

introduced which provides for the inspection of all such machines by the police, before they can be used in public buildings.

Fireproof construction of buildings has gone a long way towards making theatre audiences feel more comfortable and free from the dangers which beset a crowd closely assembled in a large hall. But with so inflammable and explosive a material as a gelatine film passing rapidly through a machine, which when out of order is liable to cause friction and result in an explosion, all the fireproofing in the world will be useless in preventing a great disaster some day when the proper circumstances combine unexpectedly to bring it about. As a means of reducing the insurance risk on public buildings, the measure now introduced will be commendable, and as a means of preventing possible disaster, it is a necessity to have effective supervision exercised over so fertile a source of danger. Now is the time to see to it, not later on, when we have learned wisdom by sad experience.

Nothing But Good Times.

The Central and Western sections of Canada experienced a wonderful wave of building activity during the period between 1903 and 1907. The crest of this wave may be said to have been reached during the latter half of 1906. Having felt the flurry in the world of finance but slightly, as compared to the United States or the Eastern section, the country between the Great Lakes and the Pacific is today well upon the highroad to prosperity. The pendulum having swung to the extremest point, is now swinging back, and the prediction, made several months ago, that 1908 would be a good year, has, even at this early date, been justified.

There is a reason for all this, particularly when one finds business and the building trades not especially active on the other side of the border. There have been no real hard times nor panics in this country. The Presidential campaign to the south stagmates business, and at the same time sends business and capital to our country. Our people have made a good deal of money during the past few years. This money will seek the safe investment that building offers. Stock speculation has never had much hold on Western Canada. The tremendous activity in railway building—which, during the next three or four years, will give this country the greatest expenditure ever known in the world within such a short space of time—will of itself guarantee the

building trades untold benefit. Business confidence is increasing, and the "cold-feet" brigade that besieged Winnipeg is being routed. It was a skeleton army based upon phantom ideas.

There is only one drawback. In Milwaukee the rate on building loans is to-day only 5 per cent. In Winnipeg it is 8 to 10 per cent. It must be lowered. Prices on building materials, on the other hand, are cheaper. To build now may mean one or two per cent. more if a loan is desired, but it means also that a saving of 10 to 15 per cent. can be effected upon the prices that will prevail in less than a year. Lumber is much cheaper, but skilled labor wages are the same as last year. At a meeting of the retail lumbermen of the Estevan and Napinka districts a heavy cut was made in the price of lumber, being equal to \$5 a thousand feet bought at the yards or \$6 a thousand feet if taken in car load lots. This means a great deal to the builder. A similar reduction has taken place at nearly all points.

The year 1908 will be a banner year for settlers. Great swarms of desirable settlers, who have money to build, are already on the way to the promised land—the last Great West. It is the last great chance for the white man in his quest for prosperity. Reports of Western town councils and boards of trade show that the country, outside of Winnipeg, is in many instances ahead of any previous year. An immense amount of work is prospected, and a fair proportion will undoubtedly be gone on with. Another month may show Winnipeg in the midst of great building activity. March was the coldest month of the whole winter. There is not so much small residence planning in Winnipeg, but apartment blocks and store buildings are plentiful. Government and public buildings throughout the West show a larger number planned than ever before. All the architects, however, are not so busy but that they could take on considerable more work, but the month of May ought to see all of them busy.

G.T.P. Opens More Tenders.

The Grand Trunk Pacific officials are now considering tenders for the additional two hundred miles east of Prince Rupert, which will be undertaken this spring. This will make three hundred miles of road under way from the Pacific ocean to meet the line which the Foley firm has under way from Edmonton towards the Yellowhead Pass, through the Rockies.

The tenders have been opened, and it is understood that a number have been received for the work, which will prove some of the most expensive road building on the whole system.

No information has as yet been given out as to who the tenderers are, since it will probably be several weeks before the work is awarded, the tenders for so great an enterprise being rather elaborate documents. It is, however, regarded as not improbable that the Foley firm will not be in the running for the section, as they already have an immense amount of work under way, including part of the Lake Superior division, a big slice of the prairies, a hundred or two miles between Winnipeg and Edmonton, and one hundred miles east of the Prince Rupert terminus, so that their work will be cut out for them for some time to come handling the contracts they already have under way. It is hoped that work on the next two hundred miles in British Columbia will start in June, and if a proper supply of labor is available it will be pushed ahead with energy during the coming summer. Tenders for the erection of the new depot for Winnipeg, the joint enterprise of the G. T. P. and the C. N. R., are due the 15th of this month.

Government Guarantee for C. N. R.

A bill has been passed by the Ontario Legislature providing for a guarantee of bonds for the Canadian Northern Railway to the extent of about \$2,500,000. The guarantee is at the rate of \$20,000 a mile on four sections of new road to be built from the main line between Toronto and Sudbury. It also guarantees \$1,500,000, the amount needed for terminals at Toronto and Key Harbor on Georgian Bay. The four branches involved are to Key Inlet, Moose Mountain Mines, Garson Mines and Orillia.

Securities amounting to 65 per cent. of the expenditures on terminals are also taken, provided the total amount of such securities shall not exceed \$1,500,000.

Holders of the debenture stock under the first mortgage are asked to turn in their stock and accept stock under the second mortgage to be taken.

In 1904 the province guaranteed the debenture stock of the line from Toronto to Sudbury to the amount of \$20,000 per mile. The new mortgage will include that on portions of the line from Toronto to Sudbury already constructed, and the entire guarantee, including terminals, will amount to about \$2,500,000.