was an eye-witness of the conflagration. He confirms the statement of other observers to the effect that the great steel-frame buildings are those best adapted to resist both fire and earthquake. The Palace Hotel, for instance, which was among the first of the buildings to use iron in its construction was designed to be both fire and earthquake proof. The earthquake test was successfully passed. Not a square glass fell from the glass roof of the immense court, and guests were breakfasting in the grillroom when the second shock, about 8.30, drove out the timid ones.

The effect of the earthquake and the fire upon many of the most notable buildings of the city is described and illustrated, and the writer concludes with an estimate of the building situation as it appeared in the early part of June, when his communication was despatched. Considerable delay has been caused (he says) by the uncertainty as to the provisions of the new building regulations, but the Board of Public Works will not revoke any of the permits for new buildings granted previous to the fire. It is held by the Commissioners that the rules of the committee appointed to revise the municipal building laws cannot affect cases already decided. Work on several buildings in process of construction will be continued immediately In addition to these about sixty permits had been granted for buildings where actual work had not commenced The plans call for structures of classes "B" and "C." They will be built of brick, with wooden interiors, in most instances. The Board has been notified that construction will commence as soon as material is available.

A big seven-story hotel will be built by Charles Stewart on Geary street, opposite the Francis hotel. The building will be a class "B" edifice. A six-story brick structure, originally intended as a storehouse, will be erected on the corner of Jackson and Drumm streets. A six-story building will also go up in East street, between market and mission.

No class "A" permits are out, except for buildings which were partially erected before the fire. No permits will be granted from now on until the new laws are formulated and passed. Applications for building permits of all kinds received daily by the Board of Public Works are being kept on file pending developments.

The Commissioners have requested that City Architect Shea be allowed to confer with the Commission on Revision of the Building Laws. The architect does not favour the drastic regulations proposed by many. He believes that unless some latitude is allowed in the use of inflammable material the building industry will be paralysed.

San Francisco Building Regulations

The following are the building rules in San Francisco for the temporary period until new building laws are completed, as adopted by the Reconstruction of Buildings Committee and Board of Public Works :—

Rule 1. Permits will not be required to erect temporary one-story structures of galvanised iron or wood, but they must be removed at ninety days' notice.

Rule 2. All permits for permanent structures must be obtained from the Board of Public Works.

Rule 3. Permits will not be required for repair of chimneys or roofs damaged by falling chimneys or other causes, but permit for use of said chimney must be obtained from the Building Committee before any chimney can be used or fire started.

Rule 4. All buildings outside burned district which were badly damaged by being thrown off their foundation or out of plumb must secure a permit for repair of said buildings from the Board of Public Works.

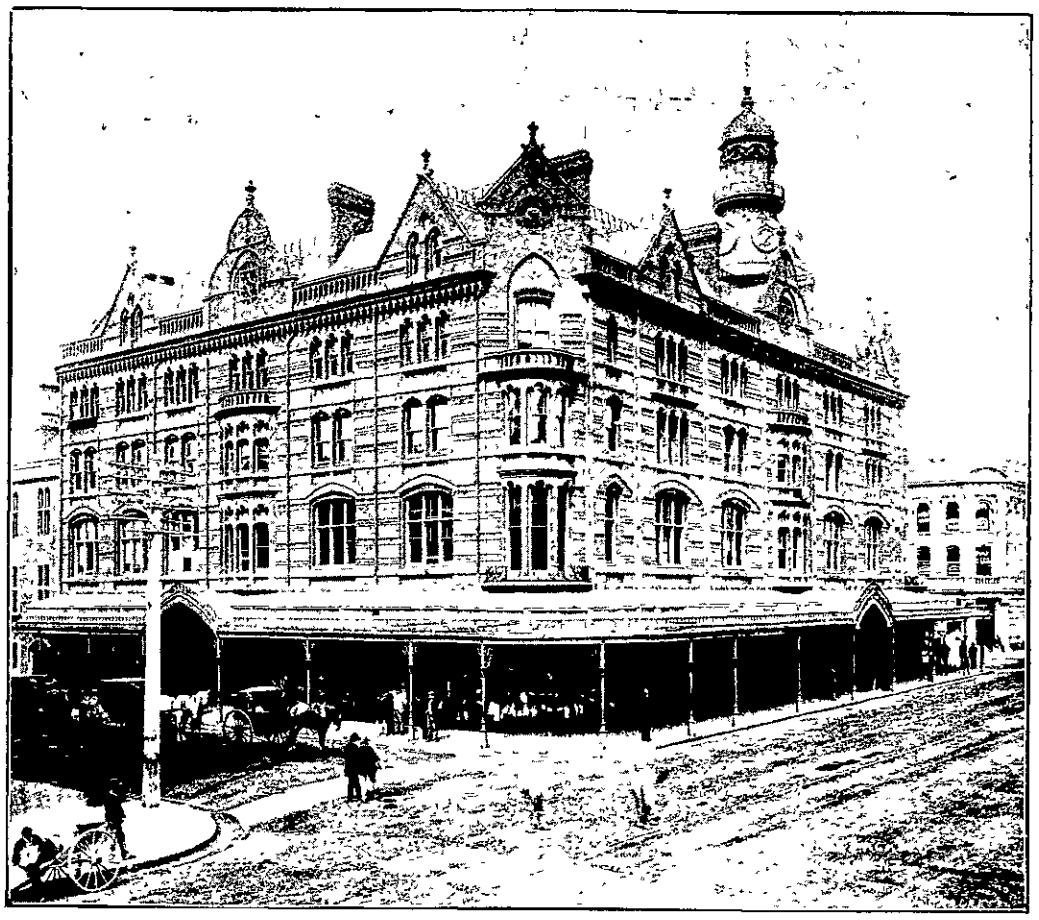
Rule 5. All matters pertaining to side sewers must be referred to the Board of Public Works.

