

BUSINESS EXPANSION

SPACIOUS NEW MUSIC WAREHOUSE.

A fresh evidence of the advancement of New Plymouth is seen in the fine buildings which have been erected for the firm of H. Collier and Co. in Devon Street. This new warehouse stands out with a distinction quite its own and is at once an ornament and a landmark in the business centre of the town. The need for expansion of their accommodation has been long felt by the firm and with the facilities for direct shipment through the port of New Plymouth the need has become imperative. The new buildings have been admirably designed to meet this need, and for the future New Plymouth will be the distributing centre for this firm to its branches in Wanganui and other centres. The business is one of the oldest in New Plymouth, and although originally established in Wanganui it has been carried on here for nearly 50 years.

The structure is built of concrete, and contains a basement and four storeys. The exterior is finished with a coat of white plaster cement. The front is distinguished by the straight and dignified lines, while the street frontage to the shop is finished in black tiles with white lines, giving a pleasing effect. The windows, which are roomy, flank a wide and handsome doorway fitted with swinging doors glazed with heavy bevelled plate glass, framed in stained oak, and the windows being backed with stained oak panels, the frontage has a very handsome appearance. The ground floor is occupied as a sales department for music and gramophone records, full stocks being held of all latest H.M.V., Zonophone and Columbria records. There are also on this floor sound-proof rooms for demonstrating gramophones, the firm's office, and a specially designed theatre-box-office.

A handsome and imposing broad-staircase made of oiled heart rimu, leads from the shop to the showroom on the first floor. This is a spacious and beautifully finished, making one of the most suitable showrooms to be found anywhere in the Dominion. It is shut off from the shop by a heavy glass door at one of the stair landings, the stairway going up over the shop windows. A beautiful effect has been produced by the delicate toned papering over Maxwell boarding, and this is heightened by the chaste design of the leaded window lights on the easter side of the building. Special attention has been paid to the artificial lighting, and the scheme adopted is that known as the inverted bowl type, in which lights of 300 candle-power are used. This has been carried out in the shop and showroom, and helps to throw into prominence the effect of the decorative plaster work in which the ceilings have been finished.

The display in the showroom is a comprehensive one, consequent upon the heavy importing direct from the manufacturers, and the distribution from here to all other centres in which the firm carries on its business. Sherlock-Manning and Doherty pianos and Players, Eavestaff, Barrett and Robinson and Brinsmead pianos, player rolls, and the Imperial Gramophones are admirably displayed in this exquisite showroom, which is beautifully carpeted.

The second floor is devoted to second hand pianos, repair work and tuning, and the storage of pianos and gramophones in bulk, and still further accommodation is provided in this direction on the top floor.

There is a stairway from the back of the shop leading right up through each floor to the top story, while for heavy lifting an electric elevator has been installed. Access to each floor is provided from the lift, and when not in use this is all completely closed up by panelled door-ways, in keeping with the woodwork of the whole of the interior, which is executed, in heart rimu.

The whole of the work on the building has been done locally. The architect was Mr. T. H. Bates. Mr. Frank Amore was the contractor; Mr. P. W. Roberts the decorator; Mr. John Hallam, plasterer; Messrs. Smart Bros. did the electrical installation, and Harwood's Ltd. the ornamental windows. The lift was designed and installed by Messrs. Rollo and Millar.