



(Correspondence of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.)

#### IMPORTANT TO CONTRACTORS.

A Bill is now before the Quebec Legislature to amend the law relating to contractors, in such a way that the number of years for which a contractor is held responsible for his work shall be reduced, and also that each contractor and sub-contractor shall be held individually responsible, instead of the responsibility being placed entirely upon the general contractors as at present. A deputation, composed of Messrs. Sauvageau, president of the Liberal Contractors' Club, and Messrs. Lemoine, Lamarche, Le-land, and Leveille, visited Quebec recently in support of the measure.

#### A COSTLY BLUNDER.

The civic hospital building in this city is an excellent example of short sighted economy. The building was erected about twelve years ago at a cost of about \$75,000. There was no proper foundation put under it, and from this cause the structure is now in a state of decay and declared to be uninhabitable. The Health Committee have recommended that plans be invited for a new building to cost about \$35,000. There appears to have been wilful mismanagement in connection with the institution, in view of the fact that some years ago the Legislature voted \$10,000 to cover the cost of putting in a proper foundation for the existing buildings, but the money is said to have been appropriated by the Council for other purposes.

#### PLUMBING REGULATIONS.

A deputation, headed by Mr. J. W. Hughes, the well-known plumber, waited on the Health Committee of the Council recently, to protest against the failure of the sanitary engineer to comply with the provision that the drainage system of all new houses must be inspected and certified before the building can be occupied. The deputation stated that only two hundred out of eight hundred new houses had thus been inspected. The sanitary engineer claimed that he had been unable to obtain lists of the new houses from the building inspector. A sub-committee of the Health Committee was appointed to enquire into and report on the matter, which has an important bearing on the public health.

#### A MUNICIPAL INVESTIGATION.

A disgraceful condition of affairs is being revealed as the result of enquiries by a committee of the Council appointed to investigate the claims of certain contractors for work done without the sanction of the proper authorities. The committee report that in connection with certain repairs at No. 16 Police Station, a local plumbing firm has presented an account amounting to \$511.55, which, at an outside valuation, should not have been more than \$297.55. Well known and responsible plumbers, who were called in as experts, stated that they would be prepared to contract for the work at \$250. Again, with reference to an account of another local firm amounting to \$1,540.11 for installing a hot water heating system, the committee report that the work could be duplicated for \$600. The committee state that in these cases no tenders were called for, and the work was ordered without sanction of the Police Committee, and in direct violation of the expressed wish of Council. A similar condition of affairs is shown to exist in connection with work done at No. 12 Police Station, where a charge of \$1,987.33 was made for work which the city's experts claim could be duplicated

for \$1,081.31, this latter figure including a handsome profit. In one of these accounts appears a charge for 117 pounds of solder. The experts declare that not more than 50 pounds could possibly have been required. Labor amounting to almost three months' continuous time for man and helper was charged, which is declared to be out of all proportion to the amount of work accomplished. A stairway consisting of ten treads leading from the main floor to the cellar in No. 15 Police Station is said to have been charged at \$2,500. Evidently there is need for a searching investigation into this whole matter, and perhaps also the scope of the enquiry might profitably be enlarged.

#### FIRE TEST.

A most successful test was made on St. James Street a few days ago of a fire retarding material called Salamander by The American Fireroofing Company, Boston, under the direct superintendence of their general manager, Mr. Chas. S. Ellis and their agents, Webster Bros. & Parkes, of this city, a large number of the leading architects, fire underwriters and fire department officials being present. The first test was of a house built of  $\frac{3}{4}$  spruce tongued and grooved and lined inside with No. 3 Salamander and measuring 48 x 40 x 40 in., into which a flue was inserted and a draught door. This was filled with kindling saturated with coal oil and the flames allowed to play directly on the Salamander, a condition not usually associated with ordinary construction. The furnace heat was kept up by fresh supplies of fuel, and 40 minutes elapsed before the fire penetrated to the wood and came through. During the whole of this time the outside of the building was so cool that the bare hand could be comfortably placed on it. The second test was to show the use of the Salamander as a fire retardant for ceilings. A section of ceiling covered with No. 1 Salamander, the lightest made by the Company, and with No. 2, the next grade, was placed over a furnace built with brick and filled with kindling wood saturated with coal oil. The No. 1 stood the test for 13 minutes, when by a regrettable accident it was perforated by the operator and the flames came through. The No. 2 stood for 32 minutes, thus proving conclusively that as a fire retardant it had accomplished its purpose. The third test was of a 3' section of flooring composed of a rough underfloor of  $\frac{3}{4}$  spruce on which a layer of No. 2 Salamander was laid and on this a finished floor of  $\frac{3}{4}$  spruce was nailed in the usual manner. For 60 minutes the fire roared and blazed, being fed with wood saturated with coal oil. During the whole of this time the top floor remained cool enough for the hand to be placed on it without any discomfort. At the expiration of 55 minutes Mr. Carver, of Boston, got on the flooring to show that the tensile strength of the boards was not destroyed and after being exposed to the fierce flames for 60 minutes it still held out, and on being removed the top floor was practically uninjured. This Salamander has been in use in Boston and the Eastern States for the last sixteen years, and in the city of Boston is of such known value that the Insurance companies allow a rebate of 5% off their rates where it is employed, and it is accepted by the Building Committee of the city in lieu of 1 inch of concrete, terra cotta or plaster.

#### NOTES.

Mr. John Clifford, one of the oldest and most highly respected contractors of this city, passed away a few days ago.

A by-law is now under consideration of the town council of Westmount, which provides that no building shall in future be erected covering more than 60 per cent of the ground area.

The Annual Exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy is announced to open on the 7th of April, in the gallery of the Art Association. Exhibitors are required to send in their exhibits before the 28th of March.

The recent Conversazione of students of the Faculty of Applied Science of McGill University was held in the McDonald Engineering Building. Refreshments were served and dancing took place in the rooms of the Architectural Department.

A clause in the new City Charter proposes to place an impost of \$25 on vehicles used to bring building stone from outside municipalities into the city. The proposal is properly regarded as being too restrictive, and likely to injure rather than benefit the city's interests.

On behalf of the Estate of the late Duncan McIntyre, a peculiar request was recently made to the Finance Committee of the City Council, namely, that the proportion of the taxes for the unexpired term on the building destroyed by fire on Victoria Square be refunded. This is the first instance in which such a claim has been made, and the same has been referred to the city's solicitors.