

The architectural students of Ontario are at present on the anxious seat in view of the approaching April examinations. Many architects now in practice regret that such examinations were not required of them during their studentship. Students of the present day should, therefore, appreciate the facilities which, under the Ontario Architects' Act, have been placed at their disposal for acquiring a proper knowledge of architecture. With the object of assisting students who shall present themselves as candidates for examination, we publish a paper on "Heating and Ventilation," by the President of the O.A.A., Mr. S. G. Curry, and also a paper on "Elements of Building Construction" and "Structural Iron Work," by Mr. E. Burke, recently read before the members of the Toronto Architectural Sketch Club. The authors have been appointed examiners in the subjects treated of in their respective papers.

It is every day becoming more apparent that the activity which was expected to mark the coming season in Toronto in consequence of the changing of the street railway system and the construction of permanent pavements on the leading streets, will not be witnessed. The Council are in a fair way to spend the balance of the year in discussing the merits of the trolley versus the storage battery system of street car propulsion, notwithstanding that their experts reported in favor of the trolley, and in the face of the fact that the experimenting which has been done by American cities points to the trolley system as being at present the only one which can be depended on to do the work satisfactorily, especially where heavy grades and heavily laden cars are among the difficulties to be encountered. It is right enough that the Council should endeavor to make provision for the adoption of a system more perfect than the trolley, should such be made available before the period of the present company's franchise shall have expired, but they are not justified in throwing over the carrying out of this great improvement for another year when the evidence all tends to show that no corresponding advantage is likely to be gained. The outlook for the building trades is none too encouraging. There is consequently the greater reason why the City should endeavor to afford employment on as extended a scale as possible to artisans and laborers.

This is not the first time that we have taken occasion to speak of the Mechanics' Lien Law and its many disadvantages. The act remains in force, and as long as this is the case there will be heard from all sides complaints of its cumbersome, expense in procedure, and its incomprehensiveness. We have more than once heard it said by "persons in authority" when asked to explain some part of the Lien Law, "It's not surprising you don't understand it, for nobody ever did." This assertion is, of course, an exaggeration, but it has a great deal of truth in it. Surely then it is time to amend a law that has such obvious flaws in it. Many people, and among them lawyers of eminence, contend that it would be better to abolish it at once. The fact is, the system on which the law is based is wrong. It encourages fraud, as it attempts to legislate for credit, giving considerable opportunity for dishonesty. It fosters speculative building, and dishonest builders have not failed to take advantage of it, causing an amount of distress, annoyance and embarrassment that it would fill volumes to dilate upon. Were there no Lien Law, there would not be much credit. But under the existing state of things the material man prefers to sell his goods on credit and run the chances of being able to protect himself by a lien, and not selling anything, the man who gives credit being the one who secures the orders. The material man can come down on the innocent owner, and so can the workman, and force him to pay again that which he has already paid the builder who has absconded, for the percentage retained in making advances to the builder rarely are sufficient to cover the whole costs. The system of credit is bad, but this plan of safeguarding the man who gives credit in order to sell his material is worse.

MUCH has been heard of the danger attendant upon the system of stringing electric wires overhead, and reiterated demands have been made that all wires be placed underground. It is questionable, however, whether the carrying out of this demand would not tend to enhance rather than diminish the danger. An example of the peril which is likely to attend the underground system occurred in Toronto a few days ago. Illuminating gas from the street mains found its way in sufficient quantity into one of the man-holes in the public streets through which passes a telephone cable, to require but the faintest induction spark from the covering of the cable, or a spark of atmospheric electricity to cause an explosion. The spark appears to have been forthcoming, for suddenly the heavy iron man-hole covering which had been firmly bolted down, was torn from its seat and carried into the air. A horse which was being driven past the spot at the moment fell into the man-hole, and before it could be extricated there occurred a second explosion, burning the animal severely. The driver of the horse and another person who happened to be near the man-hole when the explosion occurred escaped with slight injuries. It is a well-known fact that about 10 per cent. of the total supply of illuminating gas which goes into the street mains leaks out at the joints and saturates the earth. This gas must find its way into the

man-holes, and when the right admixture of gas and air is reached, the material is ready for an explosion. There is always danger with underground wires that the inductive current set up in the lead covering of the cable may become sufficiently strong to generate a spark which would be the means of igniting the combustible materials. Had the explosion to which we have referred taken place in the man-hole at the intersection of King and Yonge streets, where the traffic is always great during business hours, there would in all probability have been many persons killed. The daily press which has so often held up to view the horrors of the overhead system, should now have something to say on the other side of the question.

