

building department. It is desirable that the building by-law should be amended and properly administered, and during the present period of dullness, the City Council might profitably turn its attention to the matter.

**Cheapening  
Production.**

HOWEVER much condemnation may be heaped upon "combines" of manufacturers in the same line of business for the purpose of maintaining prices at a point which would insure a fair margin of profit on invested labor and capital, much can be said in favor of such organizations. Overproduction in almost every line has resulted in competition which, if not restrained in some manner, must work disaster to manufacturers and their employees. To illustrate the effect which this striving after cheapness of production has upon the workman, we may cite the case of a manufacturer of a certain class of appliances used in building construction, who recently put in operation mechanical apparatus by means of which, with the assistance of a couple of laborers, he is enabled to do work which formerly required the services of eight skilled mechanics. This method of cheapening production has been forced upon him by the invasion of his territory by several new competitors. By and by these competitors will either be forced out of the field and suffer the loss of their capital, or will have discovered means of reducing the cost of production to a point which will enable them to hold their own in the race. When that time shall have arrived an effort must be made to further cheapen production, and so the struggle to outdo one another continued until the margin of profit is entirely wiped out, and the skilled workman reduced to the level of the laborer, with his chances of employment reduced in like proportion. Do the public want cheap goods at such a sacrifice? Whether they do or not, manufacturers should decline to sacrifice their interests and those of their employees to satisfy so unreasonable a demand. When competition reaches the point where there is no profit with which to pay a fair return to capital and labor, the combine becomes justifiable.

**A Brightening  
Outlook.**

It is gratifying to observe indications of a revival of building operations in Toronto, where a stagnation has prevailed for several years past. We are advised that owners of land in the out-lying districts are beginning to erect houses, owing to the fact that the extension of the street railway system, and the widespread use of the bicycle has made it possible for persons engaged in the business part of the city to reach the out-lying districts as conveniently, and in less time, than was required a few years ago to reach points a mile or two nearer the centre. The conditions of residence are certainly more desirable in the out-lying sections, and now that time and distance have to so large an extent been annihilated, it may reasonably be expected that comfortable houses in these districts will find tenants as readily as those in the more populous localities. The steady decline in the rate of interest is also inducing the erection of new buildings. Within the past few weeks, loans have been made on real estate in the city of Montreal at as low a rate as  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and we are informed that English capital is now available at this rate for any legitimate enterprise which gives promise of proving reasonably remunerative. With money available at this low rate of

interest, persons who for a number of years have been holding vacant lands, from which they were unable to derive any revenue, and on which they were obliged to pay city taxes, are said to be coming to the conclusion that they might better build thereon a class of houses which would be likely to command a fair rental.

Taking a broader view, there are indications to be seen pointing to a more prosperous condition of affairs in Canada in the near future. The collapse of the South Africa boom, the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in Australia, together with the unsettled state of affairs in the United States, as the result of which a large amount of British capital has recently been withdrawn from that country, and the possibility of the adoption of a silver coinage, which would lead to a still further withdrawal of British investments, all point to Canada as one of the most desirable fields for the investment of foreign capital in the future.

The recent gold mining developments in British Columbia are certain also to prove a most important factor in our future prosperity. We have the assurance of experts of the highest authority that the gold mines of British Columbia are the richest in the world. At the present time millions of foreign capital is being invested in these mines, and the prophesy is being made that a large influx of population will be received within the next few years. Owing to the disappointing experience of British capitalists who invested so largely in Grand Trunk securities, Canada has hitherto been shunned by the British investor, and other fields which were less promising have benefitted at our expense. It now seems probable that our turn will come in the near future. We have one of the richest countries in point of natural resources upon the face of the globe. We have also a favorable climate, and unrivalled transportation facilities. We lack capital and population, and it seems probable that these necessities are now about to come to us. If so, we may expect to witness improvement in every line, in which event no industry is likely to derive greater benefit than that in which architects, builders, and manufacturers and dealers in building materials are connected.

**PERSONAL.**

Mr. Anderson, Building Inspector, Hamilton, is recovering from a severe attack of typhoid fever.

Mr. Charles Rose, a well-known Toronto builder, died unexpectedly while visiting friends in Portsmouth, England.

Mr. R. P. LeMay, of the firm of Berlinguet & LeMay, architects, Quebec, is at present in Charlottetown, P. E. I., superintending the construction of the new Catholic cathedral in that city.

The appointment of Mr. E. G. Barrow to the position of city engineer of Hamilton, Ont., rendered vacant by the death of the late Mr. Haskins, has been officially announced. Mr. Barrow was assistant engineer for some time, and is thoroughly familiar with the details of the work. He was born at Clifton, near Bristol, Gloucestershire, England, forty-nine years ago, and educated in the Taunton College School. He served three years under Francis Fox, chief engineer of the Bristol & Exeter Railway of England, and at the expiration of that period his ability was recognized by his appointment as assistant engineer of the branches of the same road. Mr. Barrow came to Canada in 1871, and had charge of the work of locating the line of the Midland Railway, and afterwards that of the Northern & Northwestern from Georgetown to Collingwood. For the latter work the late Mr. Haskins was chief engineer. Thereafter Mr. Barrow worked for the city under Mr. Haskins, although not permanently appointed assistant until 1888. He superintended the construction of waterworks at Teeswater, Paisley and Campbellford, and also the Government waterworks at Mimico.