

works is very much greater than would be the case under our system of constructing such works by contract. Another deplorable result is that bribery and corruption universally prevail, and the standard of public morality has become sadly impaired. Some years ago the government of New South Wales borrowed a large sum of money for the purpose of constructing a railway from one end of the country to the other, a distance of about 1,000 miles. This money, however, was never used for the purpose for which it was borrowed, but has been diverted and frittered away on a great number of minor objects. Much of it no doubt has found its way into the pockets of the politicians. There is here food for reflection for the press of this country and those who are clamouring for the control by the government and the municipalities of all kinds of business enterprises.

Bricklaying in England and America.

MUCH interest has been awakened among architects, builders and building workmen in England by the results achieved by the contractors in the construction of the British Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company's works at Manchester. The contractors are an American firm, Messrs James Stewart & Company, of St. Louis, Mo. Previous to the commencement of work on this factory, the average number of bricks laid per day by Union workmen in England was about 450. In a letter to the "London Times" Mr. Stewart states that the average attained under the direction of his superintendent on the Westinghouse Company's buildings has been from 1,400 to 1,800 bricks per man per day of nine hours. The averages mentioned included face brick work. On common work an average of 2,250 bricks per man per day was reached. The walls range in thickness from 19 to 23 inches. The bricks were laid in mortar. In the construction of a chimney stack at Birkenhead, by the same contractors, an average was attained of 1,976 bricks per man per day of nine hours. Mr. Stewart states that the results achieved in the last mentioned case were in part attributable to the facilities afforded the workmen, such as a double platform lift, each platform holding two barrows of bricks, one ascending the other descending. Only fifteen seconds was occupied in raising this platform to a height of 150 feet. Soft mortar was used instead of the stiff mortar usually employed in England, thus permitting enough mortar to be laid with one stretch of the trowel for half a dozen to a dozen bricks, and allowing of the bricks being laid by a light pressure of the hand and a light tap of the trowel instead of by repeated hammering of the trowel to force the brick into place, as in stiff mortar. As an incentive to the workmen, they were paid 1½d per hour above the Trade Union rate. A record was kept of each man's work and the workman who failed to measure up to the standard were dispensed with. The new standard for workmen which has thus been established by American contractors should result to the advantage of English employers and prove a hard blow to the efforts of the Unions to restrict, to the greatest possible extent, as in the past, the amount of work which Union men shall perform. Mr. Stewart states that in the United States the workman's average per day is from 2,000 on the best class work, such as private residences, including face brick as well as common, to 2,500 and even 2,700 including face and common on other

structures. This is far above the Canadian standard. The average here is from 700 to 1,000 bricks per day according to the character of the work.

Justice to Tenderers

THE final action of the City Council of Toronto, with regard to awarding contracts for concrete sidewalks, tenders for which were received recently, is being looked for with much interest. When the tenders were opened, it was found that a firm of Chicago contractors had put in the lowest bids for the bulk of the work, and the Board of Control recommended that the contracts be awarded to them. Immediately that this decision was announced, the aldermen were besieged by local contractors, and the cry was raised that the successful tenderers should not be given the work because they were aliens. This objection having come to the ears of the Chicago firm, they sent a letter to the city authorities expressing their willingness to open an office in Canada, and to employ none but Canadians and Canadian material in the carrying out of the work. To our mind, this offer removed every legitimate ground of objection, and should have secured them the contracts. Such, however, has not so far been the result. The local contractors have organized and are evidently bringing to bear as much pressure as possible to compel the aldermen to withhold the contracts from the lowest bidders. It is to be hoped that a majority of the members of the Council will act justly in this matter. The local contractors are not entitled to these contracts, first, because their tenders were not the lowest submitted, and second, because they are suspected of having agreed together to extort from the city an exorbitant price for the work. If the Council violate the principle of giving contracts to the lowest tenderer, where the securities and all other conditions have been complied with, they will justly be accused of sacrificing the interests of the tax-payers and of dealing unjustly by outside contractors. The result will be that in future no outside bids will be submitted for the work in Toronto, and the local contractors will be in a position to charge what they please. The Council should either cease to publicly advertise for tenders, and let it be known that no outsider need apply, or stand by the principle of giving contracts to the lowest bidder whether he be an insider or an outsider. Since the above was put in type the contracts have been given to the City Engineer.

THE BEAUTIFYING OF CITIES.

The Park Committee of the City of Sherbrooke, P. Q., have arranged with Frederick G. Todd, Landscape Architect, of Montreal, to prepare plans for their various parks and squares. Mr. Todd's contract covers five years and, aside from planning for the parks, he will make a report each year dealing with the growth and extension of the city, which will take up its future needs as regards the location of public buildings and streets and the beautifying of the city.

The City of Sherbrooke is specially fortunate in having set aside an unusually large amount of land for parks and playgrounds, the area, according to the 1901 Park census, being greater in proportion to the number of inhabitants than any other city with the exception of two or three in the United States. It is a matter for congratulation also that the City Council have decided thus early to have a general scheme definitely laid down which can be followed from year to year.