

union or other interest. That there is much need of some efficient training of our mechanics in technical matters, all will admit who have had any experience of the mistakes which the average mechanic is capable of making to the injury of himself as a mechanic, and the serious loss of his employer. It is possible that the education which they most require is one which would prepare them to receive technical education. Many of our mechanics have an aversion to theoretical knowledge, even priding themselves on their total ignorance of any thing which is not in their opinion practical. If these detestors of theory were good practical men, one could excuse them, but, as might be expected, they are almost invariably poor workmen. The contempt which such men have for theory is only equalled by that which intelligent men have for them. The first thing therefore is, to teach a man that there is no such thing as being possessed of too much information, either practical or theoretical—that the man who can make himself of the greatest service will succeed better than the man of lesser qualifications. It is not enough that a man can do certain work and receive the ordinary remuneration for the same; he should, if he has the ability, gain a knowledge of all matters directly or indirectly bearing upon his pursuit. That some employers are too ignorant to recognize intelligence and ability, and refuse to pay anything additional, does not prove that all are likewise indifferent. The time will come when some employers will see what is in the man and appreciate him accordingly. The unions have been doing their best to make all men, intelligent and ignorant, stand on the same plane, but it cannot be done for long. The capable man will rise in spite of all the weights which he may be forced to carry.

A man who has a reasonable knowledge of the theory of his trade, must become a better practical man, for he will have more information, and will have greater resources. No one will surely maintain that a man's ability to use his hands skillfully is lessened by having his brain power cultured, and yet one is almost obliged to come to that conclusion by the statements made by some very ignorant friends of labor. We are at times inclined to blame the teaching given in our public schools for much of the contempt which Canadian workmen have for technical knowledge, or in fact for information of any kind. If a reasonable amount of time was taken by the teachers to impress upon their scholars the value of knowledge instead of trying to drive it into them according to lines laid down, and made mechanical by regulation upon regulation, our workmen would surely show a greater desire to become acquainted with that theoretical information which they now hold of little value. The bricklayer or mason would not be a poorer mechanic because he has some knowledge of the loads which the material he handles will carry with safety; nor the carpenter if he has some knowledge of the safe loads which beams, joists, columns, etc., will carry. Every workman in the building trades would be benefitted by a training in the theoretical branches of his trade; and what is true of them must be true of every mechanic in the country.

If building operations in the province are as brisk as the demand for competitions for design, there is a very large amount of work being done and to be done this summer. We have severely criticized the conditions of a number of competitions, and still we hear of others being brought forward with conditions as bad or worse than those criticized. The County Council of Kent ask for competitive designs for a Court House to be erected in Chatham. The building is not to cost more than \$30,000, which is an allowance equal to about 5 cents per cubic foot. When there is so little money to be expended, and so much required, it would be much better to save the expense of holding a competition, and go at once to the nearest architect who has a reputation for doing cheap and bad work. No competent or reliable man will be drawn into a competition of this character when the inducement is \$900 for \$1500 worth of work, more especially as there is but very little hope of merit alone winning the magnificent prize. The amount of room asked for

on the first floor is 3,321 sq. feet, on the second floor, 3,761 sq. feet, and on the third floor, 6,250 sq. feet. As the lower floors must equal in area those above, we will be obliged to figure the approximate size of the building by top floor. For walls, halls, staircases, lavatories, etc., it will require nearly an equal amount of area, say 5,500 sq. feet, thus making the total area of the building 12,000 sq. feet. The height for cubing the same will not be less than 50 feet, thus giving a total cubic space of 600,000 feet, which, divided by the sum of \$30,000, gives the truly magnificent amount of 5 cents per cubic foot for the erection of the building. We do not know what such a building should cost, but we are of the opinion that it cannot be erected, even in the plainest manner, for less than 10 cents per foot, or a total amount of \$60,000. If the building can be erected for the above amount in even an imperfect manner, the County Council of Kent need not fear that they will be accused of extravagance. The building will cover an area equal to 240 feet long by 50 feet in width, with a height of not less than 50 feet. That such a building can be had for \$30,000, no one with a single grain of sense will maintain, and consequently those men who profess to be architects who enter the competition, will deserve any treatment which they may receive at the hands of a Committee so ignorant of the cost of building as this Committee appears to be. The usual commission of 5 per cent. is no more than a fair and reasonable remuneration for the work which an architect will be required to give if he properly fulfils his duties. At 3 per cent. he will not receive back what the work will cost him to execute, if he does not shirk the work which devolves upon him as an architect. Of course, some architects have a method of reinforcing a low commission by allowing the contractors to understand that they can make up the deficiency to their advantage. This method allows of the architect making good the deficiency in his commission, at whose expense we will allow his client to figure out. We will say, however, that the contractors are none the poorer through such payments. All architects who accept commissions below a fair rate are not dishonest, but there are far too many men who claim to be architects who are not honest, and who make much more out of their work, although it may be done at .01 % than those men who charge the highest rates. The condition that all the premiated drawings are to become the property of the Committee, is highly objectionable, and would alone prevent architects of any position entering the competition, even though all the other conditions met their views. The ordinary building committee is apparently not able to distinguish between a set of drawings necessary to explain a competitive design, that it may be awarded its proper position, and a full set of working drawings giving every possible information which a contractor may require to enable him to take off his quantities and give them proper values. A set of competitive drawings cannot be prepared which will meet with the entire approval of a committee, and where they have to be altered to any extent, it is better to prepare new drawings. The calling for all manner of unnecessary drawings and full specifications is unreasonable, more especially as not one in ten of the members on the building committees ever understand them. They certainly have no knowledge of the amount of work which the preparation of them entails. Architects should also refuse to send in designs to be judged by incompetent committees. Professional advice should always be insisted upon, as there is thus some guarantee that one of the best plans will be accepted, and not one of the worst. It is astonishing how men of little culture and no artistic training, consider themselves competent to judge of designs for a building, when at the same time they would scorn to have any work which they might do in their particular calling judged by any one not of that calling. We have also seen a notice of a competition to be held for a town hall in Collingwood. The notice is very brief and very indefinite, the committee evidently not knowing anything about a competition. No sum is mentioned for the erection of the proposed building. In this they are wiser than the building committee of the County Council of Kent. What we have said above applies more or less to this most vague competition for a town hall in Collingwood.