

CONNELL and WARD

A R C H I T E C T S

A KORERO Report

TWO NEW-ZEALANDERS who have succeeded brilliantly in their chosen profession are Amyas Connell and Basil Ward, of the firm of Connell and Ward, practising London architects. Student rivals for several architectural prizes in New Zealand, the two decided to join forces and go in search of fresh and greener pastures. They made no secret of their intention to work for the premier British architectural award, the Rome Scholarship, tenable for three years at the British School of Architecture in Rome. In 1924, when both were in their very early twenties they worked their way from New Zealand to England via Cape Horn as stokers in the "Karamea." They obtained work in architects' offices in London, and for nearly three years devoted their spare time to study for the scholarships. The result was the award in 1926 of the Rome Scholarship to Amyas Connell, and the second prize, the Jervis Studentship, to Basil Ward. In the interval of six months before the scholarships became tenable the two worked their way to New Zealand to see their relatives. On this return trip the team had to split. Connell travelled as steward in the emigrants' quarters of the White Star Liner "Ionic," and Ward, more fortunate, became bath steward on the Commonwealth Liner "Port Dunedin."

In New Zealand their fame had preceded them. They were entertained, and a Government contribution towards their expenses enabled them to return to England together as third-class passengers. From England they travelled to Rome to take up their respective scholarships, Basil Ward for one year and Amyas Connell for three. At the end of his study at the British School in Rome, Basil Ward, in quest of further experience, took an appointment with

an architect in Rangoon. There he gained valuable experience in constructional work specifically designed to withstand earthquake shock.

In 1930 he married in Rangoon Beatrix Douglas Connell, sister of Amyas Connell, whom he had met for the first time on his last visit to New Zealand three years before. On his return to England shortly afterwards, the firm of Connell and Ward, architects, came into active existence. A year or two later Colin Lucas, a Cambridge architectural graduate, joined the partnership, and the firm became Messrs Connell, Ward, and Lucas, specialists in reinforced-concrete construction.

Connell and Ward have for years been putting into practice views on the function of an architect which even to-day are regarded as advanced by the more conservative of their contemporaries. They have had to battle against prejudice on the part of local bodies, other architects, and the public in general, but their designs have nearly always emerged unscathed from the turmoil of public controversy.

The views of the younger architects on the purposes for which the modern house should be designed have been stated in part by Professor C. H. Reilly, Director of the Liverpool School of Architecture from 1904 to 1933, and a member of the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

In an article in the *Manchester Guardian* Professor Reilly wrote: "The light modern structure with its reinforced-concrete walls, thin like cardboard, which can themselves bridge voids without the help of lintel or beam, or as roofs and floors can project into space without apparent support, is entirely alien to all those ingrained notions of what an Englishman's castle or even his