

of a non-speculative character, and the consequent difficulty experienced by manufacturers and dealers in finding an outlet for their goods, has led them to assume large risks in the way of selling on credit to irresponsible persons. As a result of this laxity of credit, irresponsible parties are enabled to recklessly underbid and undersell responsible firms.

The Brick Market.

BRICK manufacturers in the neighborhood of Toronto are all operating their works at full capacity, and find difficulty in keeping pace with the demand. Many of them have orders ahead which will require the balance of the season to fill. At present it appears that little if any stock will be carried over, and builders who do not now succeed in buying sufficient material to meet their requirements until next year's stocks can be put on the market are likely to experience a time of enforced idleness when the season of 1899 opens. The unexpected extent to which building enterprise has revived in Toronto the present season, after several years of unexampled dullness, found the brick manufacturers with no surplus stock on hand.

Students' Competition.

ATTENTION is directed to the particulars of a students' competition appearing in the Students' Department of this number. The subject of the competition is four ornamental chimneys. It is hoped by this means to direct the attention of the rising generation of architects, as well, perhaps, as of architects already in practice, to the value of chimneys as features in building design. This subject, which has received so much attention in European countries, seems to have been to a considerable extent overlooked in connection with our native architecture. Fortunately, however, there are exceptions to this rule, and it is possible to point to buildings, the artistic and pleasing appearance of which is almost entirely due to a single well designed and located chimney. Architects are urged to bring this competition to the notice of their students, with a view to inducing them to take part.

The New Westminster Disaster.

IN spite of increased attention on the part of municipalities, the insurance companies and individuals, to the subject of fire protection, we are frequently reminded of the great risk from fire which still prevails. Last year the town of Windsor, Nova Scotia, was wiped out in a day; the sturdy young city of New Westminster, at the opposite end of the Dominion, is this year the victim. The loss, which, exclusive of insurance, is estimated at \$2,000,000, must fall heavily on the shoulders of such a young community. Doubtless, however, the enterprising spirit so abundantly manifested by the people in the original development of the city, will be equal to the present emergency. Already the Dominion government and some of the corporations whose buildings were destroyed have announced their purpose to rebuild immediately. The mildness of the climate will permit of building operations being continued throughout the winter, while the same cause will greatly mitigate the discomfort of the homeless citizens. The substantial character of most of the buildings destroyed is to a large extent a guarantee that they will be replaced by structures at least equal if not superior as regards durability of character. In the light of the present experience,

the municipal authorities will also doubtless insist on the employment of every reasonable precaution against fire.

Mexican Federal Palace Competition.

THIS competition, the principal conditions of which were printed in these columns, has recently been decided. As was anticipated, in view of the unsatisfactory character of the conditions, the competition has not proved successful. Only one or two architects of prominence submitted designs, and not more than seven or eight sets of drawings out of all that were submitted were worthy of special notice. As none of the competitors complied with the published conditions, the jury, which by the way was entirely under the control of the government, decided to divide the first prize of 15,000 pesos among three competitors named for second place, viz., Pio Piocentini and Filippo Nataletti, Mexico; J. P. Weber, Chicago, and Adam Boori (place of residence not given). The third prize was awarded to Pietro Paolo Quaglia, Mexico; the 4th prize to Antonio Rivas Mercado. It is estimated that the cost of any of the the premiated designs would exceed by at least 50 per cent. the limit of 1,500,000 pesos.

Windowless Buildings.

MR. Howard Constable, who a few years ago was a successful competitor for the position of supervising architect of the United States, is the author of a scheme for the erection of windowless tall buildings on expensive sites. It is proposed to furnish such buildings with entirely artificial light, instead of a combination of natural with artificial light, as at present. Ventilation would be provided by a system whereby fresh air would be brought in from the roof in pipes and conducted in proper quantities to the various rooms throughout the building, while the impure air would also be expelled through pipes, which might be charged with chemicals so as to destroy disease germs with which it might be impregnated. The advantages claimed for this style of building are that the space now required in such buildings for a central court for lighting purposes would be available for use and would add considerably to the revenue; that the absence of window openings in the outer walls would greatly lessen the fire hazard; that all rooms in such a building would be equally desirable; that smoke and foul air which now enter through windows would be excluded, and that if the architect were relieved from the necessity of figuring out the problem of how to successfully light so many scores of rooms, he could make his facade much more beautiful. The author of this ingenious if somewhat impractical theory of construction admits that the public is not likely to immediately fall in with his ideas, but proposes that his theory should at once be put in practice by reducing the number and size of window openings in buildings of this class to be erected in the future, and by glazing them with wire mesh glass, which would resist the action of fire.

Ineffective Building Laws.

BEYOND the fact that the Toronto building by-laws are sadly deficient in construction, there appears to be reason to question also the efficiency if not the impartiality of those whose duty it is to enforce them. A conspicuous violation of the law is now to be seen on Yonge street, where the owners of a departmental store have been permitted to erect a tower of wood and what is