

New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Fifteenth Annual Meeting, held at Napier last month.

The Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, which was held at Napier on February 23rd, 24th and 25th last, is probably one of the most important meetings held by the Institute since its foundation in 1905. The Institute has now reached a stage in its development when a new and progressive policy becomes imperative, and in venturing this opinion one in no way detracts from the volume or value of the work done in the past. The original founders of the Institute did admirable work in their day, work that the needs of the time required, that is to say, they put in the foundations of the Institute conscientiously and thoroughly, so that the future erection might rest as upon a rock and be enabled to resist the encroachments of time and circumstance. The development and improvement in constitutional methods necessitated by war created problems, and the restrictions on building activities made by Government have brought about a position which requires the most careful consideration, and special means must be devised to meet altered conditions, consequently a change in the policy of the Institute was due, and its purpose and need were apparent. These changes were amply illustrated by the several notices of motion brought forward for consideration.

Perhaps the most important of these, involving as it does an almost entire change of custom, was the determination to do away with the receipt of any portion of the architects' fees from anyone except the employer himself. The scale of charges provides for a charge of one and a-half per cent. for providing working plans and copies, with full detailed plans to the builders, to enable him to carry out his contract. The present scale clearly states this charge is payable by the employer or the contractor as may be mutually arranged. In the result, of course, the charge is one against the employer, as where it is paid to the architect it is of course added to the amount of the contract price. In view of the gradual growth of public opinion against this custom, it has now been decided, by a substantial majority of the members at the meeting, to charge this sum direct to the employer.

It has been very clear that for some time past the present income of the Institute is insufficient to meet the ever increasing demands brought about by the natural development of its functions, and the necessity for much greater activity to enable the profession to meet the peculiar circumstances and conditions with which it is now faced. Mr. C. Reginald Ford, of Wanganui, was the author of a proposal to increase the annual subscription of the members to such a figure as would enable certain activities to be initiated, activities which, it was

hoped, would serve to put the Institute (and, through the Institute, its members) on a much better footing, and to give it a wider scope and influence in the community.

Owing to the courtesy of the President, Mr. Ford was given an opportunity to circularise all the members, and his views and suggestions were very ably and clearly set out in his memorandum. The means by which these suggestions were to be given effect to provoked a long discussion. It was finally decided that what was needed was:—(a) A better system of training and examination for future architects; (b) a more active policy with regard to the legislative enactments; (c) the development of a legal status and authority for the Institute the better to exercise its disciplinary functions; (d) the establishment of a carefully considered and executed policy of propaganda in the direction of advertising the Institute not only to the general public but to its own members; (e) the establishment of prizes and awards for students and the encouragement of Students' Associations; and (f) a general revision of its domestic affairs. Such a policy must of necessity call for greater service on the part of the Institute officials with the consequent increase in the remuneration paid to them, this the meeting fully recognised, and cheerfully amended the rule giving authority to raise the subscriptions to such an amount as would meet the demands made upon the Council. The subscriptions finally agreed upon were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Fellows in practice	6	6	0
Fellows not in practice	6	6	0
Associates in practice	6	6	0
Associates not in practice	2	2	0
Members residing overseas for study not less than six months	1	1	0

Some division of opinion occurred as to the fees payable by Associates in practice, and it was decided that they should pay the same fees as the Fellows on the ground that the amendment to the voting powers of members would bring about equality in voting for all practitioners as distinct from non-practitioners. All practitioners will now be entitled, at all meetings, to two votes, and non-practitioners to one vote.

Such a radical change in policy and so marked an increase in the subscriptions must, of course, excite some measure of comment amongst those who were unable to be present to hear all the arguments by which the decision was justified. The Council, however, asks members to give the proposals a fair trial, and it is believed that so much good will arise from the greater activities ordered that in the result all members will benefit and the body cor-