

least of the chain of ravines by the new Ravine Drive, which connects with the great stretch of the at present incomplete Riverdale Park, which will be nearly a mile long by a quarter of a mile wide, and which is probably not well known to the majority of Torontonians, who, though they have heard of it, have probably not visited it. This park has been already several years in progress, and will be several more before complete, but it is a novel and most inexpensive method that is being taken to attain the object. The labor costs the city nothing, as it is entirely carried out by the prisoners of the jail; but as this enforced labor is objectionable to the tramps, there are but an average of twenty-five or so at work every day, whereas when the work was first started there used to be double that number available; they now steer clear of Toronto.

The Toronto Hotel Project.

FROM a reliable source we learn that a Chicago architect and capitalist have been in Toronto during the last week in connection with the project for the erection in that city of a first-class modern hotel. These gentlemen have made careful enquiries into the cost of building materials, and other matters affecting the carrying out of the enterprise. We have not learned what steps are being taken to finance the scheme, but hope to see the undertaking take tangible form in the near future. The Old Upper Canada College Grounds on King street west, seem to be regarded as the most favorable location for the proposed structure. Toronto has reached the point where improved hotel accommodation has become a necessity. There seems, therefore, no reason why the undertaking should not prove successful. So far as the cost of erecting the building is concerned, there is never likely to come a more favorable time than the present, when prices of building materials and labor are at a minimum.

Alien Labor Law.

UNNEIGHBORLY conduct, whether practiced by an individual or a nation is likely to prove unprofitable by reacting upon those whose selfishness prompts them to it. For several years Canadians have been prohibited by the alien labor law enacted by the government of the United States, from finding employment in that country unless they and their families become residents of the Republic. This law brought great hardship to workmen in the border towns of Canada, who for years had been accustomed to cross the line daily. This law is looked upon as being unworthy of a great nation, and it was expected that after the Presidential election was over, it would be repealed, inasmuch as it was known to have been enacted with an eye to securing the votes of the trades organizations. It having become apparent, however, that the obnoxious measure is to be allowed to remain in force, pressure was brought to bear on the Dominion Parliament at its last session to place a similar law upon the Statute books of Canada. Accordingly we have now a Canadian Alien Labor Law, under which foreigners are to be prohibited from obtaining employment in this county. The effect of this law is likely to be immediately felt in the United States in connection with the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, the Victoria Bridge, and other large undertakings, contracts for some of which have gone to American firms. The probability is that for some years to come undertakings of this character will

be more numerous in Canada than in the United States, so that the balance of advantage will be on the side of Canadian workmen. From an abstract point of view we have no sympathy with enactments of this character but when we find ourselves alongside so unfriendly a neighbor, nothing remains but to protect our interests. In this connection, it is learned that under the new Canadian tariff certain kinds of structural materials, such as bridge material, is admitted under a lower rate of duty than formerly, with the result that American companies have been enabled to secure a number of important contracts in Canada. This is a matter which the Dominion Government should carefully examine into. The Canadian manufacturer and contractor is certainly as much entitled to consideration at the hands of the Government as the Canadian workman.

The Tender System.

THE system of inviting tenders for works of importance is one that no reasonable contractor will find fault with. When carried to extremes, however, it becomes a nuisance. The hard times of which we have in recent years heard so much, have led the large, as well as the small, contractors to look closely after contracts whether little or big. This evident anxiety to secure business has induced persons to invite competitive bids even for contracts of trivial amount. A case was recently brought to our notice which will serve to illustrate the absurd extent to which the system of inviting tenders has been carried and the nuisance it has become. A person living in a town in Western Ontario wanted to purchase a furnace which should cost about \$110. He addressed a postal card to a dozen manufacturers asking not only for quotations, but for a personal visit. The expense of such a visit would be about \$15. Presuming that all the manufacturers complied with the request as some are known to have done, they would expend in travelling expenses the sum of \$165, or \$55 more than the entire cost of the furnace. And to what purpose! In order that the purchaser might save a ten dollar bill.

Municipal Control of Building Construction.

IN continuation of our remarks last month in connection with recent fires, a very serious fault in municipal management and control of buildings is for the fiftieth time brought prominently before us. We have a department in which plans of buildings are supposed to be examined and permits for carrying out said buildings are supposed to be granted after plans have been approved and shown to be in accordance with existing building by-laws. That this department is faulty in extreme is shown by the simple fact that it is possible to find serious fault with the construction of buildings after they have been erected. That doubts should exist in competent minds as to the stability of such buildings when completed proves that the plans have either been passed by incompetent minds or examined with so little judgment that it would have been as well if they had not been examined at all. There may be differences of opinion about limiting floor area, about central light wells, elevator shafts and so forth—opinions which must to a certain extent be regulated by the necessities of the purposes for which the building is intended—but there can be no difference of opinion as to sufficient protection for steel and iron stanchions and girders, which may be supports to important walls and piers. Certainly the city should be