

the interests of the property owners. Should the erection of these buildings proceed expeditiously, economically, and in accordance with the specifications, under the charge of the Court House Committee of the City Council, we shall be delighted to admit that our doubts of their ability to carry the work to a satisfactory completion were ill-founded. In the meantime, the ratepayers having by their votes declared that no commission shall be appointed, we can only hope that time will justify the wisdom of their decision.

HE lacks discretion and a correct appreciation of the value of human life who goes in search of a gas leak with a lighted match. The last man whom we would suspect of adopting such a fool-hardy method would be a plumber; yet we learn that this is exactly what a Montreal plumber recently distinguished himself by doing. After the gaspipes had been placed in a new block of stores and dwellings owned by G. W. Stephenson, St. Catherine street, a smell of gas became noticeable. The plumber in question undertook to find the leak in the manner stated. When he applied the match to the spot from which the central gaselier was to be hung, the whole ceiling suddenly took fire, and a terrific explosion followed; throwing the plumber violently from the ladder to the floor. Fortunately he received no serious injury. A large portion of the ceiling was thrown to the floor and the plate glass window in the front was thrown into the street in a thousand atoms. Three men employed in the store and three carpenters were in the place at the time, and, while some of them were thrown to the floor and partly covered with *debris*, they were so fortunate as to escape without any injury except a few scratches and bruises.

WE should like to see the Toronto Industrial Exhibition Association offer a series of prizes next year for competition among Canadian skilled workmen. It is a matter of regret that at present no reward is held out in any direction to the Canadian artisan for excellence of workmanship. At the exhibitions held in Toronto, and in other cities and towns throughout the country, the prizes are all for the manufacturer, none for the workman. The workman, whose skill secures the prize, must be content to remain continually in the background, while his employer receives all the credit with the accompanying financial benefits. We cannot but regard this as an unfortunate condition of things for both employer and employee. So long as it is allowed to continue, it can scarcely cause surprise that only a very small proportion of our workmen attain to a high degree of skill. Aside from the prospect of securing higher wages, there is nothing to stimulate their ambition to excel in their respective callings. That some higher object of ambition should be placed before them, all will admit. Public recognition and encouragement of the artisan classes would provide manufacturers and employers with a more plentiful supply of skilled labor, and maintain the efficiency of our national industries in competition with those of other countries. This subject is already receiving attention in England and the United States, and Canada cannot afford to lag behind.

SOME Toronto architects have recently adopted the practice of nailing upon the buildings which they are constructing notice boards with their name and address conspicuously painted thereon. It may interest these gentlemen to know what the London *Builder* thinks of the practice. Our English contemporary says:—"It is one which all those who care about the honor and dignity of the architectural profession ought to do their best to oppose and put a stop to. Some of those who put out these tradesmen's advertisements, of course, are mere hangers on at the skirts of the profession; but it is done by others who ought to know better and to have more sense of dignity and professional propriety. There is no other liberal profession in which this kind of thing would be done. What would be thought if, when straw laid down in the street gives the outward sign of a serious case of illness, a board were fixed up on the house with the notice—'Case attended by Dr. Forceps, 200 Harley street'?" We venture to think that if any medical man were so regardless

of his own dignity as to do this, he would very soon find public opinion within his own profession too strong for him. And why does not public opinion within the architectural profession put down this vulgar and undignified form of touting? We should like to know what the Council of the Institute of Architects think of members of the Institute who degrade the status of the profession in that way? And if they do think pretty strongly about it (as we should imagine,) will they tell these advertising gentlemen what they think."

IN criticising the terms of the Hamilton Public Library Building Competition in the May number of this journal, we made this statement: "The value of building material and labor in Hamilton must be only one-half what they are in other places if the sum of \$20,000 is sufficient for the erection of the building. On the dimensions given the building will cube about 400,000 cubic feet, which, at 5 cents per cubic foot, would give \$20,000, the proposed cost of the building. We believe that we are well within the mark when we state that 10 cents per cubic foot will no more than cover the cost of such a building, and then there will be nothing spent on ornamentation." The soundness of this opinion is justified by the tenders which have been sent in, the lowest of which amounts to between thirty-three and thirty-four thousand dollars. This is exclusive of architects' fees, \$1,500, and furniture, \$2,000. The committee now find themselves face to face with a deficit of \$13,000, and are compelled to go back to the city Council for further assistance, while the architect will probably be asked to alter his design with the object of reducing the cost of construction. The Building Committee who have thus walked into a difficulty with open eyes, are deserving of little sympathy. They ought to have known better. It is to be hoped that the blunder they have made will serve as a warning to building committees in the future not to make themselves ridiculous by asking architects to attempt the impossible. If fine buildings are required, funds for their erection must be provided on a liberal scale. So long as the funds are meagre, those charged with their disbursement must be satisfied with unpretentious buildings.

M^{R.} A. M. WELLINGTON'S scheme for the improvement of the Toronto Esplanade has been submitted to the Board of Trade of that city and to the public through the medium of the daily papers. It has received a flattering reception. The daily press speaks of it in terms of unqualified praise, and appears to believe that it is as nearly applicable to the requirements as anything which could be devised. The citizens' organization formed to watch the interests of the citizens of Toronto on the Esplanade, has yet to be heard from. Many have refrained from expressing an opinion until the report of the experts appointed by the City Council shall have been given to the public. We do not propose at the present time to consider at length the adaptability of Mr. Wellington's scheme. We differ, however, from those journals which seem to regard it as perfect. In our judgment, it certainly is not the best arrangement for the purpose. Under it the improvement of the water front will extend no farther west than Simcoe street. West of that the water front is to be shut off from the city by railway freight yards. The proposal to convert a large area on the Esplanade, opposite the center of the business portion of the city, into a public park, is not a commendable one. The Esplanade property now occupied by the railway tracks should be utilized so that it may be made to yield a revenue to the city which would go towards paying interest on the cost of the improvements. The fact that no provision is made for this purpose, is a weak point in Mr. Wellington's scheme. The proposed park might be more advantageously located elsewhere. What is more required on the water front, is a promenade. The scheme submitted by Mr. Wellington contains little that is original, its main outlines having been presented to the citizens before, while in many of its details it is open to serious objection. However, it is valuable in the sense of being a help to the solution of what is certainly an important and difficult problem.