

You've Got Worries!

PLANNING new premises for a chain of branches spread over much of Australia raises a crop of problems as varied as the climatic conditions and the towns where they are built. Buildings begin with foundations—and that is right where some of the problems begin, too.

TAKE Bourke . . . Because the black soil is subject to lateral movement, the main piers supporting the building are surrounded by free-moving hollow concrete tubes. The inside diameter of the tube is three inches greater than the outside diameter of the pier. The piers themselves rest on reinforced concrete slabs positioned eight feet below the surface. When expansion or contraction forces the soil near the surface to move laterally, the tubes move with it, but not far enough to touch the piers. Thus, protected from the fear of being "pushed around," the piers are able to carry on with the job of supporting the building.

Bothurst premises were designed to take additional floors in the future, and the problem of supporting what will one day be a very heavy building in unstable sub-soil conditions was overcome by the use of "Frankl-piles." These foundations are constructed by ramming concrete down a hollow steel tube to make a concrete plug base. Then, as the tube is gradually withdrawn, more concrete is poured into it and is rammed in to the surrounding earth so that it grips rather like a screw in a piece of wood.

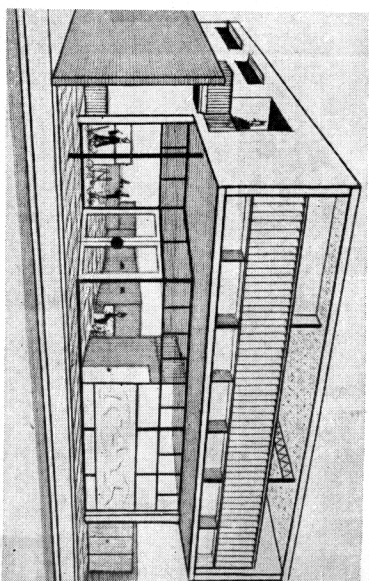
Sub-soil conditions are not the only reason for foundation problems. At Wodonga, specially strong foundations had to be used to counteract the effect of vibrations set up by the stream of heavy transports thundering past along the Melbourne-Sydney highway.

Variations in climate pose equally varied problems. At Charleville in Queensland, for protection from the summer sun, the front of the banking chamber is recessed seven feet under a projecting top floor. The entrance to the banking chamber is recessed further still, thus protecting the air-conditioned office from blasts of hot air off the pavements.

Rain, Hail or Shine

Wide vertical fins, sheeted with porcelain enamelled metal, will protect the front of Kogarah branch from the western sun. At Gladstone, Queensland, fixed vertical fins of white painted reinforced concrete will serve the same purpose. Bothurst had to be provided with central heating for the winter and an air cooling system for the summer; at Merbein the residence had to be dust-proofed; Kempsey premises were built four feet above street level to be out of flood reach.

Architect's perspective of Charleville building.



Sometimes the shape and size of the building block dictates the design of the building. At Coff's Harbour, where the frontage is only 25 feet, the building was given added height to compensate its narrow width, with tall windows in the front to light a mezzanine floor. At Dandenong, the problem of getting sufficient natural light and ventilation into a long, narrow building enclosed on both sides was overcome by means of a "Monitor Roof Light." This is simply an extension of one slope of the roof past the ridge, with a vertical window rising from the opposite slope to meet the extension. A well is formed in the ceiling space underneath and an egg-crate grille

incorporated in the base of the well at ceiling level to diffuse the light and provide a visual cut-out. Being vertical, the window is practically self-cleaning. Burwood premises were converted from an existing shop. With a narrow frontage, and not a great deal of side light, the solution was a ceiling which slants upwards to a large front window, allowing the maximum amount of light to enter the office.

These points of interest, taken from some of our press releases, show something of the problems that have to be overcome by those who have the responsibility of providing accommodation for an ever-growing business.

Could It Happen Here?

Russian Sputniks and American space rockets might or might not benefit humanity—that remains to be seen. But every ledger-keeper will agree that it has been left to the English, once again, to do something constructive about lightening the burden of the under-privileged classes. This uplifting thought is inspired by the announcement in the November issue of the "Bankers' Magazine" that legislation has been passed in England dealing with the abolition of endorsements on order cheques so far as the paying and the collecting bankers are concerned. "The Cheque Act 1957" will be discussed more fully in a later issue of the "Bankers' Magazine."