

The necessity existing for the periodical inspection of passenger elevators, as well as hoists in warehouses, factories, etc., was referred to in these columns on a previous occasion. The rapid rate at which these contrivances are multiplying, and the probability that the serious accidents which have happened in connection with their operation in the past will increase in equal ratio in the future, renders proper supervision of them a matter of growing importance. Any provision which may be made for the protection of life in this direction, should have regard to the danger arising from elevators and hoists being placed in charge of lads and even children. There are many buildings where with a view to lessening expense a child is thus employed to do the work which should only be entrusted to an adult. The tendency to increase the speed of elevators must also result in aggravating the danger from inexperienced and careless management.

CITIZENS of Toronto may be congratulated on the outcome of the negotiations of the Council with the telephone company. The demagogues of the Council aforesaid used their utmost endeavors to have an unconditional franchise granted to an opposition company, but it is fortunate that the older and wiser heads were able to command a sufficient majority to defeat the destructive scheme. The offer of the Bell Telephone Company to pay into the City Treasurer four per cent. of their gross receipts, to materially enlarge the scope of their underground operations, to supply telephone facilities to private residences at a reduced rate, as well as offering facilities in their conduits for city wires, was an eminently fair and business-like one. It would have been a great pity to have lost all these advantages, besides burdening the business man with a double telephone service and having the streets crowded with another set of poles and wires, but that is a consummation the citizens of Toronto have only missed by a very narrow chance, thanks to the peculiar constitution of some of the gods that the people have chosen to rule over them.

We commend to civic authorities in Canada the example set by the city of Boston which has recently established an ordinance regulating the laying out of new streets. Henceforth all new streets are to be laid out in accordance with a plan to be established by a Board of Survey, which also fixes all street lines and grades. By this means comprehensive plans may be carried out, if not all at once, yet with a definite end in view. Numerous opportunities for grand avenues and noble streets have been lost—in Toronto, for instance—for lack of this much needed supervision. One has only to look at a plan of the city in order to become disgusted by the piecemeal method which has characterized the extensions and growth of the metropolis of Ontario—streets stopping abruptly, jumping a block and then continued, streets with a jog of one-half their width, streets beginning and ending nowhere, lots having an abnormal depth and others too shallow. The by-law accepting no street under a certain width was a step in the right direction, and put a stop to a fast-growing evil. We hope the City Engineer will sharply scrutinize all new surveys with an eye to the future, and would be glad to see some such board established in Canada.

DISPUTES of all kinds have arisen in connection with building enterprises—some between architects and their clients, some between owners and contractors, others again between contractors, sub-contractors, and workmen. Thus precedents can be found in the records of the decisions of the courts, for the settlement of almost any disagreement which may arise. The city of Hamilton is at present the scene of a dispute, however, for which we find no precedent, and the termination of which, should it find its way into the courts, will be looked for with interest. The city having decided to turn the grounds heretofore used for exhibition purposes into a park, disposed of the exhibition buildings to a Mr. Walton, who employed a contractor named Scott to take them down. While engaged in doing so the workmen came upon a number of American and Canadian coins which had been placed in the corner stone of the structure at the time of its erection. These coins were appropriated by the caretaker and the workmen. Mr. Walton it appears had likewise counted upon becoming their possessor, and when the time came for a settlement with the contractor,

finding they were gone, he deducted \$20 as their value. The contractor protested against paying the amount, whereupon Mr. Walton reduced his claim to \$10. This demand was likewise rejected, the contractor being willing to pay only 86 cents, the intrinsic value of the coins. It is said that the courts will probably be asked to adjust the dispute. There can be no question as to the ownership of the coins. This the contractor appears to recognize. The decision will turn upon their value, and the value will be likely to depend largely upon their antiquity.

THE inability of the average municipal corporation to successfully conduct a business enterprise, is receiving one more exemplification in the case of the Toronto Street Railroad. Though it has been a little over a month in the hands of the city, the receipts have shown a falling off of over a thousand dollars by the time they have reached the city treasury as compared with the same period last year, the expenses have increased fifty per cent., the cars are dirty and uncomfortable, and the state of the roadbed is simply villainous. Unless the railroad is speedily handed over to a private corporation the chances are that in a short time there will be no railroad to hand over. There have been handsome offers by a syndicate of citizens to take the property and pay the amount of the arbitrators' award and a handsome sum per year for the franchise, with an undertaking to make the change from horses to electricity within two years. Why this offer is not accepted is a mystery. Its acceptance would mean the expenditure of two millions of private funds in the work of construction. One of the largest steam and electric plants in existence would be at once installed, and a rapid and comfortable service given to the citizens. The success of the electric method of propulsion is now demonstrated beyond question, and the citizens should no longer be deprived of its advantages. The overhead method of construction would have to be employed, as nothing successful has as yet been evolved in the way of a conduit, but while properly constructed, it need not be considered a permanency, as it could be changed in the future if the development of the art ever permits of its being done. Let the Mayor and Council respect the pledge they gave the people when the funds to purchase were provided, that the city would in no case attempt to run the road, and hand it over to the company who will pay the most for the privilege, with the undertaking to provide electrical rapid transit at the earliest possible moment.

DECIDED advancement has taken place in domestic architecture in Canada, particularly in the larger cities, during the last decade. The introduction of new and improved materials has had considerable to do with the results achieved. It is possible for the architect who is the possessor of good judgment and a cultivated taste to obtain agreeable effects in his buildings at an expenditure far below what was required fifteen or twenty years ago. The variety of "ready-made" materials placed at the architect's disposal in the present day cannot, however, be regarded as an unmixed good. They tend to make him feel that he is relieved by their use from the necessity of giving that personal study and attention to the details of his building which was so important a part of his duties under former conditions. In the hands of unskilled architects many of these new materials are a positive injury. The prevailing ambition of this class of architects is to obtain novel and striking effects. The dignity resulting from breadth of treatment is entirely overlooked, as they crowd their walls with ornament until the effect resembles that of a piece of patchwork. In Toronto at least, the improvement in the character of the buildings erected for business purposes cannot be said to be keeping pace with that exhibited in the residence districts. On thoroughfares such as Spadina avenue, which are destined to be centres of business, buildings are being erected that from an architectural standpoint are an eyesore to passersby. Here may be observed façades in which carved stone, pressed and moulded brick, galvanized iron cornices and cornices are arrayed in a manner which results in ugliness so obtrusive, as to make one wish that the means were at hand for inflicting deserved punishment upon the author. When every architect shall have learned to use and not abuse, the almost endless variety of materials entering into building construction in the present day, the results attained will come nearer to being universally satisfactory.