

SOME extracts from an address on "Native versus Natural Cements," are printed in this issue. The statements and deductions contained therein must prove of interest to many of our readers. Our attention has lately been called to the results of tests of Canadian cements and artificial cements under the direction of the Dominion Government engineers. These tests show that the native cement rapidly improves in quality with age. For example, while in a seven days test the tensile strength of native cement is shown to have been less than one-third that of English artificial cement, at the end of twelve months the strength of the two cements was about equal, showing that age improves to a wonderful degree the quality of the native article, which also has the advantage in point of cheapness. We would be pleased to know how far Canadian engineers and architects have gone in the direction of proving for themselves the merits of the two varieties.

The opinion seems to be very general that work in the building trade will be quiet this year. "Things are awfully quiet" we hear remarked half a dozen times every day, with reference to all lines of business. The record of building permits taken out at the City Hall is very incomprehensible. It is stated that permits have been taken out for so many thousand dollars worth of work making a considerable increase over the amount shown by the permits issued for the same period last year. But where is the work? As it is well known there is a great deal of irregularity in the matter of taking out permits. Many people do not take any out at all until the building has been completed, and then again, many works for which permits are granted are not carried out, so that as an opportunity of comparison, the permit book is not of much value. There are several large buildings drawing near completion, but we hear of few if any as likely to be begun this year. However the season is young as yet, and we hope matters may improve as it gets older.

IN view of the penalties to which they were liable to become subject under the Employers' Liability Act, the master builders of Melbourne, Australia, arrived at an understanding with their workmen by which an insurance of £50 against accident of whatever kind was to be carried by each workman. Towards the cost of this insurance both employer and employee were asked to contribute, the latter in the proportion of sixpence per week. This arrangement, while seemingly advantageous to both parties, did not long satisfy the workmen, who began to grumble about the weekly payment of sixpence. The employers opened negotiations with the insurance company for the cancellation of the policies. Despite the willingness they thus manifested to terminate the arrangement as soon as possible, the stone masons went out on strike because it was not ended immediately. Exhibitions of unreasonableness have not been wanting on the part of employees in the building trades, but this certainly deserves to be classed as a conspicuous example. It would be safe to assume that many of those who begrudged to pay sixpence a week to secure compensation in case of accident, would freely spend twice or thrice that amount at the saloonist's or tobaccoist's counter.

THE organization of the Toronto Builders' Exchange on the lines of the Exchanges affiliated with the National Association of Builders of the United States, seems likely to mark a new and better era in the history of building in that city. For years there existed the Federated Association of Builders, but having been unsuitably planned, it accomplished but little in the direction of uniting and advancing the interests of the various trades. In the new organization the weak points in the old have been carefully avoided. The officers are known to be energetic and deeply enthusiastic in the success of the undertaking. A large membership has already been secured. Under these circumstances the success of the movement seems to be assured. Some of the objects of the Exchange as well as some of the benefits which it is in a position to confer upon its members are touched upon in an article which we print elsewhere in this paper. It has clearly defined purposes, and will no doubt succeed in placing on a more satisfactory footing the interests of its members. Already we learn that communications have been received from Ottawa and other cities desirous of establishing similar Exchanges. It is to be hoped that the movement will

extend until every city of importance in the Dominion has its Exchange. When that stage shall have been reached, the next step should be the organization of a National Association representing the various Exchanges and the building interests of the whole country.

THE attention of the Government has been called to the fact that the contractor for the new Toronto drill hall is having the cut stone work done in the Province of Quebec, thus depriving local workmen of the employment to which they deem themselves to be entitled. It does appear to us, as we have before stated, that the city of Toronto having provided the Government with a free site for the building, might reasonably expect that employment would be given to local workmen who must bear their share of the taxes imposed by the purchase of the land. At the same time the city and the Government both having failed to make this a condition either of the agreement between the city and the Government or the Government and the contractor, it is too much to expect that anything can now be done to remedy the matter. The contractor in making up his tender had in view the employment of Quebec labor, as a result of which it is claimed he will effect a saving of about \$40,000. Having obtained the contract without restrictions, his right to carry it out by whatever means will yield him the greatest amount of profit, cannot be fairly called in question. Whatever fault may be found belongs to the City Council which neglected in the negotiations with the Government, to protect the interests of the local workmen.

SINCE our last issue the examinations of the candidates for admission as members of the Ontario Association of Architects, have taken place, but they were billed too late in the month for us to obtain any report as to results that we could use in this issue; we hope to be able to give full particulars next month. In the meantime we may say that by permission of the Minister of Education, the Hon. G. W. Ross, and Professor Galbraith, (who is also Chairman of the Board of Examiners), the examinations were held in the examination hall at the School of Practical Science, where in profound peace and quiet thirty-five candidates spent three hours twice a day for four days working at the papers set. The Moderators were members of the Board of Examiners, and two or three were present at each examination to order the routine and supervise. The Board of Examiners consists of Professor Galbraith, Chairman; Mr. Wright, Lecturer in Architecture of the school, and the following architects: Messrs. Burke, Gambier-Bousfield, Curry, (President of the O. A. A.), Darling and Townsend. We understand that the results will be made known as soon as possible, but it must necessarily take some time for the Board as a whole to consider the reports of each of its members and finally to decide who have passed and who have not. The candidates at these examinations, whether successful or not, will carry away with them a lesson that will serve them all their lives, so that none need think he has wasted four good days. An examination in any subject is an excellent education; it has often the effect of an "eye opener," and there are but few upon whom such a tonic does not work beneficially.

NO arrangement has yet been arrived at concerning the method to be used for propelling the electric cars of the Toronto street railway. The question is between the "trolley" system and the "storage" system; the one has about as many supporters as the other, and therefore it is difficult to come to a decision. As a matter of fact the "storage" system is in its infancy only, and, though in a few years time it may be developed with practical utility, yet at present its adoption would only be a most costly experiment and probably fraught with a good deal of danger. The "trolley" system has been tried and found practically useful in many places, and, though by no means a perfect arrangement, is undoubtedly the best, if indeed it is not the only one possible under the circumstances for introduction to Toronto. A contemporary speaks of it as "the most uncivilized convenience known to our times," and certainly it is not a desirable system were there any better to choose from, but is at present "Hobson's choice." In the meantime, while this matter remains unsettled, the streets remain in the worst possible condition. New permanent roadways have been promised for the last three or four years, yet it looks as if it will be another season before we shall see any improvement. The change of system for the street