

advantage in comparison with such other Ontario points as Sarnia, Midland, etc., in the west and Kingston in the east, which latter has iron and limestone at least of the necessities almost on the spot, and hardwood for unlimited charcoal production in the immediate neighborhood. If there is any question of supplying local Ontario demand the smelters now established or in process are ample to meet all requirements. If export to other provinces or abroad is contemplated the proposed investors in the scheme should examine carefully the advantages of Cape Breton before deciding that Toronto is a suitable location. Toronto has some vacant lots where a smelter would look well—Cape Breton has coal, iron ore, limestone and deep sea harbors, all within a stone's throw of each other, and will some day, not far in the future, lay down in the world's market iron as cheap and as good as any.

As we said in beginning this note it is proposed to form a company to establish an iron smelter in Toronto. To whom it is afterwards proposed to dispose of the shares is not known.

THE NIAGARA POWER QUESTION.

The greatest natural resource of Southern Ontario is beyond all question the water-power at Niagara Falls. Just what the development of this power could do for Canada may be judged by the changes now going on in the industries of Hamilton, Ont., since the introduction of electrical power by the Cataract Power Company last fall. Hamilton is becoming a smokeless town and that means a great deal more in coalless Ontario than in Pennsylvania, for instance, where coal is mined almost at the factory door. After years of idleness, due to the Ontario Government's having granted a monopoly of the Niagara water-power to the company which had the most interest in preventing its development, there seems to be a prospect of actual development being undertaken. The Canadian Niagara Power Company has agreed to abandon the monopoly it holds, in return for a number of concessions. In place of the present annual rental of \$25,000 per annum, a tariff of rates has been decided upon. Under the new agreement the company, instead of a fixed annual payment, will pay in proportion to the power which it develops, a new tariff as follows: For the first 10,000 horse-power developed, \$15,000 per annum. For the next 10,000 horse-power, \$1 per horse-power per annum. For the next 10,000 horse-power, 75 cents per horse-power per annum. For the remaining power developed up to 100,000 horse-power, 50 cents per horse-power. Under the new arrangement the revenue derivable by the Government for the first 30,000 horse-power developed will amount to \$32,500. If the company develops up to 100,000 horse-power, it will pay a further sum of \$35,000, making a total revenue of \$67,500.

The town of Niagara Falls, Ont., has made a vigorous protest to the Government against any agreement being made which would prevent a later company obtaining more favorable terms from the Government. The whole question is a very difficult one, but in the past the Government has shown very little capacity in handling it. So far little but mistakes have been made. It is to be hoped that a very considerable development will at once be undertaken, but at the same time it is essential that the Ontario Government should obtain for the use of the people the highest possible rental from the power companies compatible with the works being conducted on a commercially profitable basis. We must not only develop the town of

Niagara Falls, but also at the same time lighten the taxation of the future inhabitants of the James' Bay district. This is not a local issue in any sense.

BUILDING REGULATIONS.

It is a much debated question as to whether it is better to have no law at all than one which is not observed. When the law itself is of such a character as to be quite out of touch with modern conditions, and its enforcement, which works hardship on the public, is at the discretion of persons who may or may not be absolutely unbiased in their decisions, the uselessness of such legislation is unquestionable. Where, as in Toronto, the laws are building laws quite out of date, which are enforced by inspectors who are perfectly competent to apply such obsolete rules, but are entirely unfamiliar with building operations as carried on to-day in other than rural communities, the necessity for reform is evident. The building regulations of Toronto would be valuable at a barn-raising, but are not applicable at all to modern office, store, or warehouse buildings.

We find rules for height and the thickness of brick and stone walls, but none for strength of floors or roofs. Of steel construction the makers of the regulations seem to have known nothing, for the modern steel building is quite ignored and such specimens as have been built already in the city are in direct violation of the departmental regulations. We are informed that the building inspector recently refused to pass the plan for a building because the walls were only one-half the required thickness. It did not seem to matter that the walls were to carry no part of the weight of the structure, which was steel throughout, but were merely to enclose the building from the weather.

The great advance made towards fire-proof construction is unknown apparently in Toronto. As a matter of fact there are fire-proofed buildings in Toronto, but their existence is contrary to the by-laws, and there are many fire-traps which conform entirely to the building regulations, as for example, the new City Hall.

There is urgent need of an entirely new set of building regulations for Toronto which shall conform to the needs of the present day conditions. There is need also of a competent civil engineer at the head of the department who will be capable of criticizing the plans of steel buildings. There is need also of a more businesslike conduct of the department inasmuch as the building regulations are unobtainable by the public, the architects or the builders. There is only one copy in existence, apparently, and into it are laid or pasted the various amendments that have accumulated in the past ten years. The regulations should be codified and printed.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES ACTS.

Much interest is being taken in the efforts recently made by the British Government to make provision for the compensation of workmen who are injured on their employers' premises. The subject is a very difficult one. If employees are hedged about by too many legal safeguards they become careless and not only perform their labor less efficiently, but cause unnecessary expense. That this is true has been established almost as clearly as that employers when left without legal restraints will sacrifice the health and lives of the workers for the sake of a trifling gain.

The Government of Ontario, wishing to keep in touch with the most progressive legislation on the labor question, has commissioned Jas. Major, professor of Political