

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION.

THE Fifth Annual Convention of the Ontario Association of Architects, was held in the School of Practical Science, Toronto, on January 14th and 15th.

The President, Mr. Darling, having called the Convention to order at 2 p.m., the Registrar read the minutes of the last Annual Meeting, which on motion duly seconded, were confirmed and signed by the President.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The President then read his annual address, as follows:—

It is with pleasure, gentlemen, I welcome you to the fifth annual convention of the Ontario Association of Architects. The past year has not been greatly fraught with matters either of great importance or of much interest to the welfare of this Association.

We have had a quiet year, and I cannot, I am afraid, bring before you anything either very fresh or very novel, as it is my intention to deal almost entirely with the question of legislation.

We are, as yet, but a young institution, struggling for recognition and a livelihood; the latter I feel assured of, if the former can be managed, and managed it must be, and can be, if only we will all do our duty—each of us and all of us.

We are nearer the goal of our hopes now, I firmly believe, than we have yet been, but the prize will not be won without a strong and desperate effort. It is the last spurt in any struggle which requires the greatest exertion and determination in order to achieve victory.

We have it in us to win if we but choose to put forth all our strength. It behooves us, therefore, to make up our minds with grim determination to struggle and fight to the last. There is no need to despair. It wants nothing but a steady, persistent and united effort, and the battle will be ours.

Talking it over, however, between ourselves, in our offices, when we happen to meet in the streets or elsewhere, or reading papers and making speeches in yearly conventions, will not bring about the results desired. I wish it would. It's easy. Talk is cheap and there is plenty of it, but unfortunately it is work that is wanted—not talk—steady, persistent work.

Whenever you can get hold of a member of the Legislature, see that do not neglect the opportunity, but seize the chance, and explain to him as clearly and definitely as you can what it is we are asking for, remove his apprehensions, which you will find are many, and do all in your power to make him understand the matter properly.

It has been found by those members of the Association who have done some work about the Legislative Buildings, in the way of interviewing members, that the greatest opposition to the Act arises either from ignorance, indifference, or from very serious misapprehension of our intentions. It was found, also, that in the great majority of cases, after our views had been clearly set forth and explained, that the opposition was removed or at any rate, very greatly lessened.

I am safe, I think, in saying that the work which has been done for the last few years in making the members of the Legislature familiar with our aims, seems to be gradually bringing about a favorable feeling on our behalf. Neither on the part of Reformers, Conservatives or Patrons do we meet with any definite opposition. Such as does exist is individual, and does not represent the united action of any party. It does not, indeed, appear to be regarded by anyone as being a party measure in any sense.

The Government refuse to introduce the Bill as a measure of their own, but that, we have reason to believe, is from motives of policy, and not because they have any objection to the Bill itself. Mr. Haycock, the leader of the Patron party, was most kind, showed much interest in the matter, and was extremely desirous of being thoroughly informed on the subject, and in the end expressed himself as having no objection to the Act as amended. Mr. Howland, also, gave us much valuable assistance, and very kindly took charge of the matter in the House.

After consultation with him, Mr. Haycock and others, the Council came to the conclusion that, in order to remove as far as possible any chances of defeat, and to bring the provisions of the Act into harmony with the expressed wishes of various members of the Legislature with whom the matter had been at different times discussed, it would be wiser that the fixing of the amounts of the various fees should be left to the decision of the Lieut.-Governor-in-Council, and not in the hands of the Council of the Association. It is presumed, of course, that suggestions as to the amounts of the various fees will be permitted to be made by the Council of the Association, the Government only interfering if, in their judgment, the amounts appear excessive. We need fear no difficulty, however, on this score, if we prove to the Government that the fees are such only as are necessary to allow the Council to properly carry on the work of the Association.

It is really difficult to see what objection can be urged against the Bill in the shape it now is.

Practically all we ask for is—that the Government shall take some steps to assist us in raising the standard of education which it will be necessary for persons to possess who in the future desire to assume the title of "Architect."

It has resolved itself into an educational matter pure and simple, and not, as it was at one time feared by some people, a

sort of scheme by which we could make the practice of Architecture what is called a "close profession."

