

## Here and There.

Quite a controversy appears to have arisen over the question as to whether the wood borer will attack pig lead. In Wellington recently a city plumber pointed to a lead gutter which, he asserted, had been pierced by the borer. Another plumber attributed the tiny holes to the corrosive action of iron nails, but it is felt that the irregularity of the holes is against that theory. A third party believes that the wood borer will attack lead. Recently, he states, he was doing some repair work, and in finishing off a job near a sink he placed a layer of white lead beneath a sheet of glass. The thickness of the white lead was threequarters of an inch, but the borer came right through the lead. Of course, the glass was too much for the pest. This informant is inclined to the belief that if the wood borer will go through white lead it will go through pig lead. \* \* \*

It is reported (says the Wanganui "Chronicle") that the wholesale price of building timber is likely to recede early next month. This is no doubt due to a general slackening in the demand, as there is not the same difficulty at present in getting orders filled as was the case a few months ago. \* \* \*

The raising of a loan of £250,000, bearing interest at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., by the Napier Harbour Board for the construction of harbour works is authorised in the "Gazette." The Lyttelton Harbour Board is authorised to borrow £150,000 for harbour works at the same rate of interest. The Timaru Harbour Board has permission to raise £9,000 for the erection of workers' dwellings. \* \* \*

It has been decided by the Auckland University College to agree to the suggestion that the Auckland branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects should confer with the Council, with a view to deciding by what means the branch might assist in the development of the School of Architecture. The conference was fixed for April 11th, at 4 p.m.

## Concrete Roads.

The value of the cement concrete roadway, which connects Toronto and Hamilton, is declared by Mr. George H. Gooderham, Chairman of the Toronto-Hamilton Highway Commission, to be of "greater importance than any other section of highway in Canada." On the busiest days the traffic exceeds 8,000 vehicles, the average being about 3,000, and the average motor lorry traffic about 400 per day. Farmers living fifteen miles from the Toronto market who formerly made three trips by team per week by being up early and late now leave home at eight in the morning, are home for dinner and supper, and make twelve trips per week by motor lorries in comfort. Many of the farmers, Mr. Gooderham declares, sell all their market produce at their own gates to the motorist, and some of them six miles off the highway haul it to wayside and community markets which have been encouraged by the Commission.—*Commercial Motor*.

## Britain to Harness Tides.

### A Million Horse-Power Possible.

The striking photograph shown on the next page taken from official material and issued with the authority of the Transport Ministry, gives a pictorial presentation of the great Severn Barrage Scheme, the first big effort in England to utilise tides for generating electricity.

The scheme has been developed by three distinguished engineers in the service of the Government, Sir Alexander Gibb, Mr. J. Ferguson, and Mr. T. R. Menzies.

Owing to its formation, the Severn Estuary affords many favourable features for such a development. The principal points of the scheme are shown in the photograph, and include a three-mile long barrage with automatic sluices, a road and railway viaduct, a ship lock, a reservoir in the Welsh hills, and an enormous power station, the capacity of which, it is estimated, will be a million horse-power.

"Harnessing Niagara" has ceased to be a proposition approaching the miraculous, for the feat was achieved long since, and there are several other engineering accomplishments of the same kind, one or two of them in Scotland. But it has been left to the British Ministry of Transport to announce a scheme of magnitude transcending everything yet devised, and worked out in detail "to a logical conclusion to employ the rotating forces of the earth, in conjunction with the attractive powers of the sun and moon, for the use and benefit of mankind."

The words quoted are from a memorandum of the Ministry of Transport issued recently, and the document, in its closing paragraph, commends the venture as "opening up a vista which is little short of a revolution in the industrial life of the West and Midlands of England, effectually solving the problem of congestion for all traffic between South Wales and the West of England, both by road and rail, and bringing within the reach of all classes of the community the blessings of light, purity, and power."

The following are the principal details of the scheme:—

### *Resources Available.*

A Committee of the Board of Trade, under the presidency of Sir John Snell, has been looking into the water-power resources of the United Kingdom which could be made available for industrial purposes, and the memorandum of the Ministry of Transport sets out the conclusion that "the power available in the Severn dwarfs into insignificance all the other potential sources of inland water power within the United Kingdom put together." The river is unique in combining in itself all the conditions essential to the economic development of tidal water power on a large scale. Those conditions are:—

An exceptionally high range of tide.

An estuary of large capacity.