

It was well contended by the deputation from the Guild that this was a matter beyond the scope of volunteer advice such as the Association of Architects have offered in the minor matters of rearranging the fair grounds or preserving an ornamental water front in the centre of the city. The Mayor's reply that, if a plan which would cost money was necessary, the Guild of Civic Art ought to collect half the sum necessary for it, was probably the most practical politics, though, abstractly, the work is eminently a public work, and is only an expense in the first instance; for it would undoubtedly in the end save many times its cost.

Economy was the word with the Board of Control. Let us then point out a civic improvement that would be a saving; which at least would have been a saving if nothing had yet been done, but now involves the slight expense of some uprooting, for it is the uprooting of what has been planted that constitutes the improvement we would suggest. Somebody has conceived the idea of spotting the Queen's Park over with little conical evergreens. Whether these remain dwarfs or grow to any considerable size, the Park is in either case spoiled; and it is difficult to understand how any official, of sufficient attainments to be in a position of authority in this department of the city, could not see how totally at variance these plantings are with the character of Queen's Park. The history of the Queen's Park is probably that of most of the parks which are adjacent to the country seat of an English landed family. It was originally set apart for pasture land, and trees have been allowed to grow up sufficient for shade without being so close as to spoil the grass. The resulting character of sweeping lines of grass, harmonizing with the spreading growth of trees which stand alone or in groups, constitutes to English people the idea of a park; and that sort of park we had in greater perfection than many an English nobleman, until this bush planter came along and intercepted every vista under the trees by his little stiff cones of fir, so that the eye can no longer follow the long sweeps of surface which were the characteristic beauty of the park.

Doubtless the idea comes from the new American parks, in which a garden style is adopted as the only thing available until trees can be grown. To imitate this at all is only excusable under the same conditions, and one may expect from the committee of parks and gardens not only a perception that the two styles cannot be mixed, but a perception that the style of the Queen's Park is much the finer. It is only an understanding of the ground of beauty in the Queen's Park that can preserve it not only from this danger but from a danger which continually threatens, of tampering with the ravines so as to spoil the slopes which are so essential to the beauty of the park. Trees on a slope have always made a favorite theme for painters, and, whatever happens to the bottom of the ravines, it ought to be well understood that the grassy slopes must be preserved.

The New S.P.S.
Building.

The Guild of Civic Art is also taking a hand in the effort to have the new School of Practical Science Building made worthy of the city. It is supported by representatives from most of the important public bodies in Toronto, who have united with the Guild to form a

special committee for this purpose. An interview with the Premier has been arranged, but so late in the month that it is probable the Premier's answer will be—with much regret—that it is too late to do anything. It is understood that the Provincial Architect's office is already engaged upon plans of the building. It is now or never that the case of this building must be pressed. The Premier and the Minister of Education have both spoken in such a way as to lead to the belief that they wish to have this building well designed, and are disposed to regard favourably a liberal policy in regard to the appointment of an architect. That liberal policy which will be most effectual is to be found in practice in the United States, where private architects of repute are employed for the erection of public buildings. The Minister of Public Works, who seems to think his department is being "passed over" unless the provincial architect is not only the supervisor but the designer of the new building, will find, if he enquires about the present method in the United States, that there is no occasion for such a feeling. The Federal architect and the State architects still exist and have plenty to do, but, though it is such a short time ago since the struggle arose with these departments—the same struggle as is taking place over the School of Practical Science Building—to have important buildings put in the hands of architects in private practice, the question is completely settled, settled on its merits. Public opinion and official opinion are at one in the matter. Indeed, so settled has the idea become that this is the only way to procure good public buildings, that the government is now quite as anxious as architects or the public not to lapse into the old way of doing things. Some misunderstandings have arisen, the American Architect says, in applying the bill under which treasury work is given out to competition of invited architects, and some of the most eminent architects in the country have declined invitations to compete for government work. In consequence of this, the Secretary of the Treasury has been conferring with the President of the American Institute of Architects, in order to remove the conditions which have led to misunderstanding. It is evident that the Secretary of the Treasury agrees with the American Architect that "the refusal of the best architects to enter into government competitions would be a public misfortune." This is after experience of the working of this method, which had when first proposed to encounter the identical opposition which, if we may judge from his words, it is encountering now in the mind of the Hon. Minister of Public Works in Ontario. It is for this reason that we recommend to him to make enquiries about the American method of proceeding, and we think he will find that he will pursue a course most to the credit of his department if he requests the public architect to utilize the study he has so far made of the subject, and the special information he will acquire on his trip with Professor Galbraith, to draw up a full statement of the requirements and conditions of a properly arranged building for the school, and to act afterwards as one of the expert arbitrators to judge the results of either a limited competition or an open competition.

We are reminded by this Ontario situation, of a motion that was made in the convention of the Ontario Association of Architects, to memorialize the Dominion Government upon this same subject of appointing private architects to design public buildings, or giving