

## TOWN IMPROVEMENTS.

### THE MELBOURNE CLOTHING CO.'S PREMISES.

The above well-known cash concern has just had effected very extensive alterations and additions to its premises situated at the corner of Devon Street and Liardet Street, and to-day it is beyond doubt one of the finest stores in its particular branches of business on the West Coast. The Melbourne has shown a remarkable growth during the past few years, and to-day, instead of a small shop with a frontage of fifteen feet and a depth of twenty feet, it occupies a property which provides between 4500 square feet and 5000 square feet of floor space. The recent enlargement was effected by the absorption of the shop and rooms hitherto occupied by Mr. J. W. Thompson in the conduct of his business as a baker; the extension of the building by carrying the rear wall back to the boundary of the section for more than half its width; remodelling of the whole of the interior; and the provision of new and large plate-glass windows on the Devon Street frontage. The Liardet Street windows have been retained, but the old shop is unrecognisable in the fine expanse of plate-glass and modern furnishings in Devon Street. In all there are seven large show windows, thus allowing one for each particular department. The firm now has the largest frontage of any clothing store in the province. The corner entrance is still there, but the alterations give two doors leading from Devon Street, one being direct to the boot and shoe department. The interior is designed on the American principle, whereby the whole shopping area can be supervised by the manager at his desk. The shop is divided into separate sections for men's clothing; boys' clothing; Manchester goods; men's tailor-made suits; men's hats, collars and ties, and general mercery; men's ready-to-wear suits and trousers; shirts and underwear; rugs and blankets; travelling bags and trunks; and a separate room for boots and shoes, connected with the soft goods store by a wide archway. A new department has just been added, Mr. A. P. O'Leary, the manager, having arranged, whilst in England a few months ago, for a direct supply of sheetings, calicoes, towels and towelling, table covers, shirtings and flannelettes, from the manufacturers, thus saving all middlemen's profits.

A special line for which The Melbourne is noted is the famous shilling ladies' stockings, which are sent all over New Zealand, they are such grand value; and the same remark applies to the firm's 16s 9d boots for men, which are made in several different styles. There are at present in stock and on the water 598 pairs of these, and Mr. O'Leary has arranged at Home for a regular supply of them from one of the largest Northampton manufacturers. Importing in this way The Melbourne sells for 16s 9d what is usually a 25s line in the trade.

In connection with the men's tailored suit department, Mr. O'Leary arranged whilst in England for The Melbourne to receive cloths direct from the looms, and the suits are made by a firm of leading tailors in the Dominion. This enables highest quality suits to be offered for 50s 6d to 65s. Arrangements have also been made for shipments of weavers' odds and ends, remnants, ends of lines, and materials showing slight fault in manufacture, all of which goods are sold at half the usual prices.

The first floor showroom is at present empty. It is intended that it shall act as a reserve store as well as for special offerings of bankrupt or assigned stocks or other under-priced purchases by the firm's own buying office in Basinghall Street, London.

It is the intention of Mr. O'Leary to visit the Old Country periodically, and keep in touch with progress in the Old World—a policy which he considers necessary in order to be up-to-date here.

The alterations were designed by and carried out under the supervision of Messrs. Sanderson and Griffiths; Mr. W. Howson was the contractor; and Messrs. Smart Bros. installed the electric light throughout.