

TORONTO BUILDERS' EXCHANGE.

WE are pleased to learn that the Toronto Builders' Exchange are again holding their annual excursion to Lake Island Park, Wilson, N. Y., on Friday the 27th inst. As the Committee are making every possible arrangement for the pleasure and comfort of the party, this will, no doubt, be one of the most enjoyable trips of the season.

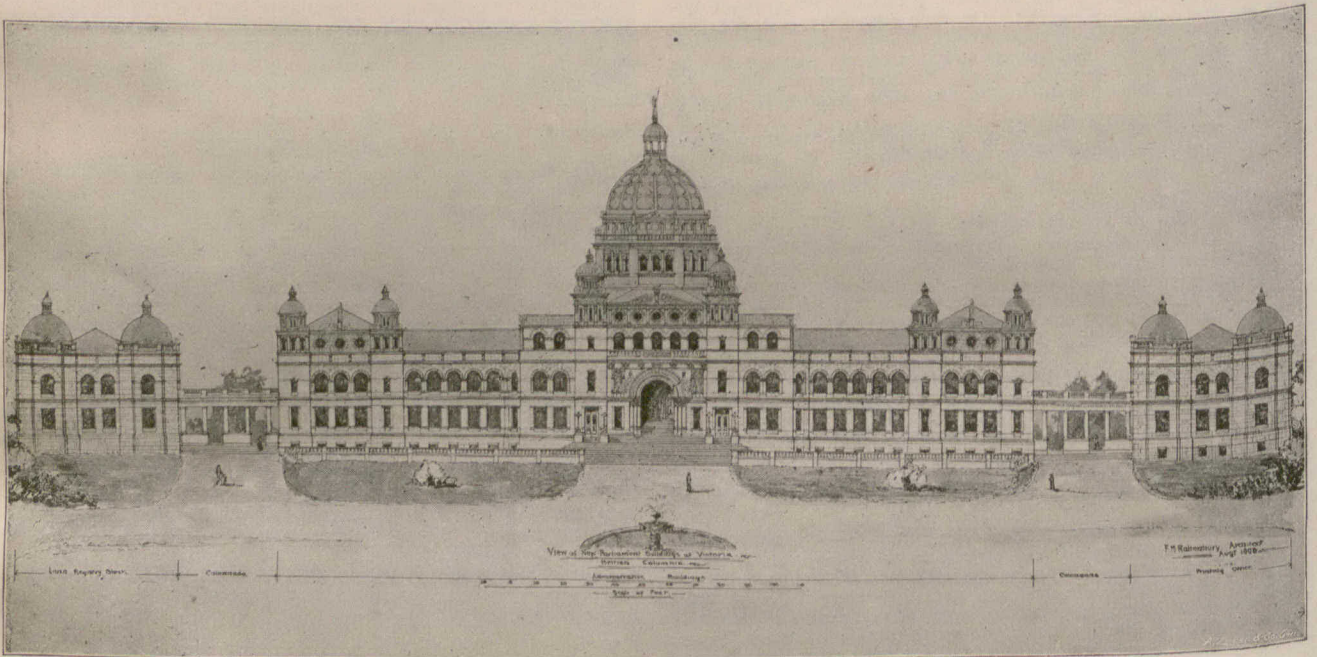
We understand that the steamer "Garden City" (which has been chartered by the committee) will leave Yonge street wharf at 10 a. m. on the above mentioned date, the price of tickets being 50 cents, and 20 cents for children. The members of the Exchange extend a hearty invitation to all their friends to accompany them upon the trip.

ESTIMATES AND QUANTITIES.

THERE is generally a considerable difference to be noticed between an estimate prepared by a builder from a set of drawings and a specification and one which is based upon bills of quantities prepared by a regular surveyor. It is often assumed that a builder can sail nearer to the wind than a surveyor; that he is not under the same necessity for allowing margins of safety, and that, in fact, as he makes any omissions at his own risk, he knows how to compensate himself for such lapses of forethought. Hence, in small works, when an estimate has been accepted on a builder's own quantities, the architect is more than usually on his guard against making allowances for extras. When there is a disagreement in such cases, the amount in dispute is often so trifling that the builder ends by yielding the point and accepting the architect's award. If the architect be a fair-minded man, he

the cost of carriage, the amount and quality of labour involved, and the profit for which it will be worth his while to undertake the work. Such methods of procedure, so far from being haphazard, demand the exercise of more thought, and bring into play a larger amount of practical knowledge than is generally realized. The items which are "lumped" in a surveyor's bill require an equal amount of careful consideration in pricing, but these items are comparatively few.

