

Canadian Contractors Form New National Association

General Conference to Be Held October 22nd, 23rd and 24th in Ottawa to Form a Dominion-Wide Organization of Interests Connected With the Various Local Builders' Exchanges—Many Evils to Be Discussed and Corrected

TO improve the status of contractors in Canada, a representative group of men from Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, London, Galt and other cities have decided to form a national association of general contractors, sub-contractors and supply houses. At a preliminary conference yesterday in Toronto, it was decided to organize a Dominion-wide conference to be held October 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1918, at Ottawa, Ont. The following temporary executive committee was appointed, with power to add to its numbers especially in regard to western members:—

J. Penrose Anglin, of Anglins Limited, Montreal, chairman; D. K. Trotter, secretary-treasurer of the Montreal Builders' Exchange, secretary; W. Davidson, member of the Winnipeg Builders' Exchange; W. E. Dillon, of W. E. Dillon Co., Limited, Toronto; Herbert Elgie, Toronto; Harry Hayman, London, Ont.; H. Hazleton, president of the Winnipeg Builders' Exchange; J. D. Johnson, Ontario manager of the Canada Cement Co., Limited; W. A. Mattice, of the Dominion Bridge Co., Limited, Ottawa; W. E. Ramsey, of Pedlar People, Limited, Montreal; and E. A. Sanders, secretary of the Mechanical Trades Association, Halifax.

The preliminary conference was called at the suggestion of Mr. Anglin and was held at the rooms of the Builders' Exchange, Toronto. The first session was at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 1 p.m. The second session was called to order about 2.30 p.m. and adjourned two hours later. Among those present, besides most of the above-mentioned, were:—

John Quinlan, Montreal; C. F. Smallpiece, eastern manager of the Taylor-Forbes Co.; H. N. Dancy, Toronto; T. Gander, Toronto; R. Jackson, of the Jackson-Lewis Co., Limited, Toronto; Walter Davidson, Toronto; Geo. R. Hyatt, London, Ont.; Edward and George Hayman, of Hayman & Sons, London, Ont.; A. G. Robb, of Galt; T. R. Wright, of London, Ont.; and F. B. McFarren, general manager of the Interprovincial Brick Co.; Geo. E. Stocker, president of Wickett Bros., Toronto.

Minister Will Meet Delegation

Vice-President Davidson, of the Toronto Builders' Exchange, occupied the chair during the morning session and W. E. Dillon, president of the Toronto Builders' Exchange, presided at the afternoon session. Mr. Anglin opened the discussion with an outline of the work that could be accomplished by a live contractors' association, briefly reviewing some of the evils now existing in the business, and stated that the Minister of Public Works has signified his willingness to meet the contractors, or a delegation from their association, to talk over the various matters that relate to Dominion Government work or to Federal legislation.

Mr. Anglin proposed the following tentative list of subjects to be discussed at the proposed Ottawa conference:—

Builders' exchanges (future usefulness of); quantity surveying; method of calling and opening bids; contract and bid bonds vs. cheques; contracts; standard agreements; unit prices; cost-plus-fixed-sum contracts; labor trade parliaments; employers' apprenticeship; technical

education; resources, economy, readjustment and standardization of materials; future business; public works; relations with architects, engineers and owners; relations with sub-contractors and supply houses; powers of superintendent or inspector; arbitration; foreign competition; plan making; building by-laws; lien laws; relations with other organizations, such as Boards of Trade and Manufacturers' Associations; code of ethics as between general contractor and trade contractor, covering such subjects as receiving bids and awarding work, payments, bonds, bonuses and penalties; zones of operation; plant; yards; trade papers; and building statistics.

Open Bids Promptly

Mr. Quinlan called special attention to the hardships created through the requirement by the Dominion Government and many other public bodies of marked cheques with tenders. The banks charge high rates of interest, and as these cheques are often retained for long periods, it is a costly practice. Mr. Quinlan thought that in the first place guarantee bonds should be accepted universally and secondly, the bids should be opened at once in the presence of the bidders, and awarded promptly to the lowest bidder if any award is made at all. There should be no delay, no need for wire pulling to find out where one stood in the bidding and no inconvenience through having to refuse other work until announcement is made of the bids for big jobs on which one may have tendered and for which one may desire to reserve funds and staff in the hope of having been the lowest bidder.

Mr. Anglin told how the National Federation of Building Interests had been recently formed in the United States under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce of that country. Its purpose at present is to discuss building for war work and after-the-war problems. Its proceedings will be of assistance to the newly formed Canadian association, thought Mr. Anglin.

Mr. Elgie referred to foreign competition, but Mr. Anglin thought that unfair home competition is a more serious matter. Too many manufacturers are now doing their own building, thinking that they can buy labor and materials as cheaply as a contractor, and that a capable superintendent is all that is necessary for the construction of works by day labor. It was the consensus of opinion that representations should be made to supply houses and labor unions that an established contractor, who buys in large quantities the year around and who employs labor continuously, should receive a legitimate trade discount upon the prices quoted to the occasional buyer or the temporary employer.

Mr. Wright enquired regarding the fate of the former National Association of Builders' Exchanges. Mr. Anglin and Mr. Gander explained that its demise had been due to a mistake in dividing it into eastern and western sections, having no central executive and no definite dates for meetings.

Mr. Elgie moved that the meeting divide into three separate meetings—supply men, sub-contractors and general contractors—for an hour's discussion of the more selfish viewpoints of each of these three component parts of the field represented, and that each section then make a report to the committee of the whole regarding any