

THERE is a suggestion for wide-awake manufacturers and dealers in building supplies in the advertisement of an architect which appears in this number, inviting information concerning such materials. The cheapest and most effective method of affording information of this character to architects is by means of a standing announcement in the pages of the ARCHITECT AND BUILDER, which will be found on file for reference in the offices of 90 per cent. of the architects of the Dominion.

SOME recent remarks of Judge Ferguson, at Ottawa, in regard to the terms of a certain contract being very hard on the contractor, have attracted considerable attention from the local contractors, some of whom say that they do not get fair treatment as contracts are at present made out. While admitting that the various stipulations are intended to act as a preventative against fraudulent contractors, they claim that there are clauses not needed even for this purpose. We have long been of the opinion that the usual form of building contract would furnish good material for the careful consideration of contractors, with a view to securing some changes. One clause only will be cited here, viz., "That in the case of several contractors being employed on the work, no trade is to be considered complete till the other several contracts are also completed." Contractors are every day signing conditions which, if rigidly enforced, would compel them to perform work as part of the contract without having had adequate opportunity of estimating its cost. Other conditions might in various ways be made burdensome to contractors. To the credit of the architects it can be said that their large powers are seldom abused, but there is a difference between them in this respect, which is properly taken into account by contractors in tendering. It is hardly fair to ask contractors to sign articles of such a nature as can only be required as a general protection from unreliable persons. Owners are encouraged to believe that with such iron-clad conditions the architect is sufficiently armed to insure a first-class job from any one regardless of price. Contractors would be justified in objecting to such clauses. The architect is supposed to stand as the independent interpreter of the obligations between proprietor and contractor, but since he is in the pay of the proprietor it is only reasonable to expect that he will be more particularly interested on the side from which he receives his commission. It follows that the contractor must look after his own welfare, and the clearer and more definite contracts can be made the more satisfactory will be his position and the less embarrassing that of the architect. We believe the architects would gladly meet the contractors for the consideration of questions of this kind. We have no hesitation in saying that the Uniform Contract used in the States and approved by the American Institute of Architects and the National Association of Builders, is better than the forms in use here, but it also is capable of being improved.

THE annual convention of the American Institute of Architects held in New York last month is likely to have a marked influence towards bringing about some changes in practice. Many valuable papers were read; some of these called out spirited and interesting discussion. The president's address contained brief references to the past year's experience and suggested lines of discussion for the Institute to take up. We quote only a few sentences as follows:—"There is great virtue in the formal publication of any truth."—"It is a good thing for the Institute to publicly express its views concerning vital matters of professional conduct."—"Whatever the Institute condemns the architects must conform to, and stand squarely on its decision, or lose caste in the eyes of the profession and of the public."—In the discussion on his address, the president recommended that the Institute especially express its views regarding the practice of doing work without proper remuneration, either in competition or otherwise, and that such practice be stamped as unprofessional. If this was published as the view of the Institute, it would have great weight, while the same belief expressed by the members to each other privately would have no influence whatever. The report of the Committee on Competitions was approved and the committee continued to prepare a code embracing the views expressed in the report. It is not proposed to make any change

in the rate of 5 per cent. on the cost of the work for full professional services, including supervision, 3½ per cent. for preliminary studies, general drawings, specifications and details, and 2½ per cent. for the same, less details. A radical change is proposed, however, in charges for preliminary studies, as follows:—

Minimum charge \$50.00.		
For works costing \$		50,000, 1 per cent. of proposed cost.
" " "	5,000 to \$	
" " "	50,000 "	75,000, .....
" " "	75,000 "	100,000, .....
" " "	100,000 "	150,000, .....
" " "	150,000 "	200,000, .....
" " "	200,000 "	250,000, .....
" " "	250,000 "	300,000, .....
" " "	300,000 "	350,000, .....
" " "	350,000 "	400,000, .....
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" " "	500,000 "	600,000, .....
" " "	600,000 "	700,000, .....
" " "	700,000 "	800,000, .....
" " "	800,000 "	900,000, .....
" " "	900,000 "	1,000,000, .....
" " "	1,000,000 "	1,250,000, .....
" " "	1,250,000 "	1,500,000, .....
" " "	1,500,000 "	1,750,000, .....
" " "	1,750,000 "	2,000,000, .....
" " "	2,000,000 "	2,500,000, .....
" " "	2,500,000 "	3,000,000, .....
" " "	3,000,000 "	4,000,000, .....
" " "	4,000,000 "	5,000,000, .....

The rate is about 2½ times the square root of the lowest estimated cost. This rate seems excessive for inexpensive buildings, but is about right for buildings of great cost. It is expected that architects will not enter competitions unless paid for their services according to the above schedule, and it is hoped to discourage competitions for buildings of low cost. The table of charges quoted is to supersede the former rate of 1 per cent. on estimated cost for preliminary studies. Competitions are not to be entered into except for public buildings, and then only on condition that four competitors shall be paid at the schedule rates, and one employed as architect with compensation at the minimum rates fixed by the Institute. The paper on High Buildings brought out in discussion a variety of opinions regarding the durability of iron skeleton construction. In a paper read on fireproofing it is assumed that if protected from fire such buildings are practically indestructible. Mr. Post, who has had a large experience in erecting this kind of buildings believes their life will be but short. His opinion, supported by others, is, that the most serious drawback is the effect of rust on the iron. In view of this he argued in favor of cast iron for columns instead of wrought iron or steel. These ideas were strongly opposed, but the conclusion is unavoidable that every possible precaution should be taken to protect iron work from rust in whatever position it may be placed, and also as far as possible to arrange the construction so that it can be examined and painted from time to time. A paper on elevators treated exhaustively of the mechanism of the modern electric elevator, showing its advantages over other kinds. The opinion is expressed that little improvement in these appliances is to be looked for in the near future, for the reason that in every industrial development there are forms of machines which early become typical and remain so, and that machines are now in use of so high efficiency as to leave little margin for improvement.

Some experiments were recently made by the Buildings Inspection Department, Vienna, on the protection of iron from fire by incasing it with brick. A wrought iron column, 12 feet long, and built up of channels connected by lattice bars, was used. This was set up in a small chamber constructed of brick, and the column was loaded by levers. This done it was surrounded by a 4½ in. brick wall laid in fireclay mortar. Between the wall were fixed samples of fusible metals, which should serve as a gauge of the temperature attained. Various samples of stone concrete and other materials were also placed in the chamber within the column. This chamber was then filled with firewood, which was lighted, and the doors were walled up. An examination of the room after the fire had burned itself out showed that the walls of brick laid in Portland cement retained their strength whilst most of the natural stones left in the chamber had been destroyed. The ceiling had been lined partly with plaster of Paris and partly with terra-cotta tiles. Both were damaged. The inclosure round the iron pillars was still standing firm, though corners of the brick-work were chipped 1 in. or so, and the fireclay mortar was largely washed out of the joints. On removing the casing, however, the pillar inside was found to be uninjured, even the paint being unscorched, and the fusible plugs only showed a temperature of 149 degs. Fahr.