

THE gratifying information reaches us that steps are being taken to form Architectural Associations for the cities of Montreal and Quebec. The promoters of the movement have the best wishes of their professional brethren of the O. A. A. It is to be hoped that the architects of these two cities will not stop short of attempting to form an Architectural Association for the entire province of Quebec. We hope to be in a position to state in our next issue that the work of organization has been successfully accomplished.

THE Montreal Subway Company is seeking incorporation for the purpose of conducting electric wires underground. Further, it seeks to be clothed with powers such as would enable it to work its own will and snap its fingers at any efforts on the part of the city to control its operations. It wants a 40 years' franchise for nothing, to be protected from the interference of any other company, and to have the right, after giving the city eight days' notice, to open the streets, roadways, alleys, and so forth, for the purpose of laying underground the conduits. In short, this enterprising company seems to "want the earth." We cannot for a moment believe that the Legislature of Quebec would saddle the city of Montreal with such a monopoly. It behooves the City Council, however, to be watchful of the city's interests in this matter.

THE Building By-laws of the city of Toronto provide that "no person shall commence the erection of any new building, or the repair or alteration of any old building, within the fire limits A, B, C, and D, unless and until they shall have first submitted the plans and specifications of the proposed building, alterations, or repairs to the Inspector of Buildings for his inspection, and shall have obtained his written certificate that the proposed building, alterations or repairs, are in compliance with the provisions of this By-law, and will not involve a violation of any By-law or regulation of the City relating to prevention of fires or the erection, repair or alteration of buildings." So far as our observation has gone, the above clause is disregarded in a very large number of instances, and the attempts made to enforce compliance therewith are of the feeblest character. We have already pointed out the fact that permits which should be obtained before work is commenced, are in most cases not obtained until the building is well under way or nearing completion. It is not unreasonable to suppose that under such a slipshod method, the provisions of the by-law are frequently violated, yet we seldom or never hear of work being ordered to be done a second time on that account. While the City Council are considering amendments to the by-laws designed to govern the erection of buildings, they would do well to endeavor to secure the efficient administration of these laws.

THE report of the committee appointed by the Toronto City Council to consider a method of regulating the erection of scaffolds within the city limits fully bears out what was said in the January number of this journal on the subject. The committee say they think it impossible to frame a by-law which would be workable and which would state just how every scaffold should be erected, as the circumstances under which they are to be erected differ so materially. They have come to the conclusion that the better plan is to let the city commissioner, or inspector of buildings, be the judge, upon complaint, as to whether a scaffold is safe or not, and would recommend that by-law No. 627 be changed so as to read as follows: "When information comes to the inspector of buildings, or when by any means it comes to his knowledge that any building, or portion of a building in course of erection, alteration or repair, within the city limits, or the scaffolding or hoists connected therewith shall be deemed unsafe, he shall immediately examine the same; and should he decide the same to be unsafe, he shall immediately stop all work connected with the part of the building so condemned, and shall at once notify the owner, contractor or agent to make the said building, scaffolding, hoists or other work so condemned, perfectly safe, and any owner, contractor, agent or workman who does work, or allows work to be done upon said condemned work (except for the purpose of

making the same safe) until he has received a certificate from the inspector that the said condemned structure has been made safe, shall be subject to all penalties of this by-law." The committee cannot overlook the fact that after all, the workmen who erected or are employed upon a scaffold are the very best judges as to whether or not the scaffold is perfectly safe, and would strongly recommend workmen who suspect a scaffold or building to be insecure, to refuse to work upon the same, and to instantly notify the commissioner's department that such scaffold or building is supposed to be unsafe. The committee had before them correspondence from the principal American cities, and find that in no case have they a specification defining just how a scaffold should be built. It is also recommended that placards should be placed upon all buildings in course of erection or alteration, informing the workmen engaged thereon of the provisions contained in by-law 627 for their protection, and that all complaints made by workmen or others will be held in strict confidence.

IT seems very strange to the profession that, notwithstanding all that has been written concerning competitions and the manner in which they should be conducted to meet with a response from the best men, instructions such as those issued by the city of Quebec should still be prepared in all seriousness, believing that they are all that architects can wish for, and that they will result in the selection of a superior and unobjectionable design. These instructions have been prepared with great care and in the most elaborate manner. Much instruction and advice has also been offered for the benefit of competing architects. Here and there pithy statements have been made as to this and that, which some might profit by if they would, but which will be disregarded by all. It is evident that the city of Quebec does not wish to discover a good design together with its author, so much as they desire to secure a set of plans which can be placed in the hands of the City Engineer or some favored local architect to have a building erected therefrom. While they were about it, they should have asked for detail drawings, and thus have placed themselves in possession of all the drawings necessary to the complete erection of the building. As there are three premiums and all the premiated drawings are to become the property of the city, they should have more than sufficient drawings and information for the erection of this most important building. We cannot imagine any sane man undertaking to prepare a design under these instructions, in the hope of receiving any one of the three prizes. The work called for is tremendous, and the first prize, if obtained, would not pay the actual cash outlay of preparing the drawings. If one attempts to compute the cost to the profession of entering such a competition, he would be astounded, more especially if he takes into consideration the reward. The profession should take some concerted action which will result in the complete failure of all such competitions. The instructions state that the cost of the proposed building "shall not exceed the sum of \$200,000." This is a very definite statement, and should be strictly adhered to. How it is to be done we know not, for we are convinced that it would require between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to erect in Toronto a building of the size of this proposed structure, and if the suggestions made in the remarks at the end of the instructions are followed, the building could not be erected for \$750,000. Why problems impossible of solution are seriously placed before architects by men who are considered to be capable and of sound mind, we cannot comprehend. We have never known of an architect supplying the deficiency, so the hope that he may do so cannot be put forward as a reason for appropriating only one half or one third of the necessary funds. Granted that the building can be erected for \$200,000, the architect who may win the first premium will give value in the form of drawings and specifications to the amount of \$5,000, as the plans and specifications asked for are nearly all that would be required for the making up of tenders. If the building should cost \$500,000, which it will most certainly, the drawings to be supplied would be worth \$12,500. Would any member of the City Council of Quebec agree to sell \$12,500 or even \$5,000 worth of goods, for \$1,500. Certainly not! And yet that is what they think archi-