The Act does not preclude anyone either now, or in the future, from carrying on, as at present, the whole business of an Architect. A man will be able to make plans and sell them, design houses and build them, or do anything else he wishes in the way of ordinary architectural practice. He may charge for his services exactly as he does now, five per cent., or less, or more as he himself may deem such services to be worth. He will have the same facilities for collecting these fees (in the courts if necessary) as he at present enjoys—the only difference being that he will not be able to take or use the title "Architect" in any way or shape whatever. He may call himself by any other name he chooses, and may designate his business by any title it may please him to invent, but from the use of the word "Architect" he will be debarred entirely. And this only because he so elects. There are no hindrances placed in his way should he desire to enroll himself in our ranks.

If on the one hand he decides that he will follow the practice of his profession calling himself a "Designer," "A Plan Maker," or anything else, other than an Architect, well and good, no man will say him nay. It is entirely his own business and we may suppose he knows his own business best.

If on the other hand he wishes to use the more honorable title, all he has to do (if he be practising at the time the Act goes into force) is to send in his name and register as a member of the Association.

The Act says, "Any person now practising the profession of Architecture within this province may become a member of the Association by causing his name to be registered with the Registrar of the Association within three months of the coming into force of this Act and by paying to the Registrar such fee as may be made payable in that behalf subject to the proviso hereinafter contained."

Certainly no one can say that any difficulties are created; no man's rights, interests, or privileges are interfered with. If a man does not choose to register it is his own lookout. He can still continue to carry on his business, he can still charge his usual fees, and he can still collect them, all just as usual, only he cannot call himself an "Architect."

No difficulty will however arise from this source for I am proud to say that our Association practically numbers among its members every person following the profession of Architecture in the province of Ontario; if there are any whose names do not appear upon the roll it is owing to inadvertence of some sort and not because of any hostility to the proposed measure.

I am glad to state that we have had no dissensions within our ranks. Almost to a man the whole profession is in favour of the Bill.

It must not be forgotten that the present benefits (should the Bill pass) will be small, so small indeed as to appear almost insignificant. It is to the future we must look if we wish to see the results we hope for. Don't let any of us run away with the idea that just as soon as this Act comes into force something wonderful is going to take place. Nothing will happen at all. Business will be neither better nor worse. We will have just as much bother and just as much worry as ever. Work will be no more plentiful than it is at present and it will be no easier to get. It will be just as difficult to collect our fees as it is now. The modest man who only charges three per cent. will not suddenly find that he is going to have five per cent. thrust upon him. Not at all. These things will always be; they are not to be remedied by the passing of Acts. We will have only the consciousness, and it will be a very pleasant consciousness, that at last we belong to a profession which has some real and proper standing of its own, and that it lies with us to see, that in the time to come when the public find a man calling himself an Architect, they may know that he belongs to an honorable and recognized profession, and that he has acquired the right to wear the title by education, by reading, by work, by application and study, and finally by successfully passing such examinations as will be at any rate, some guarantee to the world at large that he is properly qualified to practice, and is learned in the science of the profession he has undertaken to follow.

I say science designedly, for it is that side of the education of an Architect which these examinations will go furthest to foster, and which, moreover, is most necessary for the safe guarding of life and limb. I put little, if any stress on the artistic side. For the cultivation of that, by means of examinations I have personally no faith whatever. You will never make an artist of a man, who has not had born into him the divine gift of artistic and creative power, by putting him through examinations from now till the day of judgment, and no Acts of all the Parliaments and Legislatures in Christendom will give it to him. You can teach him, however, to put up buildings that will not fall down. You can teach him the science of construction, the property and strength of materials, their proper application and use, the principles and theory of sanitary science, of plumbing, heating, ventilation, and many other kindred matters, and you can so direct his reading and his study that when he is able finally to pass his examinations successfully and attains the right to assume the title of "Architect" and commence the practice of his profession the public may feel justified in considering that they will be safe in entrusting the expenditure of their money into his hands.

It is to this end it seems to me that these examinations should lead, that we should strive to turn out thoroughly educated well qualified practical men, learned in all that pertains to good safe scientific building construction in all its varied branches, for this is the point upon which the public want to be assured of most, and the one about which they are the least competent to judge. If we