is proposed to arrange the living room and "den" so that they can be thrown open by a sliding or folding door. The bedrooms will have built-in wardrobes. Concrete will be used even for the roof, which will be flat. The layout is to be on garden-suburb lines, and there will be no front fences, as it is intended to have the whole frontages and roads kept up by the estate. No doubt Mr. Massey will be able to turn to good account his very fine designs which won the "Daily Mail" prize last year. Both Mr. Massey and his partner were members of the Auckland Students' Association before the war. We feel sure our architect readers wish their colleagues well in their work, some illustrations of which we will reproduce in our next issue.

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BRITISH ENTERPRISE.

We welcome the proposal to organise a big travelling exhibition of British manufacturers' products, which in due course will make its appearance in New Zealand. The Home manufacturer is not so deadly dull in his methods as is sometimes made out. We had one example of his efficiency in connection with the contract for the electrification of the five-mile Otira tunnel, where the tendering was extremely close between an American syndicate, and a group of British electrical firms—each firm a specialist in some particular line, and all combining to provide a complete equipment for a job worth about £400,000. The British group won because it could furnish a better and more reliable installation, at a slightly lower cost than its American competitor, and it could also undertake to finish the work within the stipulated time of eighteen months. However, colonial users of British manufactures have a number of suggestions to make to their British suppliers, and the perambulating exhibition, which will, we suppose, be accompanied by capable representatives of the exhibiting firms, will afford the needed opportunities. For instance, the Master Painters of the Dominion are already laying in wait for the exhibitors with a complaint which surely has only to be mentioned to be immediately remedied. They wish to obtain better treatment and consideration of their needs from British manufacturers than has been the case up to the present time, more particularly in reference to paper hangings. At each centre a deputation of master painters and wall-paper merchants will wait upon the Exhibition Commissioners and impress upon

them that the trade desired to give preference to British trade, but unless certain grievances were reduced it would be impossible to do so. A speaker at the recent annual meeting of the Association stated that they were systematically robbed by most British wall-paper merchants to the extent of about 10 per cent., through papers being 10½ to 11 yards in length instead of 12 yards, as alleged in the various price lists. The same applies to friezes—8½ yards instead of 9 yards—though why the friezes were different lengths from wall-papers nobody knew. It would suit the trade and the markets very much better if 12 yards guaranteed were the length of all paper and friezes. The shortage, we are relieved to find, is a general practice and not confined to any particular firm or branch and is also prevalent in Canada and America.

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ROADS—AND ROADS.

The Waimari County Council worked up quite an imposing degree of indignation over a proposal of the Labour Department to subdivide an area of land for workers' dwellings at Papanui, Christchurch. It was alleged that a slum was going to be imposed on the district because the settlement would be provided with roads having less than 40 feet of macadam. The plan of this subdivision shows that road space for the statutory width of 66 feet is reserved, but that it is intended to put in a strip of macadam sufficiently wide to carry the traffic of a residential area. The remaining space will be grassed, and the roads lined with trees. Thus, instead of having a dust-creating waste of 40 feet, there will be a much narrower width of roading, and sufficient green-sward on either side to trap the dust. The houses will be placed on allotments having a 66 feet frontage. If this is slum planning, then we hope to see more of it in New Zealand! The Labour Department has probably had to contrive its subdivision with a keen eye to economy, but it has done better than we could have hoped from that quarter. The local objection is enforced by the perfectly valid argument that a full-width road is insisted on in connection with private subdivisions, and that the Government is defying the law. It is a stupid law which provides for no differentiation between main streets and secondary streets, and it should be altered as soon as possible. The fact that a Government department flies in the face of a statute provides a good argument in favour of this clause in the Town Planning Act of the future. As the Papanui subdivision is a compact block, we hope that the Labour Department will do away with front fences, and employ a gardener to keep up the whole of the lawns fronting the roadways. The expense, spread over the whole estate, would be extremely small, while the advantage to the householders in having a smart, well-kept residential area would well repay the small addition to their rent or purchase instalment. This method is being adopted in many of the latest schemes projected in England.