

THE commissioners appointed to investigate the management of the Lachine Canal and Curran Bridge affairs have reported that the whole business has been conducted with looseness, extravagance and questionable methods generally. This work has been carried on by day labor instead of being contracted for, and the Government is thereby loser of about two hundred thousand dollars. The responsibility is charged by each upon the other as between the Department of Railways and Canals and the local officers. The lesson to be learned from this affair is that no government, corporation or individual can have work of any kind done so economically by day labor as by contract; and when works of considerable magnitude are undertaken without the safeguard of a contract, the door is thrown open and invitation given for loss and scandal to enter.

A PERUSAL of the new building by-law of the City of Hamilton, an abstract of which appears in our Hamilton correspondence, shows the newly appointed Building Inspector's duties to be multiform in character. In addition to seeing that in future construction work shall be done in the manner prescribed by the by-law, he is also assigned the duties which ordinarily belong to Plumbing and Health Inspectors. We take it therefore that the proposal for the appointment of a plumbing or sanitary inspector which has several times occupied the attention of the Council, will now be abandoned, and the salary of such an official saved. The clauses of the by-law forbidding the construction of eave troughs and down pipes in such a manner as to admit of water dripping upon the heads of persons passing along the streets and flowing across the pavement beneath their feet, is commendable, and might well be made to apply to building construction on the business streets of Montreal and other cities. The clause compelling the placing of snow guards on roofs is one the necessity for which was made mention of in these columns recently. The by-law seems in most particulars to be well adapted to the requirements. It will be the duty of the Building Inspector to see that it is not allowed to become a dead letter.

THE building season is now sufficiently advanced to make it clear that the volume of work for the year will be only moderate, and that it will be fairly distributed over the country. There is a good demand for work in the line of alterations and repairs outside of the mason's and bricklayer's trades, but the trades mentioned derive the least benefit from this class of work. There seems to be a peculiar combination of circumstances operating to retard increasing business activity pending further developments in some of the factors in the situation. Among the influences compelling great caution may be cited, the unsettled tariff discussions at Ottawa and Washington, the question of England's embargo on Canadian cattle being removed, the near approach of elections, etc. The wonder is that business of all kinds in Canada has not been more seriously disturbed during the past few months. Such improvement in the conditions as may reasonably be expected cannot much affect the volume of business in the building trades for this year. Therefore, while it is necessary for us all to give the best possible attention to the work in hand and to the immediate future, we would suggest that the greater interests of all connected with the building trades lie beyond the months remaining of 1894, and that the true basis for future development is to be found in the question of immigration. Canada's greatest need is a much larger agricultural population, always having regard to kind as well as numbers. Only as agriculture is developed can building industries be maintained. Although without any immigration there will be a certain amount of growth and demand for building work we should be very stupid to lose sight of the opportunities plainly before us. Canada has all the manufacturing, mercantile, and transportation facilities for conducting the business of a much larger population than she at present possesses. In fact, these very facilities have been developed largely in anticipation of increased immigration. With such an immigration the building industries would be taxed to keep up with the requirements. No other class of business would receive equal benefit from this source. The government is making strong efforts to induce immigration, but the results so far this season are disappointing. We must not be discouraged if

the returns seem slow, but rather let us be determined to devise the necessary means to accomplish the desired object. If those engaged in the various branches of the building industries were thoroughly alive to their own welfare and prepared to unite on this question they would find themselves possessed of brains and influence sufficient to materially assist in the solution of the problem.

IT is to be feared that the building contractors of Canada are dropping behind the business men in nearly every other line of equal importance, in their lack of organization for the advancement and protection of their common interests. We have plenty of contractors who as individuals are good and live business men, but as a body they are not known except in a comparatively small way. The existing organizations among builders are few, but are deserving of commendation for their good work and are examples worthy to be followed. The Toronto Builders' Exchange is no doubt the leader, and is destined to steadily increase its usefulness so long as its affairs continue to be guided by capable hands. If contractors have not yet thought it worth while to organize more extensively from the standpoint of general progressiveness, it is about time that they should combine for purposes of common defence. We notice that the trades unions are working aggressively in season and out of season to secure recognition, and there is no doubt that they gain ground in this way. Among their latest successes is the securing of municipal legislation making it compulsory that in civic work contractors shall pay union wages. They are now seeking to have this stipulation inserted in all contracts for public works from those of School Boards up to those of the Dominion Government. We do not say nor do we think that trades union agitation is all conducted with wisdom, but the trades unions are alive, and they are gainers by their activity. There is legitimate work for them and for others to do through organization. The architects, too, are making progress by means of their associations, and they have interests that make it necessary for them to carry on and enlarge their association work. The work and business of contractors is hedged about with many protections for other people. In the first place there are the contract drawings and specifications; next the superintendence of the architect or clerk of works; then trades union rules, municipal building regulations and the Employers' Liability Act, with penalties of all sorts to protect everybody from the contractors. These things are all quite proper up to a certain limit, but there exists no doubt a contractor's side to the business. Doubtless there are instances in which a contractor may suffer an injustice simply because single handed he is unable to put up the costs in expensive law suits. Suppose that such a contractor had the assistance of an organization in testing his case in a manner similar to the method followed by the architects of France. In that way wrongs would be righted, and every such test case would help to remove friction and to stop bad practice all around. This is only one way in which contractors can work together to advantage. In the arbitration method for the settlement of labor troubles or their adjustment by Government Commission, contractors cannot afford to take their chances single handed any more than in suits at law. There is work to be done on behalf of the contractors that none but themselves can do, and we would urge them to greater activity in this direction. Wherever union labor is found there should united contractors be found also. By this means alone can all interests be properly counterbalanced.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

BANCO DI SAN SPIRITO, ROME.—DRAWN FROM PHOTO, BY
J. C. B. HORWOOD.

C. A. & B. COMPETITION FOR DRUG STORE.—DESIGN SUBMITTED BY "ITALIA" (MR. MELVILLE MILLAR), AWARDED
FIRST POSITION.

DESIGN FOR COTTAGE TO COST \$1,000.—SUBMITTED BY
"DEMOS."

This cottage, to cost about \$1,000, contains seven rooms and bath room, and is designed to face the east. To be of frame construction on stone foundation. Walls to be clapboarded, as shown, or hung with shingles. Roof to be shingled.