Rule 6. Permits for operation of factories using steam or other power except electricity must be obtained from the Building Committee.

Rule 7. All factories operating by electrical current must obtain a permit from the Department of Electricity, and a further permit from the Committee, before operating their plant.

Capital is also waiting for the new building ordinance. So far there is no inkling as to what the new permanent restrictions and limitations will be. But there is not the slightest doubt that new skyscrapers will be built. The State Board of Architects makes a number of suggestions in relation to the restrictions of the coming building ordinances. Thorough inspections and investigations have been made through the burnt district, and it has been found that safety is not a question of style of architecture, but quality of workmanship.

Cornices and arches need not be excluded from the new city. Where they were properly anchored and built they withstood the shock and the fire both. It is the opinion of the Board that the city need not be without its picturesque cornices and decorations.



VICTORIA ARCADE, AUCKLAND. THIS HANDSOME BUILDING IS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE BEST EXAMPLE OF BRICK CONSTRUCTION IN THE NORTHERN CITY. IT WAS ERECTED BY THE NEW ZEALAND INSURANCE CO. AT A COST OF £29,000.

We learn that since the above was written the Council on Building Laws have decided to recommend the following ordinance —

"On streets 800 ft. wide, or over, the height of buildings facing thereon shall be unlimited. On streets 80 ft. wide, or over, the height of buildings shall be limited to 200 ft."

Internal Decoration of Houses

The days of plaster, as applied to ceilings and walls, are already numbered. We live in a progressive age: fireproof materials such as metal ceilings and walls, combined with the rapidly expanding use of ferro-concrete, are effecting a transformation in building construction that will undoubtedly tend in the future to the increased durability and beauty of the home. In countries, too, where the danger of earthquake is ever present, the new materials have increased value, and in New Zealand the reformation in building construction set in long ago with the introduction of metal ceilings, which may be noticed in almost every up-to-date house that is now completed. We have yet to experience, however, a modern building constructed entirely of metal, similar to that which is often fitted out by the Metallic Roofing Co., of Toronto, Canada, and which we hope to illustrate in a future issue. The metal ceilings made by this Company are specially adapted for use in business houses, churches and private residences They are made from soft steel plates embossed into an almost countless variety of designs, with harmonious adaptations of each pattern to suit the walls, ceilings, cornices and other members. These plates are made so mathematically correct, and the designs embossed with such absolute precision, that when put into place the joints are totally imperceptible, and the pattern continues throughout the entire ceiling or wall as though it were put on in one great piece. Once in position the decoration is commenced—the scope for the decorator's art being quite unlimited. A great advantage connected with the use of these metal plates is their ease of fixing, so that when placed in a new building they are simply nailed on rough lining or wood furring strips; and when it is desirable to install a metallic finish in an old building where it would be inconvenient to remove the plaster, these furring strips are run over the plaster and the steel plates fastened to them, thus enabling the whole to be firmly stayed into place and at the same time obviating the litter usually associated with the handling of plaster.

The sanitary feature in metal ceilings and walls is of almost equal importance to that of proof against fire or earthquake; for though a fire or earthquake may not occur for years, the danger from disease germs is ever present. Metal finish, however, gives no chance for such germs to get a foothold, for it may be cleansed by washing, without any injury to the decoration, and a possible hiding place for germs is thus rendered out of the question. The costs of metal finish for walls or ceilings is cheaper than plaster, and their durability and pleasing effect are incomparably superior.

The system adopted by the makers is for prospective purchasers to send

GRAND STAIRCASE, WELLINGTON TOWN HALL.