

# REMARKABLE PROGRESS

## "ECONOMIC'S" NEW PREMISES.

### A RECORD FOR TARANAKI.

The largest and most up-to-date store in Taranaki, and one of the largest in the Dominion, catering solely for men's and boys' wear can truthfully be said of the new two-storey ferro-concrete building in Devon Street, New Plymouth, recently erected for Mr. H. L. Autridge, proprietor of the well-known "Economic," New Plymouth's popular mercers. The new building embodies remarkable spaciousness combined with every modern convenience and equipment which is up-to-date in every respect so that, now, more than ever, can customers be assured of an unexcelled service.

The whole of the ground floor, 90 feet in depth by 40 feet wide, is occupied by the "Economic," embracing the shop proper, a centrally situated office and a well appointed storeroom, with storage provision at the rear for empty cases. The front of the shop is especially attractive with two spacious display windows, which for size and appointments can scarcely be equalled in Taranaki. There is no wooden beading in the windows, the plate glass being bevelled and "butted" at all joints and the panes are made doubly secure by neat chromium-plated clips. Black vitrolite panelling carried out by Darby and Hannan Ltd. with chromium-plated vents, around the windows and a central entrance paved with terazza adds distinction to the store front. The windows are divided from the shop by handsome panels of light oak which form an effective background for displays. For depth of colour and beauty the black vitrolite is outstanding and its use in this case adds a pleasing finish to the front.

On entering the store one is immediately impressed with its spaciousness and the convenient arrangement of the goods which are displayed in wall fittings and on numerous tables arranged over the floor so that customers can actually inspect articles without having to appeal to the assistants. From the entrance the main store is the full width of the building running to half the depth, then the remainder of the depth comprises the storeroom and office for half the width on the left while on the right is the suit, hat and overcoat department served, at the rear, by two roomy, well equipped fitting-rooms. The office is most centrally situated and behind is the storeroom 33 feet deep by 16 feet wide with entrance from the front shop by a plate glass door. Here all goods are unpacked, sorted and methodically arranged on shelves in readiness for being brought forward into the store at a moment's notice.

A feature of the building is the excellent lighting provision both natural and artificial so that the store is, despite its size, always well lighted, by day by overlights running the full width of the building both in front and rear and by a sky-light in the roof immediately above the office portion. The artificial lighting is so effective that it is almost possible to "turn night into day" by switching on the electric lights of some 7100 candle power.

The electrical work was carried out by Smart Bros. of New Plymouth and introduces several novel features. In the first place there is an excellent example of scientific window-lighting which eliminates all shadows from the display windows. Each window is served by twelve powerful globes with special reflectors which cast the rays of light from above, through the special white sanded glass ceilings of the windows. These lights are not seen by anyone viewing the windows and the sanded glass ceilings diffuse the rays creating a soft pleasing white light by which the window displays may be inspected in detail with no inconvenience to shoppers. The lighting of the interior of the shop is just as effective, with the provision of special reflectors at intervals so that there are no dark corners and materials can be inspected with ease.

Nothing has been overlooked in the endeavour to make the store up-to-date in the smallest detail, even to the provision of six heating points, long and conveniently arranged counters and the adoption of clearly defined departments for the several varieties of men's and boy's needs.

A wide stairway with a separate entrance from the footpath gives access to the upstairs portion of the building which comprises a fine and well-lighted room 44 feet deep by 38 feet wide—to be used as a tea-room or to be divided into suites of offices, and a modern three-roomed flat, complete with every convenience and served by a roof courtyard 32 feet by 16 feet.

The building has been faithfully constructed in every way and is a credit to the contractors, Messrs. Lovell and Rawlinson, and the following sub-contractors: Messrs. Darby and Hannan, glazing; B. C. Rosemergy, plastering; Smart Bros, electrical work; W. Casey, plumbing; Knight and Daly, fibrous plaster and Fash and Door Co., timber.

The architects were Messrs. Messenger and Taylor.

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