

are told that they should sue for the privilege of conferring upon the United States a distinct commercial gain which is declared to be unequalled in history. Canadians will appreciate our contemporary's humor.

The architect for the new city and county buildings in Toronto, in which so much interest has centered since the disagreement with and dismissal of the contractor, has issued an advertisement inviting tenders for the completion of the contract. We are pleased to see this course taken in preference to an attempt to complete the work by day labor, for reasons previously stated, and we hope that the result will be a satisfactory arrangement under which this important undertaking may be brought with reasonable dispatch to perfect completion.

The unsightly condition of Queen's Avenue, Toronto, has more than once been the subject of comment in these columns. It is gratifying to observe, that during the present year something is likely to be done towards its improvement. The Ontario Government propose to beautify the portion of Queen's Park in front of the new legislative buildings, which would serve to accentuate the unsightly appearance of the avenue leading thereto. The Government has been asked to join with the city in improving the avenue in a manner to harmonize with the portion of the park to which it leads. This the Government seems willing to do. We hope to see the natural beauties of the avenue supplemented to an extent which will make it a feature of pride to the citizens.

A BILL has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States, providing that in future the designing of Government buildings shall be done by private architects of recognized ability instead of under the direction of the supervising architect of the Government. The extent of this work is such that when attempted to be done in one office, it necessitates it being turned out at machine speed, and we might add, with the marks of machine manufacture upon it. Under such conditions there is no time for careful thought with consequently the public architecture of the country, which should afford examples of the best architectural talent, is greatly inferior to the domestic work. Under the bill to which we have referred, the standard of such architecture will doubtless be greatly elevated, and with it the standard of public taste.

The *Northwestern Architect* relates an amusing incident of an American architect who, having secured a commission from Canada, was coming into the Dominion via Suspension Bridge with the necessary plans for the carrying out of the work in his possession, when he fell into the hands of a confidence man in the form of a customs officer, who, after having extracted from him, under friendly guise, the necessary information as to the value of the drawings, etc., compelled him to pay one hundred dollars duty upon them. The architect in question was evidently what in western parlance would be termed a "tenderfoot," or in other words, one who is unfamiliar with the business of evading payment of customs duties. We would advise him to study the methods of certain architects in the eastern border cities, who, while taking out of Canada large sums in the form of commissions, have never been known to contribute a dollar in customs duties to Her Majesty's exchequer.

ADVICES from the principal cities and towns throughout Canada indicate that the volume of building operations during the season which is about to open, will probably be in excess of that of last year. In Montreal the indications point to a busy season, and in a modified sense the same can be said of Hamilton. The outlook in Toronto has considerably improved since the beginning of February, at which time it appeared exceedingly gloomy. While it is yet too early to speak with definiteness, there are prospects that a fair season's business will be forthcoming. There is great cause to hope that these prospects may be realized, as the condition of things in the city for many months past has been exceedingly trying to architects, builders and material dealers. The scarcity of work has had the effect of intensifying competition and further depressing prices which had previously reached far too low a standard.

The interior of the Toronto public library building was recently remodelled, and is in consequence much better adapted than formerly for its purpose. In view of the expense which has been put upon the building for the purpose of increasing its attractiveness and usefulness, it is to be regretted that the means have not been discovered to prevent the public reading room from being used as a place of shelter in winter by persons of the dissipated class, whose presence in some cases is so offensive as to make the atmosphere unendurable beyond a short period. Rather than be brought in contact with persons of this class and be obliged to inhale the impure atmosphere due to their presence, the respectable reading public is forced to forego to a large extent the advantages to be derived from frequent visits to the public reading room. We can quite understand the difficulty which may be experienced in attempting to exclude the undesirable class of persons to whom we have referred, but it ought not to be an impossible task, and in the interests of the reading community it should be done.

THE importance of trifles in a contractor's business is not as fully realized as it should be, notwithstanding that if neglected they cause ruin, and if looked after will make a fortune. A brick merchant may not be particular about his bricks being one-eighth of an inch below the regular thickness, but to the builder this means he will want a considerable number more bricks to complete his job, for it will take 1125 bricks to fill the space usually occupied by 1000. Again what time can be lost by unpunctuality. A contractor employing 50 hands will lose fifteen hours per week by the loss of one minute each time of beginning work. In no trade is a good and accurate system of book-keeping so requisite as in that of building, on account of the various and multitudinous features of the business, the men and materials not unfrequently, being not under the employer's eye, and other minor matters. Whether it be a large or small business, every hour worked and all materials used should be charged to some account, and every sack, cask and package hired should be returned. The cost of every contract should be known to a fraction in order to see how the matter came out, and for guidance in future work. Attention to these matters together with great care in estimating for jobs, will prevent contractors much inconvenience and loss.

MUCH valuable information for architects and builders is contained in the paper which we publish in the present number entitled "Some Observations for Fireproof Building in New York," by Mr. J. C. B. Horwood. Canadian architects and builders have already been called upon to deal to some extent with the problems attendant upon this form of construction, and in the future may expect to be confronted with others of greater magnitude. The knowledge of this fact, is leading them to enquire extensively into the subject, and Mr. Horwood's timely contribution will be very much appreciated, more especially as it is known to be the result of the observation of one who has had exceptional opportunities for the acquirement of knowledge in this line, and who is known to be a painstaking student. In this connection it is said to be the intention of capitalists in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal to erect iron frame structures approaching to some extent in height those in the large American cities. We regret to observe that it is declared to be the intention of the projectors of some of these buildings to employ American architects to design them and supervise their erection. Such action would be an unjust reflection upon the competency of Canadian architects, many of whom are undoubtedly as able to carry out work of this character to successful completion as any foreign architect who might be imported for the purpose.

THE recent accident at the Odd Fellows' Hall, Weston, is an instance of the foolishness of carrying out alterations to buildings without professional aid. About a year ago the members of the society decided, without the opinion of anybody who had any knowledge in such matters, to remove certain wooden posts from the room on the ground floor, which was 25 x 36. These posts supported two beams (10 x 10 each) which carried the ceiling joists, the beams being 25 feet long and resting on the posts (6 x 8 each) of the framed buildings by tenons only 2 x 8. As a substitute for the supports removed, a local blacksmith was