

MEMORIAL TO THE GOVERNMENT

A memorial has been forwarded to the Prime Minister, protesting against the employment of American architects, engineers and contractors on Federal Government work, and making the request that in the construction of Dominion public works, Canadian architects, engineers and contractors be given an assured preference. While the government has made no reply, it is unofficially understood that the majority of the members of the Cabinet, including the Premier, recognize as self-evident the soundness of the basic contentions outlined in the memorial, and that there will be more careful observance of national interests in the future by the various departments at Ottawa. It is pointed out that while some appointments of American individuals and firms on public work for the Dominion Government, have been well justified by special circumstances, other such contracts and appointments by the Federal Government have been not only unnecessary but also really against the national interest from many broad viewpoints. No mention of private contracts or municipal or provincial undertakings is made in the memorial, which is evidently aimed chiefly at the award of the Lindsay Arsenal contract to Westinghouse, Church, Kerr & Co. The full text of the memorial is as follows:—

"The undersigned, for themselves and the several interests represented by them, desire to lay before the government certain considerations arising upon the persistent and growing practice of employing alien architects, engineers and contractors on large public works in Canada.

"The matter has assumed such proportions as to render inevitable the humiliating suggestion that Canadian architects and engineers are considered incompetent to undertake work of the character in question. This suggestion itself, apart from any economic consequence, is of such serious import to Canadians and to educational institutions, in which their professional men have received their training, that it cannot be allowed to pass without earnest protest. That the Canadian Government should give ground is so unmistakable a fashion for the inference of Canadian inferiority is a matter of painful concern to every educationalist and technically trained man in Canada.

"The immediate occasion of this Memorial is the awarding of the contract for the new Government Arsenal at Lindsay, but the submissions to be made have reference to principles and economic effects which this contract serves to illustrate, and which has been otherwise exemplified. As regards the construction of the Government Arsenal, it is desired to submit that, if any special devices, inventions or designs were required, the natural recourse would be to Great Britain.

"It should not be necessary to point to past achievements by Canadian architects, engineers and contractors in the construction of our public buildings, railways and other works. We submit what we hold the government should assume as axiomatic, that Canadian brains and skill are adequate to undertake any public works in Canada. If any special requirements were in view, it is submitted the proper course would be to follow the established usage in Great Britain, *viz.*, to send local architects and engineers to visit cities and countries where models are to be found, rather than to employ foreign architects and engineers.

"But there are other considerations of serious importance. Foreign architects and engineers naturally tend to employ materials with which they are familiar. Hence the practice of specifying materials, devices and designs

of foreign manufacture to the serious prejudice of Canadian manufacturers and workmen.

"Similarly, in the matter of contracts and sub-contracts, there is an inevitable discrimination against Canadian contractors.

"Apart from the fact that alien architects, engineers and contractors have no community interests in Canada, and escape its fiscal burdens, the employment of foreign firms has the inevitable effect of discouraging Canadians who have, and who might take up, architectural, engineering and other professions in this country, and of encouraging them to practise those professions in other countries instead, thus draining the country of service, skill and young manhood resources which should be preserved to Canada.

"Furthermore, the policy of which we complain is inconsistent with the efforts which are being made through our universities and other educational institutions to develop into a high state of efficiency the young men of the country. The conservation and development of the manhood resources of the country, no less but rather more than our material resources, are the concern not only of the interests represented by the undersigned, but of the whole country, and we submit they should receive the most careful consideration of the government.

"It is desired therefore:

"(a) To protest against the action of the War Purchasing Commission, acting for the Federal Government, in employing aliens for the construction of the Government Arsenal at Lindsay;

"(b) The protest against the increasing frequency with which foreign professional men are employed on important public undertakings in Canada;

"(c) To urge that the government should not create precedents which of necessity influence private owners of works against the employment of Canadian architects, engineers and contractors;

"(d) To urge that in construction of Canadian public works, Canadian architects, engineers and contractors should be given an assured preference."

The following signatures are attached to the memorial, per the authorized officials of the various organizations:—

Council of Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.
 Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.
 Ontario Association of Architects, Toronto, London, Ottawa and Hamilton Chapters.
 Manitoba Association of Architects.
 Alberta Association of Architects.
 Saskatchewan Association of Architects.
 Province of Quebec Architects.
 Architectural Institute of British Columbia.
 Association of Architects, Quebec.
 Canadian Society of Civil Engineers.
 Engineers' Club of Toronto.
 American Institute of Electrical Engineers, Toronto Branch.
 Engineering Alumni of Toronto University.
 Engineering Society of Queen's University, Kingston.
 Toronto Builders' Exchange, Master Masons' Section;
 Master Carpenters' Section; Master Plasterers' Section.
 Builders' Exchange (Incorporated), Montreal.
 Ottawa Builders' Exchange.
 Owen Sound Architects, Engineers and Contractors.
 Peterborough Builders' Exchange.
 Essex Builders' and Architects' Association.
 Stratford Builders' Exchange.
 London Builders' Exchange.
 Woodstock Builders and Supply Dealers.
 St. Mary's Builders' Exchange.
 Hamilton Builders' Exchange.
 St. Catharines Builders' Exchange.
 Galt, Preston and Hespeler Builders' Exchange.
 Roofers and Sheet Metal Manufacturers' Association,
 Brick Manufacturers; Reinforced Concrete Section; Builders' Supply Section; Provincial Builders and Supply Section.