

crowded with orders from all over the continent this season they have found it impossible to fill their contracts with Canadian importers promptly. At the present time there is every indication that there will be a scarcity of cement this winter, and a much higher range of prices is almost certain. In regard to English brands, the import was very small this season, being only 38,849 barrels, against 129,527 barrels Belgian. Last year 50 per cent. of the Canadian demand was supplied by English cement. The falling off this year is due to the fact that makers had advanced prices fully 8d per cask, which means 15 per cent.

In Montreal an active trade is doing in pig and galvanized iron. The advent of winter freight rates has effected the glass and paint trade.

Toronto dealers report numerous inquiries for wire nails. Orders for cut nails have been a little better, but the volume of business is still light. Stocks of iron have become considerably reduced, and trade is quite brisk. In the glass market the most enquiry is for the first two breaks.

COMMON MORTAR.

Common mortar, says the Building News, is composed of quicklime and sand, reduced to a paste with water. The lime should be pure and completely free from carbonic acid, the sand should be free from clay, partly in the state of fine sand and partly in the state of gravel. The water should be pure, and if previously saturated with lime so much the better. The best proportions are: 3 parts of fine sand, 4 parts of coarse sand, 1 part of quicklime recently slaked, and as little water as possible. The addition of burnt bones improves the tenacity of the mortar, and prevents the tendency to crack in drying. They should not exceed 25 per cent. of the lime employed.

The addition of garden-mould, cinder-

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ashes, and rubbish to this for the foundation of buildings spoils the mortar; moreover, the addition of dust-bin ashes is positively injurious to the health of whoever inhabits the house built with such mortar or plaster, because the lime in the mortar, together with moisture, will breed a multiplicity of germs from the dust-bin refuse which will produce many infectious diseases. Anyone who doubts this should smell the offensive emanation given off from the plaster of a shoddy or "jerry-built" house. The odor is most disgusting, and if inhaled for any length of time will produce serious throat diseases. The sand should be hard, sharp, gritty, and not too fine; it should be free from all organic matter. Good sand suited for mortar only can be rubbed between the hands without soiling them. The water should also be free from organic matter, and on this account should not be taken from stagnant ponds. The presence of salt in mortar causes an efflorescence of white, frothy blotches on the surfaces of the bricks, and renders the mortar liable to white moisture. To get rid of these white patches, wash the surface with hydrochloric acid and water. The sand in mortar is to increase the resistance of the mortar to crushing and lessen the amount of shrinking, and to reduce the bulk of the more costly material, lime. Water is the agent affecting a combination between the materials, and as sand does not increase in volume, it necessarily follows that no more of the diluting

element should be employed than is absolutely necessary to fill the interstices between the sand, and render the whole into a paste convenient for use.

Hydraulic mortar can be made by mixing $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ part of alum shale to the lime. The compound dries very hard and impermeable.

CONSOLIDATION OF WIRE INTERESTS.

A dispatch from New York says: Efforts were begun six months ago to consolidate under one ownership and management the wire rod, wire nail, and other wire interests in the United States. Material progress has been made in the last ten days, and yesterday a meeting was held at which every wire manufacturer in the country was represented. J. P. Morgan & Company are financial backers of the enterprise, which involves \$60,000,000. The capital will be furnished by American, British and German firms. Mr. Morgan is now in Europe for the purpose of interesting foreign investors in the scheme. It is understood that each mill will be purchased outright by a company formed recently at an appraised valuation, to be paid for two-thirds in cash, and the other third in equal portions of preferred and common stock. There is every reason to believe that by February 1st every wire mill in the country will be owned and operated by the Morgan people, with John W. Gates, of Chicago, as president of the company.

The Vulcar Iron Works, Winnipeg, Man., have been purchased by John McKechnie.

The plant of the Guelph Norway Iron & Steel Company has been sold to John Taylor, for \$9,700.

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