

the greatest claims to popularity with an undesirable class; that class of young men who, with a sort of general capacity in some degree but with no decided bent, are ready to be attracted by incidental attractions in any of the professions. If electrical engineering continues to require a long apprenticeship under the orders of mechanics, while architecture offers a university education free of charge, the usefulness of electrical engineering as a limbo for the vaguely aspiring sons of vaguely aspiring parents, who would otherwise aim at architecture, will be gone; architecture will excel in popularity but its chances as an art will be proportionately diminished.

The same doubt hangs over the proposition to create a travelling scholarship. As stated in the Educational Committee's report the proposition is that only "regular students" who have graduated and taken their degree in architecture at the university "shall be eligible for the scholarship." That is an excellent proposition; but the motion to adopt gives the Council "power to modify the details with regard to clause 4," which is the clause relating to this scholarship.

It is to be hoped the Council will not attach this scholarship to anything less than a full career in arts and architecture at McGill. Then we shall feel sure not only that it is in the right hands but that the process of getting it is too long—requires too much decision of mind towards this career and too much hard work—to attract triflers. It is attraction that is principally to be feared. The actual winner of a scholarship may be of the right stuff but, unless the scholarship is so hedged by conditions of preliminary service that it colours the prospect with visions of work rather than with visions of foreign travel—for every trained and travelled student the profession gains, we shall have another or possibly more whom the chance of free foreign travel has enticed to desert a career of usefulness to others and profit to himself in "business."

THE EFFECT OF HIGH PRICES ON BUILDING.

Attention is being called to the manner in which the demands of workmen in the building trades coupled with the high prices of materials, is checking building enterprise in Toronto.

Notwithstanding the all-round advance in wages last year, several of the unions have already decided to demand a further substantial increase. The plasterers for example, are asking 45 cents per hour, an advance of 7 cents. It is understood to be the intention of the plumbers to demand 65 cents per hour; the painters have also demanded an advance while at the same time they have voted down the request of the employers to be allowed three instead of two apprentices to each shop, and that the term of apprenticeship be extended.

In view of these demands and the uncertainty as to what the scale of wages will be, contractors feel obliged to protect themselves against loss by a substantial increase in their tenders. This has already resulted in blocking considerable work which, had prices remained about the same as last year, would have gone forward to completion.

The opinion prevails that the point has been reached at which any addition to the cost of either materials or labor will prove to be the last straw which will break the back of many building enterprises. This is a particularly unfortunate condition when money is plentiful, and under favorable circumstances would be largely invested in new buildings.

Investors in buildings must keep in mind the possibility of a return of less prosperous times, when if their buildings have cost too much the shrinkage in values may entail upon them a loss. Thousands of owners found themselves in this position on the collapse of the real estate boom in Toronto several years ago.

Some large commercial undertakings may go on in spite of higher prices, but many smaller ones, especially residences, will be stopped. This means a few large contracts for a few large contractors and employment for a few hundred workmen, leaving idle a much larger number of both masters and mechanics.

Workmen give as a reason why they should have more pay that the cost of living, including rents, has greatly advanced. They apparently do not see that this advance is largely due to their constant and ever increasing demands for more wages and shorter hours, and that as they comprise the bulk of the consuming class, they are themselves called on to bear the heaviest part of the burden. This was clearly demonstrated by the recent coal strike, the effects of which were felt most severely by mechanics and laborers. This strike has probably permanently increased the price of coal in this country. In the case of articles of general consumption such as fuel, the use of which cannot be dispensed with, the future policy of the producing companies will probably be to cease fighting against higher prices in behalf of the consumers from whom they get no thanks, and to accede to all demands of their workmen and charge up the extra cost to the consumer. Who is the consumer? In seven cases out of ten he is the wage earner, the man who is least able to bear the added burden.

In the case of the building industry, the conditions are somewhat different, but the result is much the same. People are not obliged to build expensive residences—they can live in the old ones, take rooms in an apartment house or an hotel, or adopt other modes of living which are at least less expensive and freer from care than the management of a modern house. So it happens that when prices of materials and labor reach a certain point, building enterprise slackens, the demand for materials falls off and the mechanic in the building trades and in the factory is thrown out of employment. All of which goes to show that it is possible to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, and also that to do so is a very short-sighted and unwise proceeding.

In joining parts of metal and glass by means of plaster of Paris, a serious source of trouble (according to "Werkstatt") is the tendency of the plaster to set and harden before a proper cementation has been attained. This can be easily prevented by adding to the water with which the plaster is mixed 6 per cent. of alcohol. Then sufficient time will be allowed for cementing before complete hardening occurs. Too much alcohol must not be used, otherwise the plaster will not harden.