

A CENSUS was recently taken of the vacant houses in the city of Toronto. The number is shown to be about 4,000. By some this is taken to indicate lack of prosperity. Others do not so regard it. They point to the fact that many of the houses that are vacant are old and dilapidated, and have been deserted by their occupants for those of modern date wherein greater convenience and comfort are afforded. It should also be borne in mind that houses are constantly being erected which, having been ill-designed and planned, appear to everyone except the builder to be undesirable, and consequently are shunned by house-hunters. Making due allowance for such causes as mentioned, we are nevertheless of the opinion that four thousand vacant houses is a greater number than should exist. We believe it to be the fact that increase in population has as yet failed to overtake the abnormal building enterprise following what is known as the "Toronto real estate boom."

THE corner-stone of the county and city buildings at Toronto was laid by the Mayor in the presence of a distinguished company of citizens, on the 21st of November. Unfavorable weather marred, to a considerable extent the proceedings. The occasion called forth reference to the progress made by the city of Toronto and the Dominion since a similar ceremony was performed in 1844 in connection with the erection of the present city hall. Seven years have elapsed since the first steps were taken to obtain a suitable site on which to erect the new buildings. A great deal of time was spent by the city and county authorities in arriving at a satisfactory understanding on all points. The work was further delayed pending the vote of extra money by the citizens. Subsequently there arose the dispute over the payment of a clerk of works, and this was followed again by the death of one of the contractors. The massive foundations are now in however, and it is hoped that nothing will interfere with the completion of the building in the shortest period consistent with thorough workmanship.

A SETTLEMENT of the differences between the carpenters and joiners and master builders of London, England, by reason of which building operations in that city have been paralyzed for six months past, has at last been reached. Mr. J. Macvicar Anderson, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, who was asked to adjudicate upon the case, and by whose award both parties to the dispute consented to abide, has announced his decision. Some of the minor demands of the workmen, touching the hour at which work should begin, etc., are found to be sustained by the evidence. The demand for increased pay, however, is found not to be sustained, the conditions, such as the decrease in the trade of the country, pointing to the curtailment rather than the expansion of wages. The arbitrator calls attention to some results of this strike which we have not before observed, but which are worthy of the serious consideration of carpenters and joiners, as being in some degree likely to succeed a strike in any part of the world. On this point the arbitrator says: "The recent strike has been the means of inflicting injury on the trade of the carpenters and joiners of London, from which, in my judgment, it will not recover, for a large amount of carpenters' work has been superseded by other methods of construction which are likely to be increasingly adopted in future."

THE scheme for bringing water for Toronto use from Lake Simcoe will probably die the death of its aldermanic sponsors, and will be interred with their bones on the 1st of January next. Apart from the fact that the quality of the water is much inferior to that at our doors—simply to be had for the pumping—the cost of the enterprise would considerably outweigh its possible advantages. It is stated that the revenue for power supplied to manufacturers would be enormous. We have shown in a previous issue that the idea is fallacious. If the power is to be distributed hydrostatically to the different factories, new mains of immense size would have to be laid all over the city—if electrically, the loss in transmission, cost of maintenance of apparatus, and the smallness of the available power would put revenue out of the question. Especially would this be the case were the whole arrangement under municipal control. Then it is stated it would do away with the necessity for a trunk sewer, probably by using the present suction pipe as an outlet. Even if it were large enough, it must be remembered that it could only be

reached by means of a trunk sewer intercepting all the others. The power to be developed by the city water supply from Lake Simcoe, which would have to be developed miles outside the city in any event, is purely a figment of the imagination, and it is well that the citizens should have this fact impressed upon them before they determine to spend fifteen or twenty million dollars to get bad water.

THE Canadian Society of Civil Engineers has issued its ballot list for officers for 1892. Mr. John Kennedy, chief engineer, Harbor Commissioners, Montreal, has been nominated for president, and an opposition ballot has been issued in favor of Mr. E. P. Hannaford, chief engineer of the Grand Trunk Railway. It appears from the regulations of the society that a Nominating Committee is specially struck at each annual meeting to prepare this ballot. This committee is elected by the whole society. In its composition it is made as representative as possible. The duty of the society is to acknowledge its wisdom in selecting this committee and accept the nomination made by them. The rules empower any five members to present a list of names to the council, who shall issue them for ballot. This gives an opportunity for certain districts or branches, such as mining, electricity or hydraulics, to be represented, but after the decision of the Nominating Committee has been announced, an opposition ballot should be issued only for very special reasons, none of which appear to exist in the present case. We look upon the nomination of Mr. Hannaford as a compliment to him from some of his numerous personal friends; the wisdom of it is doubtful. He has been placed in opposition to the carefully considered selection of the specially appointed Nominating Committee, with whose duties and powers he is fully conversant. As a former vice-president and member of the council, Mr. Hannaford has rendered good service to the society. He has shown many tokens of his deep interest in its welfare. He has now an opportunity of serving it still more, and he can by a very simple act lay the society under a perpetual obligation, and create for himself an even greater and higher *prestige* than that which he so honorably occupies.

AT intervals during the last three years the necessity of providing means of imparting technical instruction to artisans has occupied the attention of the City Council of Toronto. On each occasion the question, after having been to some extent considered, was on various pretexts "referred back." So frequently did it meet this fate, that its friends were almost ready to despair. It is therefore doubly gratifying to the friends of the movement to observe that definite action has at last been taken. An appropriation of \$6,000 for the purpose of founding a technical school has been voted in Council, and a Board of Management appointed, comprising representatives of the City Council, the Architectural Guild, the Trades and Labor Council, the Association of Stationary Engineers and the Manufacturing interest. The Toronto Architectural Guild will be represented on the board by Messrs. S. G. Curry and Mr. E. Burke. It has wisely been decided to establish at present but one school, to be located in the centre of the city. The course of instruction has not yet been outlined. The selection of subjects to be taught is a matter requiring the most careful consideration, and will, we trust, be approached with due deliberation and a proper knowledge of the requirements of the various classes of students. In view of the decadence of the apprenticeship system, it is from technical schools the coming generation must receive instruction of an elementary character pertaining to the various trades, a fact which should give additional interest to the present movement. Gratifying success has attended the classes for technical instruction conducted for several years past in the city of Montreal under the direction of the Council of Arts and Manufactures of the Province of Quebec, and if equal interest is manifested, the success of the Toronto school will be assured.

Messrs. J. M. Williams & Co., of Hamilton, Ont., have leased the stove foundry of Mr. Mowat, at Dundas, Ont., and are starting it up with a force of fifty hands, for the manufacture of stoves, furnaces, etc.

The Richmond Slate Manufacturing Co., have purchased a slate quarry in the county of Brome, near Sutton Junction, Que. It has been reported on as being very valuable, and so situated as to be capable of being very easily worked.