

THE Ontario Association of Architects desire to receive designs for an official seal. The sum of \$10 will be awarded to the best design sent in as an acknowledgement on their part of their indebtedness to the designer. The seal is to be 2½" in diameter and to have the name of the association around the outer edge.

A LEADER in a recent issue of the *Toronto Evening Telegram* criticizes the architecture of buildings in the city and declares that such monstrosities would never be "tolerated in the United States." No doubt there may be some remarkably ugly buildings in all cities of Canada, but we certainly were not aware that "artistic culture" in the States had attained so high a degree that ugly buildings were not permitted to be put up. We are afraid we in Canada must be a long way behind the times if this is the case, for as yet we are hardly able to prevent the construction of fire traps and booby traps—and certainly to build safely must be learnt before we can enforce building with beauty. And then, too, we must find out what constitutes beauty in a building, for the list of buildings given by the writer that do possess "grace of outline and cultivated finish" takes us over a wide field of design and leaves us in doubt as to which particular building ought to be set up as the standard of beauty.

SEVERAL hundred thousand dollars have been expended by the Dominion Government and the city of Toronto on the construction of the breakwater at the south-east boundary of the Island, with the object of preserving intact the magnificent harbor. This expenditure will be entirely wasted if steps are not speedily taken to complete the work by extending the protective wall along the entire southern and western boundaries. The narrow strip of land comprising the island is rapidly diminishing in extent before the action of wind and wave, and its entire disappearance may be looked for within a comparatively brief period if the necessary protection is not afforded it. This would prove one of the greatest calamities that could possibly befall the city, and the stupidity of those who were responsible for it, would excite the indignation of all future generations. It is to be hoped united action will be taken by the Government and city authorities to continue the construction of the breakwater during the coming winter.

ALTHOUGH we believe that the gift of High Park to the city of Toronto should be acknowledged by the erection of a monument to the late Mr. Howard, we cannot regret the defeat of the \$10,000 by-law for that purpose. If the money had been voted it would have been worse than wasted, except that it would have acknowledged the indebtedness of the citizens of Toronto to the man who so generously provided the city with so magnificent a park. A monument would to a certainty have been erected which, while it might meet with the approval of the general public, would have been held in contempt by the better informed. A bad statue is worse than no statue, and if we cannot have good work, let us at least not have work of which we may be ashamed in the near future. One Ryerson monument is sufficient in Toronto, and until we can obtain statues of real merit let us do without them. The munificence of the late Mr. Howard can be much better acknowledged and kept before the citizens of Toronto by the erection of a building which can be put to a useful purpose. Let the building be of fine design and thoroughly and substantially built, and it will be a worthy monument to a man who was the first architect which the city of Toronto possessed. A bronze or marble bust of Mr. Howard could be placed in a prominent position in the building, with a tablet giving particulars of his gift to the city.

A WINNIPEG insurance agent has published a scheme for the better protection from fire of small towns that are usually built of wood. It is simply the introduction into these places of occasional fire-walls, which shall divide blocks of houses. With such an arrangement there would no doubt be a slight diminution in the possible spread of fire, but unless the streets were widened considerably or a fire wall carried down

the centre to prevent the flames from reaching across the streets, there is nothing here to hinder the spread in this direction. And then, how about sparks which will fly over fire walls and ignite distant structures? We are afraid the only actual protection for wooden towns would be to enclose sections in fire wall all round and put a fireproof roof on top of the walls over the whole area enclosed. The cost of this would probably be greater than building the towns of bricks. But while on this subject our attention has been called to the rows and rows of houses built in every city, even those that have a so-called fire by-law, without a brick wall between each house and its neighbor. We know of rows containing as many as twelve houses built with a gable wall of brick at each end and a face of half brickwork to the front: all the rest is frame with rough-cast back. If a fire does start in one of these, there is nothing whatever to hinder the destruction of the whole row in a fearfully short space of time, and the farce of framing by-laws to prevent the spread of fire goes on, without a proper enforcement of such clauses, even if any practical clauses happen to exist at all.

IN response to repeated requisitions Hamilton has now a regular system of granting building permits and keeping a record of all new buildings, but we notice one point in the form of permit that we think is hardly advisable. It is that the name of the contractor who is to do the work appears on the permit. This means that a tender has been accepted even if a contract has not actually been signed, before the permit was given or the plan examined to ascertain if it was in accordance with the requirements of the by-law. In nine cases out of ten where the plans have been prepared by competent men, no change would have to be made, but in the event of changes, possibly sweeping ones, having to be made, there might arise a great deal of trouble between the contracting parties, for which the architect would be solely responsible. It is a question for architects to decide whether it is advisable to let a contract before the permit is given, but we think it is always wisest to be on the safe side. As an example, take an instance where a contract has been let and the owner does not intend to spend more on his house, or it may be a public body for whom the work is to be done, who cannot spend more without recourse to further loans. The Inspector insists on the addition of a brick wall somewhere in the centre as a requirement of the by-law against fire. The contract having been let, the contractor is asked to give a price for this addition, and if he is not a scrupulous man, will "pile it on" and perhaps in the end put the owner to the expense of arbitration, and naturally the blame of all this must rest on the architect.

MANY of the old macadam roadways of Montreal are to be taken up and relaid with modern paving materials, some in wood, some with granite "setts" and others again with asphalt. The somewhat hot-headed discussions that have taken place on the subject at the City Council meetings show, that many of the aldermen do not possess quite as practical a knowledge of the methods of constructing pavings and the dealings with contracts as it would be advisable they should. A number of aldermen advocate the construction of these roadways under day-work system instead of contract work, simply because they think a considerable saving would be made in public funds by this means. The question they are discussing is one of permanent roadways, and the very best method of securing a permanent result is to insist upon a valuable guarantee from the contractor. By day-work no guarantee can be given, and unless the supervision by the City Surveyor is constant and minute—such as would take up all his time—unless the city undertakes to test the materials to be used and procures the services of engineers who are thoroughly acquainted with this kind of work, the result will never be a success. And if in order to make it a success the city incurred such expenses as these, the cost would far exceed the amount of the contracts. By contract one man is made responsible, and this system of doing work must prove far more satisfactory to the public who wish for a tangible proof that their money is not being thrown away. It is not a question of the cost; the result must be as near per-