

sequence is that when builders begin to offer alternate plans of their own, a little cheaper, the owner of the projected building is generally only too ready to accept them as being good enough.

An address was delivered recently by Mr. Perez M. Stewart, formerly superintendent of buildings in New York, before the International Association of Fire Engineers, New York, in which he dwelt upon the necessity for being absolutely sure that the method of construction is in accordance with the most modern knowledge and requirements.

He insists that the ruins in Baltimore, Rochester and Toronto prove all that has been claimed for the latest improvements in building methods and materials. Good plans, good materials, and especially good workmanship, are essential to enable a building to resist fire from without and from within. The protection of the entire steel frame from the heat is particularly necessary, and for this purpose, he reports concrete to be the best material. It is of little use to make the walls fireproof if a conflagration can come in through the windows, and he refers to the Calvert Building in Baltimore, which caught on seven floors simultaneously. For window protection he urges wire glass set in frames of metal, or wood covered by metal. This he regards as better than shutters of iron or metal-covered wood.

Until very recently there has been little reduction in the amount of inflammable material used in the finishing and furnishing of buildings, and many a building has been burned out by its own doors, floors, and furniture. Concrete is increasingly used for floors, and we hear of a new hotel in New York, which contains absolutely no wood except the door-sidings, which are treated chemically to make them resist fire, and a strip three-fourths of an inch wide, buried in the concrete, to tack the carpets to. For doors and all the interior trim, experts now recommend two compositions, the basis of both of which is asbestos, and which are capable of being shaped by tools, and of receiving nails.

What with the use of fireproof materials, of metal-covered furniture, which we believe is now quite practicable, and of stand-pipes and automatic pumps and elaborate appliances for confining a fire to limited space, for announcing it and for putting water on it, it seems likely that the coming hotel, apartment house, and office building will be *really* fireproof, so far as human endeavor can count.

THE COTTON MARKET.

For some weeks past, in spite of a desire on the part of some to point to the fluctuations of raw material as a sign of coming easier conditions, it has been evident to the trade generally that chances were multiplying for an advance in cotton goods. This has now come. White and gray cottons have advanced, as before announced, but now the Dominion Textile Company has increased the price of yarns 2c. per pound; cotton ducks, 2c.; blankets, 2c. On print cloths, a second advance of 1/4c. per yard is announced, in addition to the one which went into effect a couple of weeks ago. Roughly speaking, these advances are at the rate of about 10 per cent. The Canada Colored Cotton Co. also announce additional advances of 5 to 7 1/2 per cent. in ginghams, sheetings, cottonades, Saxonomies, etc. The Penman Mfg. Co. advise advances in men's and women's underwear, rang-

ing from 5 to 10 per cent. Some other concerns have withdrawn quotations.

Even now, however, these advances are not on a par with those that are being made in raw cotton, and it is by no means improbable that should these continue a further rise in manufactured staples is to be looked for.

The increased prices, of course, go into effect immediately, so far as the wholesaler is concerned. Some retailers, however, we believe, are under the impression that they will not be affected for a long time. This can hardly happen, however, in the present condition of the trade. It seems to us more than likely that with the low stocks held, generally speaking by the wholesalers, they will speedily have to have recourse to fresh supplies, and these, naturally they will have to let go only at the revised figures. Not only this, but it is thought that the stocks of raw material now held by domestic mills are distinctly on the light side, so that every rise in value in that commodity will have full and immediate effect. Certainly, many wholesalers as well as many mill-men have been trusting to an easing off in values and thus neither put sufficiently large stocks in hand.

There is no little excuse for this attitude in the strange news which comes from Washington, where practically no doubt lingers that the Government Statistical Bureau has been made use of in the most faithless way by one of its prominent employees, to such an extent that it has furthered the interests of a nest of gamblers, by the most bare-faced manipulation of figures. For a long time, the figures and estimates given out have been received with doubt and suspicion; but the discovery of the action of the Assistant Statistician unearths a state of things which is worse than had been imagined. The consequence is that nobody knows aright respecting the probable state of the growing crop. Summing everything up, however, it does not seem likely that prices will decline in the near future. It may be said, however, that not since the high prices for raw cotton in 1903, when a price of something like 18 cents was recorded, has the cotton goods market reached a more disturbed and unsettled position than that occupied at the present time. Everybody appears to be at sea regarding the future price of cotton, and consequently it is not strange that the market for the finished product should be unsettled. It is a question with some if the future market for the staple has not been carried too high by speculative influences, but even so, we believe that our forecast above will be proved to be fairly accurate.

THE TRADING STAMP QUESTION.

The legislation introduced by the Dominion Government for the doing away of the trading stamp evil had the disadvantage of being put forward in a lukewarm manner. The Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick indeed openly confessed that he was opposed to all such (what he called) paternal law-making. But, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier remarked, the people who are so gullible as to be taken in with such schemes, have to be protected against themselves in many cases. In other cases, needless to say, such protection is impossible, or at any rate not feasible. Mr. Borden went a step further and said the logical outcome of such legislation to protect the people would be some measure to abolish the bargain system of the depart-