

The Sarjeant Art Gallery Competition

It was our intention to publish this month some particulars of this Competition, but owing to the fact that up to the time of going to press the Wanganui Council had not made public the full decision of the Assessor, we are unable to do so this month. We hope however to have some interesting particulars for publication for next month. There will be an Art Edition of this Competition published on first-class paper containing the Assessor's full Reports, with illustrations of the drawings of the final four competitors' designs. In the meantime we would draw our readers' attention to the Assessor's remarks contained in the report (published on this page) of a public lecture given in Wanganui on Art Galleries generally.

The Art Galleries of Europe and the Sarjeant Gallery

The large audience which assembled last evening at the Opera House (says the Wanganui Chronicle of October 11th), must have afforded Mr. Hurst Seager gratifying evidence of the fact that there are many citizens of Wanganui who take a lively and intelligent interest in the artistic, as well as the material, development of their city. The main purpose of Mr. Seager's lecture was to illustrate and explain the scientific, structural and architectural merits of the accepted plan for the Sarjeant Art Gallery, in comparison with the art galleries of Europe. Mr. Seager, who is recognized as one of the foremost architects of the Dominion, may be said to have made a hobby, and consequently a study, of that all-important essential of art galleries—the effective lighting of the pictures. He has personally visited most of the best-known galleries of the world and, with camera and note-book, carefully recorded their deficiencies and defects. It is a curious circumstance, recognized alike by experts and laymen, that in no single instance have the builders of the great galleries succeeded in solving the problem of satisfactory lighting. From the point of view of architectural beauty they have provided magnificent buildings for the housing of the priceless works of the great masters; but they have all, in greater or less degree, failed to evolve a system of lighting such as would enable the full beauty of the pictures to be seen without the annoying and eye-trying distractions of shadows and reflections. Mr. Seager set himself to solve this problem, and it is indeed fortunate for Wanganui that the Australian and New Zealand architects who competed in the designs for our local gallery should have had the advantage of his wide experience and special knowledge. The result is—as was clearly illustrated by the excellent lantern slides provided for the lecture by Mr. F. J. Denton—that we are to have not merely a building that will be “good enough” for its special purpose, but which will be the “best possible,” and better than the world's best in all its essential features—a gallery which will be scientifically correct, structurally perfect and architecturally beautiful. This in itself is a big thing, yet it assumes even more imposing proportions when regarded as only part of the complete scheme which has been evolved by the Author of No. 16 for the utilization of the magnificent site on which the Sarjeant Art Gallery is to be erected. It is a most alluring scheme, a truly noble conception, and its ultimate consummation—for which we must all strive—will endow our town with one of the most imposing and picturesque civic centres in Australasia. And, as Mr. Seager pointed out, the first step towards the attainment of this desirable end has been made possible by the munificent generosity of one public-spirited citizen, and it is for others to follow the late Mr. Henry Sarjeant's noble example. Mr. Seager paid a warm tribute to the Author of the design No. 2, whose excellent design secured the



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