

the month of October, show that for the first ten months of 1908, 116 permits have been issued for buildings, the aggregate cost of which is \$252,149, as compared with 240 permits with an aggregate value of \$536,911 for the corresponding period of 1907. The amount given for 1908 does not include the permit to be issued shortly for the proposed \$10,000 gas plant.

ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION THE PUBLIC'S ONLY POSSIBLE PROTECTION AGAINST THE INCOMPETENT OR DISHONEST PRACTITIONER—PROVINCIAL REGULATION REQUIRED.

THERE IS NO ELEMENT in our social and industrial development that is more important than building construction, and there is none about which the lay public knows less.

The average prospective builder who has money to invest, knows absolutely nothing of the "ware" he proposes to buy. He wants a building for a certain purpose, to be about so deep, so wide, and so high. He has a faint picture in his mind's eye as to how he would like the structure to appear when completed. He wants it to cost him about so much money, and in a vague way he has figured out about the interior arrangement he wants, to meet the demands of his purpose or his tastes.

But beyond these few ideas, that have been prompted and created by his knowledge of the purpose for which his building is to be constructed, he knows absolutely nothing of the essential details of design, plan or construction. He is not supposed to know—he leaves such matters to his architect, upon whose competency, judgment, ability and honesty he is forced to depend solely and absolutely.

What happens, if his confidence has been misplaced and in his selection he has employed an architect who is not an "architect"? What happens if he has placed the plan and erection of his building in the hands of a man entirely unequal to the task imposed upon him? What happens if he has commissioned a dishonest practitioner to spend his money in the erection of his building; one who operates and succeeds by the aid of "sharp practice," rather than through his competency?

The answer is simple and all too apparent, in object lessons that come before us every day. The inevitable results of the unfortunate plight of the client who has misplaced confidence in the man with whom he has entrusted the planning and erecting of his building, are evident by the so-called buildings—veritable shacks, fire traps, unsightly heaps of brick and stone, often erected in our smaller towns and cities and rural districts, for which owners have paid their good money.

The owner is to some extent protected in the larger cities, such as Toronto, Hamilton and London, in Ontario, where a building department exists that passes upon all plans before the erection of the building can be proceeded with, but even this protection is entirely inadequate, insofar as the building inspector demands only that the plans shall provide for a structure that will comply with the requirements of a law designed solely for the protection of the community at large, and in no way contemplates protection of the client against the incompetency, dishonesty or negligence of his architect. But in the smaller cities and towns, where there is no building department and no method of building inspection exists, neither the public nor the owner is protected and it is in these rural sections that the shrewd incompetent finds it easiest to operate.

It may be argued that if the owner is foolish enough to employ an incompetent, he must expect the inevitable. But how is the owner to judge in his selection of an architect? How can he, with his lack of knowledge of the essentials in the fitness of a capable architect, be able to choose between the capable and incapable man? What acknowledged standard of competency has he to guide him? To him the difference between one architect and another is confined simply to the individual tastes displayed in their

work. He does not realize the importance of what appears to him minor details, such as the strength and adaptability of materials, the suitability of appliances, mathematical details of plan and construction, merit of investment or supervision of erection. He does not look for a college diploma, for it is commonly known that there are possibly as many highly capable architects who have never had the advantage of a college course as there are among those who have had academic training.

The prospective builder in the Province of Ontario has absolutely no means whereby he may distinguish between the incapable imposter and the competent designer. His own knowledge of the "ware" he purposes to buy is so limited that his own better judgment often leads him astray, and there is no acknowledged standard of competence whereby he may measure the man whom he proposes to employ as his architect. He must trust to good fortune.

The conditions that have obtained under this rule of things certainly warrant a demand for a government standard of competence in the profession of architecture.

The practice of architecture in the Province of Ontario, and in fact throughout several provinces of the Dominion, has degenerated to a very low point, for the sole reason that anyone is free to declare himself an architect and start to practice without any previous training or proof of ability being required. For this reason, a great percentage of the practitioners are entirely unfitted to do the work which they have held themselves out to the public as being able to execute.

Important commissions in many cases are daily being entrusted to persons entirely unfitted to execute them, and the inevitable result is that many of the buildings erected throughout the Dominion are poorly designed and constructed, and, from a commercial standpoint, represent absolute failures.

The public does not stop to consider the basic reasons responsible for the low standard of building prevalent more or less in almost every section of the Dominion: the layman does not apprehend that much training and experience is necessary, in order to produce good buildings. He does not realize that the architect must be a thoroughly trained man. It therefore appears to us that a parental government should determine who should term himself an architect, and who should not be permitted to use the title. It has been declared that the Provincial Governments have complete and absolute jurisdiction over matters of this nature. It then rests with the progressive Ontario Government to work out this problem, for the benefit of the citizens of this province.

There is only one solution of this problem and that is "Architectural Registration."

By "Architectural Registration" we mean a system whereby the architect who desires to practice in the Province of Ontario is required by law to qualify before a government board of examiners, who shall determine his fitness to practice the profession and shall either deny him the privilege of the use of the title architect, or issue to him a certificate to practice architecture in the province.

PROVINCIAL BOARD OF EXAMINERS RESPONSIBLE ONLY TO THE GOVERNMENT THE CORRECT SOLUTION—PUBLIC PROTECTION COMES FIRST.

THE NEED FOR A LAW designed to create a government standard of competence in the practice of architecture has been officially recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects, which body has, for the past eight years, been endeavoring to secure legislation from the provincial government to provide some method or means whereby a man who desires to practice the profession in the Province of Ontario shall qualify before a competent board of examiners.

The unfortunate feature of the laws, as proposed by the O. A. A. was the fact that they would tend to make