In estimating the cost of carving and other ornamental work, the builder often runs considerable risk, unless there is a plentiful supply of large scale details to form the basis of his estimate, or unless he is thoroughly familiar with the style of work which the architect is in the habit of carrying out. In an open competition, when the lowest tender is to be accepted, there is little doubt that differences between estimates are often largely due to vague drawings or the absence of provisional sums for ornamental work in the specification. Marginal sketches in the latter are extremely useful to an estimator, and might be introduced more extensively with advantage, especially in these days of rapid work, when it often happens that there is not time to draw many details before the contract is signed. Architects are usually ready enough to furnish a builder with all the information they can command, and to afford him every facility in preparing his estimate; but time rarely permits of this being done in a thoroughly satisfactory manner to all concerned. Sometimes a builder is allowed two days in which to estimate the cost of a work. He cannot be expected, under such circumstances, to take off quantities in any true sense of the words, and thus finds himself driven to adopt expedients which only very sound knowledge can make reliable. An inexperienced man, says the Building



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will endeavour to adjudicate impartially between the builder and the building owner, allowing the interests of neither to gain any undue ascendancy. This, however, is an extremely difficult thing to do. Setting aside the fact that an architect's own interests are mainly identical with those of his client—a fact which, it is fair to say, does not influence the conduct of most professional men—how does the question usually present itself to the mind of an architect? On one hand there is the client, a man unversed in the technicalities of building, and therefore completely at the mercy of those acquainted with all its mysteries. On the other hand, is the builder, with his own special, practical knowledge, which on some points may exceed that of the architect, and with one object before him—that of carrying on his business with the greatest amount of profit to himself. It is then assumed at once that the client alone stands in need of protection; and so it often happens that an architect becomes virtually his client's advocate, instead of maintaining a judicial attitude between him and the builder.

When a builder commences making an estimate without a previously-prepared bill of quantities, he has an amount of labour thrown upon him for which he can claim no remuneration, and which, in a competition, may prove utterly unfruitful. In taking off quantities, although he will probably adopt more simple and rough and ready methods than would be found convenient for a surveyor, his task becomes really more complex. Instead of taking off a number of dimensions, to be subsequently squared or cubed, abstracted, and brought into bill, he may be seen examining the drawings with knitted brows, going through mental calculations, and occasionally jotting down rough notes. He "lumps" many of his items, considering in his mind the quantity of materials required, the markets where they can be obtained,

Times, who secures a contract in a competition may well doubt if he has not engaged in an unprofitable undertaking, and may even come to envy those who have given time and thought to the preparation of estimates which have not been accepted.

When an architect is carrying out a work for which the estimate is based upon builders' quantities, he should bear in mind such circumstances as we have endeavoured to delineate. As a matter of fact, such estimates often come out much cheaper than those which are made from bills of quantities supplied by a surveyor. In some cases builders have been known to make little or no profit upon the original contract, and have even sustained losses over extras and omissions. In these days of bad trade it is indeed hard to be presented with the alternative of standing idle or of working to no advantage, and every consideration ought to be shown, in carrying out the details of a work, to those whose toils are but too seldom adequately rewarded.

LEGAL.

Mr. McLea Walbank, architect, of Montreal, designed a chimney for the Royal Electric Co., of that city. The chimney was built by Mr. Wand, contractor, and is alleged to have proved defective. The company brought action for \$1,281 damages against the contractor, who in turn took action in warranty against Mr. Walbank, alleging that the chimney had been constructed in accordance with the plans and therefore that responsibility for defects should be with the architect. Mr. Walbank demurred to the action in warranty, contending that no such action lay in a case of this kind. Mr. Justice Davidson dismissed the demurrer. The Civil Code provides that if a building perish within 10 years, from a defect in its construction, the architect and the builder are jointly and severally responsible.