

pose. On being asked to point out the whereabouts of these protective devices, and the method of their application, the attendant was unable to do so. All he knew about the matter was that he had been told the elevator could not fall, and he had gone on operating it in the calm assurance that no accident could happen, and without making any effort to investigate for himself the actual conditions.

#### Duty on Artists' Materials.

THE request recently presented to the Government Tariff Commissioners by representatives of the Art Societies for the removal of the duties on artists' materials, is one with which the government should comply. The imposition of these duties for many years past, has not, so far as we know, resulted in any attempt being made to manufacture these materials in Canada. Presumably the market is too limited to warrant such an attempt. Under these circumstances the duties constitute a burden upon the art workers of the country, and tend to retard the development of art in the Dominion. It would therefore seem to be proper to remove them in part or altogether.

#### Care in Designing.

Too much care cannot be exercised by the architect with the details of his design. A seemingly trifling error of judgment in designing one particular feature often results in marring the general effect of the building. Instances have come under our notice in which for lack of a particular curve the outline of a verandah, otherwise satisfactory, proved defective in the eyes of the architect by whom it was designed, who felt a constant desire to pull the work to pieces and reconstruct it. Such a slip is doubly annoying to the architect if, having been dissatisfied with the effect of the detail on paper, he has allowed it to be put in concrete form, in the belief that in situ it would present an improved appearance. This rarely happens. Therefore the architect who is unfavorably impressed with the appearance on paper of any feature of his design is likely to save himself lasting disappointment by giving the problem further study, and making such changes as in his judgment will secure a satisfactory effect.

#### The Buffalo Breakwater.

MUCH interest was taken by both Canadian and United States stone dealers in the awarding of the contract for the new breakwater at Buffalo, for which the government made an appropriation of \$2,000,000. Twelve tenders were submitted, several of which were based on furnishing Canadian stone from quarries in the township of Bertie, across the lake from the harbor and only four miles distant. Provisional clauses were inserted that the stone was to be shipped from Canada in the name of the United States, a proceeding which permitted of the importation of the stone without duty. As there appeared to be a fighting chance for the adoption of Canadian stone, steps were at once taken to head off such a movement, and the introduction of a bill in the House of Assembly at Albany providing that only citizens of the United States be employed on Government work was threatened. Upon opening the tenders for the breakwater, however, the figures for the supply of both Canadian and American stone were nearly the same, and it was resolved to exclude the Canadian product.

#### Building Conditions.

MUCH satisfaction is being expressed by architects, builders, and all persons in any way connected with the building interests, with the extremely mild and fair weather which has prevailed to within a few days of the close of the year. In consequence of this unusual condition, a large amount of work in the way of completing buildings; and carrying out repairs and improvements, has been in progress, which otherwise must have been postponed until spring. Unless we should be unfortunate in having a late spring, the gap between the building season of 1896 and 1897 will be much shorter than usual, a circumstance which would be appreciated by all whose interests are dependent upon activity in the building industry.

#### The Ontario Architects' Bill.

It is a pity that some of the people who were referred to by a correspondent in our last issue as objecting to the attachment of a legal status to the title "architect" do not express their views in print or write enquiring if they are right in their suppositions of what the proposed Architects' Bill will enact. There can be no doubt that there has been much misconception of the nature of the bill and much unnecessary anxiety, on the part of builders especially, as to how their interests will be affected if the bill passes. It is not easy to see upon what this anxiety is based; but, if stated, we are confident it will be found to be as baseless as Mr. Ireland's conception of the Association bent on keeping out newcomers by examinations turns out to be, in the light of the Registrar's letter in another column saying that the Association does not wish to control the examinations. It is essential in introducing such a bill to safeguard all existing interests from sudden change, and it is not likely that, if the bill passes, anybody will be able to perceive any immediate effect. Ultimately, no doubt, the profession of architecture will, as the promoters of the bill expect, be established upon a higher plane; but why any other branch of the building trade should suffer in consequence, it is hard to see. For builders in cities, who for the most part erect architects' buildings, an improvement in the architects' art will not mean either less work or less good work; and improvement in the architects' skill will be a direct gain, for it cannot be denied that the builders' gains are sometimes seriously impaired by unscientific methods on the part of the architect and the need of making good his deficiencies. The country builder perhaps regards himself as somewhat in competition with the architect. However that may be, it is clear that the architect can never be in competition with the builder. The builder must still build everything that is built, and plan a great deal of it too. The proposed bill is not a law to make people employ architects, as some people seem to have thought, but to make architects better worth employing. It is intended to raise the quality of the architect and the character of his profession; not to insist upon every little piece of work being put into his hands. It would doubtless be an ideal state of affairs if every village store and cottage was the work of a first-rate designer, but work of this kind will always be done by builders. We do not think, however, that the design of such buildings will be unaffected by improved design on the part of architects, for the builder is quick to pick up new ideas, and the better the work of architects the better his work will be.