

borough firm, was that their capacity was too limited to allow them to turn out the pipe at a speed approaching that of the Scotch founders. There was perhaps some ground for this objection, but we are informed that it is the intention of the Peterborough company to immediately add to their buildings and machinery to an extent which will enable them to fulfil the requirements.

WE have it on most excellent authority that an American architect to whom has been entrusted the erection of a number of important buildings in Canada, recently made the statement that he would long ago have opened an office in Toronto but for the belief that his practice in Canada would fall off in consequence. In other words he understands the preference which many people in Canada are ever ready to accord foreign productions, and their belief that nothing excellent can result from the efforts of our own people. The architect in question deserves to be complimented upon his sagacity. With shame it must be confessed that he has correctly gauged the sentiment actuating many of our people. If these people would throw aside prejudice and travel sufficiently to be able to make fair comparisons between home and foreign work, they would not be long in finding out that Canadians can compete with foreigners in almost all lines of production. We have reached the stage in our history where we should rid ourselves of our provincialism, and manifest to the world our belief that we are just as good as our neighbors.

THE citizens of Toronto are being asked to contribute to a "children's fresh air fund," the ultimate object of which is to secure for poor children, especially those in delicate health, a residence of two weeks in the country. In the meantime, and until this object can be fully attained, the children will be given an occasional day's outing. Too much cannot be said in commendation of the service which the philanthropic citizens who have undertaken this project, are seeking to perform in behalf of unfortunate humanity. Without intending to throw cold water upon their efforts, we nevertheless feel it to be our duty to point out that two weeks residence in the country will do little to offset the effects of fifty-two weeks of every year spent in violation of all sanitary laws. Permanent improvement of the physical condition of the poorest classes, can only be brought about by improving the sanitary condition of the buildings they live in, and teaching, and if need be compelling, them to comply in some measure with sanitary laws. This is a matter for the municipal authorities to deal with, and we are free to confess, its solution will be attended with many difficulties.

WE had something to say quite recently on the importance to the contractor of knowing how to estimate. We referred to cases in which the bids sent in for work varied as much as fifty per cent. We learn that this condition of affairs is not confined to Canada. A writer in one of our American exchanges, gives the following startling example of the lack of knowledge and recklessness which characterize the bids of many contractors: "A friend who is interested in such matters, who was recently in Nashville (the capital of Tennessee), had occasion to examine some of the bids made for certain public works there. From the extent and character of these works, there were included among the bidders some of the best contracting firms and builders of the whole country. I selected a few from each to show the run of them. These bids were all made on plans and specifications most explicitly and carefully prepared. The island filter: among the bids were \$22,190, \$29,300, \$42,709. The foundation of the pumping works: among others were \$67,280, \$73,525, \$107,670. Bridge piers, \$76,720, \$85,859, \$133,907, \$170,573. Bridge superstructure, \$64,433, \$75,000, \$91,000. For the thirty six-inch water main from the pumping works to the reservoir, \$20,400, \$33,315, \$19,000, \$55,960. For the reservoir, \$330,921, \$351,000, \$400,000, \$435,954, \$603,887. In one of these bids the secretary of the board discovered an error, in carrying out and footing, of \$153,000. It will be seen that in some of these the difference between the highest and lowest bid was more than the lowest bid." We

need look no farther to find the cause of so many failures among contractors. We trust the series of articles entitled, "How to Estimate," which we are now publishing, will be carefully read by Canadian contractors, and will assist them to the adoption of better methods of calculation.

ON the important question of the appointment of a paid Commission to superintend the construction of the new Toronto Municipal Buildings, barely one thousand ratepayers of the city took the trouble to record their votes. Of this number 638 voted against the appointment of a Commission. We cannot do other than regret this decision, which leaves the superintendence of the construction of the buildings in the hands of a committee of aldermen, the *personnel* of which will be subject to yearly change, and the members of which, with one or two exceptions, perhaps, will be without the necessary experience to qualify them for their duties. Supposing that every member of the committee should honestly endeavor to serve the city's interests, it would nevertheless be too much to expect that a work of such magnitude will be carried to completion under the direction of the committee without the occurrence of some costly mistakes or impositions. We can only hope that this opinion may prove not to be well founded, and that both the citizens who voted to defeat the appointment of a Commission, as well as those who by their neglect to vote contributed to that result, may have no cause for future repentance. The application of some citizens for an injunction to restrain the Council from proceeding with the erection of the buildings without appointing a Commission, has been refused by the Court, on the ground that the Act of the Legislature merely gave the Council power to appoint a Commission, without making the appointment compulsory. With regard to the intention of the Council to appoint a Commission, as plainly expressed in the pamphlet issued for the information of the ratepayers when asked to vote \$600,000 to complete the undertaking, the Court held that the Council were at liberty to revoke or disclaim that intention. The learned Judge in expressing this view, took occasion to put on record his opinion of the conduct of the Council in thus repudiating the promise made to their constituents. This he did in the following words: "In deciding whether or not an injunction should issue, I have nothing to do with the propriety of the course adopted by the Council in repudiating a representation apparently put forward by their authority, and which was well calculated to mislead persons who thought a Commission desirable into believing that the Council would appoint one. In disposing of the costs, however, I am at liberty to say that the conduct of the Council appears to me to have been so discreditable that their costs ought to be refused."

WE have pointed out elsewhere in this paper that any permanent improvement in the physical condition of the poorest classes in our cities, can only be effected by improving the sanitary surroundings in which they exist. We are pleased to notice that a first step in this direction has just been taken by the municipal authorities of the city of Toronto, by the recommendation of an ordinance, which provides that "No dwelling house or other building occupied or intended to be occupied for human habitation shall hereafter be erected on any street, avenue, lane, alley, place, thoroughfare, or public communication in the city of Toronto which is less than 40 feet in width. No dwelling house or other building occupied or intended to be occupied for human habitation shall be erected or used upon any land having a less area than 1,200 square feet. Every dwelling house or other erection occupied as a dwelling house shall have attached thereto as the yard or curtilage thereof a vacant space having an area of not less than 500 square feet, on which no building of any kind shall ever be erected or maintained." The foregoing sections are not to apply in any case in which the City Engineer and City Commissioner shall report in writing, and three fourths of the members of the said Council present at any meeting thereof shall vote that, in their opinion, the opening or acceptance of the particular thoroughfare or the erection of the particular building is in the public