A VERY singular case has been before the courts for some time, and it will be probably many months before we hear the end of it. As it contains points of considerable interest, we give the story as far as it has gone at present. Three prominent men of Waterford, Ontario, built a block of business premises on the main street of that town. The boundaries of the street had not been definitely decided, but when they were, it was found that the new block encroached some six feet upon the street. The owners of the building were proceeded against for allowing a nuisance and were fined. They appealed, but the result was an order to remove the "nuisance" within three months. This they failed to do, and the County judge allowed a writ of *de nonovo amovendo* to issue, which enjoined the sheriff to pull down the projecting part of the block at the owners' cost. The barrister in charge of the owners' interests held that the County judge had no power to issue this curious writ, but that it was a matter for the High Court. He succeeded in obtaining a writ of *certiorari* during the regular term, so that proceedings were stayed on account of the irregularity, and will proceed during the ensuing term to apply for a rule nisi whereby the present proceeding will be quashed. The case gains interest from the fact that the writ of *de nonovo amovendo* is said to be the first that has been issued for a hundred years. The matter may still be brought before the High Court, and if so, the owners are liable to a fine of almost any amount, and repeated fines until the "nuisance" complained of is removed. There seems to be a difference as to the term which may be applied to an encroachment upon adjoining property, for there is a case recorded in which, by a mistake, a house was erected with one side wall, just its thickness, nine inches, on the adjoining lot. In this case the owner was proceeded against, not for a "nuisance," but simply for encroachment, and when the sheriff was ordered to tear down the wall he found he could not do so without injury to that part of the house touching the wall on the other side, and clearly within the lot of the house owner. He had no right to enter upon the lot or touch anything therein, and so far as we have been able to discover, the matter had to be left in this state.

#### OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

HOUSE FOR A. R. REID, ESQ., MONTREAL.—ALEX. C. HUTCHISON, ARCHITECT.

This building was erected in Upper Drummond street some eighteen months ago. The fronts are of red Scotch and red New Brunswick sand stone. It is at present without the library shown on the plan, but it is proposed to make this addition during this year.

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, AVENUE ROAD, TORONTO.—GORDON & HELLIVELL, ARCHITECTS, TORONTO.

SKETCH OF SUMMER RESIDENCE ON TORONTO ISLAND.—LANGLEY & BURKE, ARCHITECTS, TORONTO.

INTERIOR OF HALL, F. D. MONK'S RESIDENCE, MONTREAL.—J. W. & F. C. HOPKINS, ARCHITECTS, MONTREAL.

#### OBITUARY.

It becomes our painful duty to chronicle the death of Mr. John Webb, one of the oldest, most prominent, and most highly esteemed contractors of the City of Hamilton. Death was the result of a severe attack of rheumatism, culminating in severe spasms of the heart after an illness of seven weeks. The subject of this notice was born near Hythe, in Kent County, England. He came to this country in 1871, and immediately entered into business in Hamilton as a contractor and builder. Among the buildings erected by him may be mentioned the *Times* building, Wyerson school, West Avenue school, Canada street works, James McPherson & Co's building, the buildings occupied by Messrs. F. W. Perrin & Son, Thos. Lawry & Son, W. H. Gillard & Co., St. John's Church, the Tackett tobacco factory, and others which were both a credit to him and to the city. He leaves a widow and nine children, four sons and five daughters. Deceased was a member of the Doric Lodge, A. F. & A. M., and a charter member of Gore Lodge, A. O. U. W. For a number of years he was an active member of the Charitable Committee of St. George's Society. He was noted for his uprightness of character and kindness of disposition.

#### PUBLICATIONS.

Messrs. H. R. Ives & Co., have issued an attractively printed little book, embellished with a number of humorous illustrations, calling attention to the advantages of their Buffalo hot water boiler, corrugated cast pipe, etc.

Elizabeth Bisland opens the March number of the *Cosmopolitan* with an article on the Cologne Cathedral, beautifully illustrated from photographs. Mr. H. de Young, Commissioner of the World and Fair from California, has a most interesting article on expositions. The illustrations displaying this article are from the pen of Harry Ferry and adequately accompany the renders the architectural glories of the Fair buildings.