

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letters are invited for this department on subjects relating to the building interests. To secure insertion, all communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the author, not necessarily for publication. The publisher will not resume responsibility for the opinions of correspondents.]

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

Editor CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.

SIR,—Apropos of your remarks on Competitions last month, the question has often been asked "Whether better results attend the giving of a commission to one architect or a Competition in which a large number of the profession are invited to send in designs." The answer is altogether conditional. Competition properly conducted for public buildings will probably call forth the more thoughtful and skilful design. Much depends, however, on the terms of invitation and the discretion of the committee of selection and their assessors.

The competitive system is becoming discredited amongst architects of known experience and ability in Canada, because of the unbusinesslike way in which competitions are conducted and the flagrant injustice of the awards—a condition which obtained in England at no very distant date, until the architects combined in their endeavor to obtain fairness and justice. There were many years of isolated outbursts of indignant remonstrance from disappointed competitors against committees and boards for unfair decisions before the obvious remedy was seen, or at any rate applied. The conduct of Competitions will be what those who enter into them are collectively content to allow them to be, and it is evident that only by combining together in one solid phalanx against the loose system at present in vogue, can the standard be raised. If promoters of Competitions were made to see that professional men of ability would not respond unless an assessor of unquestioned standing were appointed, whose advice on the merits of the design would be accepted, and certain broad rules for the conduct of Competitions be adopted, a healthier system would soon be established.

I am aware that the Ontario Association of Architects have formulated some excellent rules which, with little amendment, would serve the purpose suggested, but they remain practically a dead letter, because their authors do not insist on their adoption, and it is left to anybody or nobody to take the initiative of enforcing them. The conditions for the conduct of a Competition should be framed with the single purpose of obtaining a perfectly fair competition, and having been issued, should be rigidly enforced. They should very definitely state the amount to be expended, and that all designs which cannot be carried out for that amount will be disqualified, that the chosen design will not be accepted unless bona-fide tenders can be obtained within 5% in excess of the figure stated. There should be no irksome restrictions in the conditions or arbitrary dictation of plan. I remember hearing Mr. Waterhouse, R. A., at the R. I. B. A., say: "I would have every competitor put as nearly as possible in the position of an architect acting for a private client, who, though he may have suggested his requirements, would probably listen to his professional adviser, if he gave good reasons for not literally adhering to them in all cases." If Competition designing is to be made successful, it must be spontaneous and free. Instructions which are ambiguous and which a competitor feels he cannot alter or modify without being disqualified, are prejudicial to the end in view of Competition, that of obtaining the most skilful design at a given cost. In conclusion let me say, that as far as Toronto is concerned, nothing can be accomplished until the architects act more in concert with each other. To this end they should meet together oftener and probably carry out the scheme of a common meeting and reading room as outlined by "A City Member" in the October issue of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.

Yours truly,

J. WILSON SIDDALL.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS.

At the supplemental examinations held in October the following students came up and passed:—

S. F. Smith, 2nd Intermediate; C. P. Band and G. E. Stephenson, 1st Intermediate.

E. Langley, who had intended to come up for the 1st Intermediate in March, but was prevented by illness, was allowed to take at the supplemental examination a full examination on the 1st Intermediate subjects, and passed.

Mr. C. H. C. Wright, Lecturer in Architecture at the School of Practical Science, will give a lecture on Graphic Statics to the Association on the evening of November 16th. The lecture will be given at the Canadian Institute, 58 Richmond street east, and will begin at 8 o'clock. This lecture, being on a technical subject, has not been announced as a public lecture, but we are authorized to state that any person interested in the subject will be welcome.

Judging by the new lines of furniture displayed by the leading dealers and manufacturers, a reaction is setting in towards natural finish in oak. Very little antique oak is shown, and the peculiar and fanciful colorings so popular a year ago, are nowhere to be seen. If the wood is toned at all, the tendency is toward shades of yellow or to a slightly reddish cast.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE TOWER OF PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE, ITALY.—
DRAWN BY MR. E. J. BIRD.

This tower, so admirable for its solid construction, united to graceful proportions, is ninety-four metres high.

The Palazzo itself was raised by the genius of the architect, Arnolfo di Cambio, in 1298, A.D., and has been enlarged at different times by Michelozzi (1434) and Varsari (1550). This palace was the seat of the Signoria of Florence, then the principal offices of the Granducal Government, and at present belongs to the municipality, the offices of which are here.

WROUGHT IRON FENCE AND GATES TO RESIDENCE OF MR. A. A. ALLAN, TORONTO—GORDON & HELLIWELL, ARCHITECTS—
EXECUTED BY SHIPWAY MFG. CO., TORONTO.

HOUSE FOR MR. DUBUC, MONTREAL—A. RAZA, ARCHITECT, MONTREAL.

DESIGN FOR INSURANCE BUILDING, GALT, ONT.—J. A. ELLIS, ARCHITECT, TORONTO JUNCTION.

OLD MEN'S REFUGE, VANCOUVER, B. C.—R. MACKAY FRIPP, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT, VANCOUVER.

IMPACT TESTS OF CAST-IRON PIPES UNDER HYDROSTATIC PRESSURE.

REFERRING to a frequent specification requirement for striking a cast-iron pipe with a hammer while it is subjected to heavy water pressure, S. Groves writes in a recent number of The Foundry that he conducted some experiments to determine the effect of those tests when in 1889 he was engaged with a large English pipe foundry.

"Two socket and spigot pipes 4 inches in diameter by 9 feet long by three-eighths inch thick—one cast vertically, the other cast at an angle—were subjected in the hydraulic proving press to a hydrostatic pressure of 260 pounds per square inch, and while under this condition a wrought-iron ball weighing 1½ lbs. was let fall upon a chalk line mark on the body of the pipe, at given points and from varying heights, as indicated by Figs. 1 and 2. The pipes are then taken out of the press and broken longitudinally into two parts. On the inside of each pipe, at the points where the ball had struck dead upon the center line, was a star-shaped fracture, Fig. 4. The fractured half of each pipe was then broken into two parts, and each piece upon which a blow had been struck was carefully broken through the star-shaped fracture. In each section was an oxydized fracture penetrating through the inside skin of the pipe into the body metal,

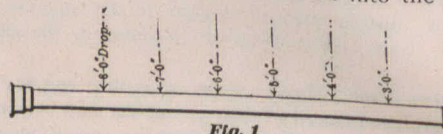


Fig. 1

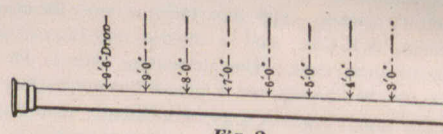


Fig. 2

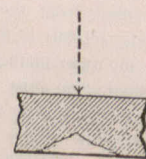


Fig. 3

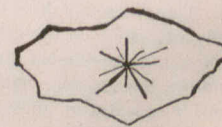


Fig. 4

Fig. 3, and in no case was the depth less than three thirty-seconds inch, the greatest being five thirty-seconds inch.

"The following is a table showing the depth of the respective fractures:

PIPE CAST VERTICALLY.	
Drop.	Depth of Fracture.
3 feet.	Slight.
4 "	3-32 inch.
5 "	Slight.
6 "	Slight.
7 "	½ inch.
8 "	5-32 inch.
PIPE CAST AT AN ANGLE.	
Drop.	Depth of Fracture.
3 feet.	Slight.
4 "	Slight.
5 "	½ inch.
6 "	Slight.
8 "	5-32 inch.
9 "	3-32 inch.
9 "	Slight.
9 "	6 inches. 3-32 inch.

"The cases marked 'slight,' were due to the deflection of the ball, in consequence of not falling dead upon the centre line. In every instance where the ball struck true a serious fracture resulted.

"Instead, therefore, of the hammer-sounding test being a safeguard, it is actually a danger; worse than a variation in body thickness of one-sixteenth of an inch, for which many a pipe has been sent to the scrap heap.