

BY THE WAY.

I HAVE been wondering whether to luck or some more tangible cause is to be attributed the decrease of \$447,725 in fire losses in Canada in 1896 as compared with 1895. It would be interesting to learn whether improved methods of building construction or more efficient fire protective devices had anything to do with this improved showing.

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AN individual bearing the scriptural name of Emanuel distinguished himself in Toronto recently by his altogether unique method of securing employment. Emanuel, surnamed Dunn, and by trade a stonecutter, was charged in the Toronto Police Court with having written a letter to a party in Rockland, Que., to which he signed the name of a well-known contractor, stating that there was any amount of work in Toronto. On the strength of this letter several stonecutters threw up their employment at Rockland and went to Toronto, only to find on arriving there that they had been deceived. Meanwhile, Emanuel is said to have betaken himself to Rockland and secured one of the vacancies which he had been the means of creating.

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THE California Architect points to a peculiar oversight in the bill now before the New York Legislature for limiting the height of buildings. The bill provides that no building shall be erected of greater height above the curb level than fifteen times the square width of the street, but neglects to say what denomination that width shall be taken in—whether feet, inches, yards or miles. The California journal aptly remarks that although the ordinary public would consider that feet are meant, there is no telling what the lawyers and judges would hold if the matter was brought into court by someone wishing to erect a building higher than implied in the act, for the ways of such are like the ways of Providence, past finding out.

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THE building inspector of the city of New York has made a new departure from the established custom of his predecessors, by making liberal use of the camera to secure pictures of defective work. Naturally enough contractors who have tried to increase their profits by doing their work in the flimsiest manner, without regard to the safety of human lives, are "down" on the new inspector. Our Canadian inspectors should lose no time in purchasing a kodak. It might also be possible by means of this little instrument for the Ontario Association of Architects to obtain some "horrible examples" of design and construction which would materially assist in bringing the Legislature to an appreciation of the reasonableness and necessity of amending the Ontario Architects' Act.

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My attention has been called to the peculiar enterprise of a Montreal publisher. This gentleman recently issued the first number of a periodical for plumbers, the heading of which, if we except the one word "Canadian," is an exact fac simile of that of a New York publication in the same line. Anybody who imagines he is called upon to fill a long-felt want in the field of class journalism or any other branch of journalism, has a perfect right to make the attempt, but for the credit of the business and this Canada of ours, I protest that such persons should show that they have ideas of their

own, and not purloin bodily the ideas of others either because of their lack of originality or because they desire by sailing under false colors to reap where others have sown.

THE COMPETITION EVIL.

AN architect forwards to us a copy of the document printed below, which he states is being sent out to architects both in Canada and the United States:

SAULT STE. MARIE, February 18th, 1897.

SIR,—You are hereby invited by the trustees of the Sault Ste. Marie Methodist Church to submit for their inspection plans and specifications for a church in said town, on the conditions that if your plans and specifications are accepted by the trustees, that you will be paid therefor the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100); but should they not be accepted they will be returned to you at your own risk, and you will be entitled to no remuneration whatever.

The church to be built of stone which was blasted out of the lock-pit of the ship canal, and is consequently not uniform in size, as if it had been regularly quarried in the usual way. The outside course to be dressed and laid in the Broken Ashlar style on the front and two sides of church, the rear end to be built of hammered stone; church to have a seating capacity of at least 450 on the ground floor, exclusive of gallery or galleries in addition, and with basement underneath adapted and suitably arranged for Sunday School purposes.

The building with heating and seating complete not to cost more than \$7,500, exclusive of stone and sand, which will be delivered by the trustees on building site outside of above amount. Full, ample and complete working details to be furnished with plans or specifications, or before the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100) above mentioned is paid, and said sum of \$100 is not in any event to be paid unless the trustees upon calling for tenders can secure a reliable contractor to undertake the building at the price named.

The church will be situated on the north-west angle of Spring and Albert streets, and will face towards south and also towards river, which runs east and west two or three blocks away; the natural depression of the lot and surrounding land is towards the south.

The plans, specifications and working details to be the absolute property of the trustees until the building is completed and all matters concerning same fully and finally settled and wound up, then to be returned to the party furnishing same at his own risk, but trustees not to be in any way responsible for loss or destruction of plans while in their possession. No plan necessarily accepted.

You are also requested to state, in case your plans are accepted, what amount you will take to superintend the erection of the building, and whether you would give same your personal supervision, and if not, what arrangement you would make therefor.

A similar communication to this is being sent to a limited number of architects, and you are requested to reply at once as to whether you intend to submit plans under above conditions, so that if you do not intend to submit plans the trustees can communicate with someone else in your place.

If you desire any further information the trustees will be pleased to furnish it.

W. H. HEARST, Sec. Com.

The gentleman who brings this document before our notice, writes: "I am not a member of the Ontario Association of Architects, and see no good reason for becoming such as long as prominent men in the Association residing in Toronto and other leading cities will allow themselves to be approached in such language and in such terms as are embodied in the enclosed. It has occurred to me that what I send you hints at a state of affairs that might well be placed before the Association."

Messrs. Smith Bros., of London, Ont., have removed to larger premises at 265 Dundas street.

The Asbestos & Asbestic Company, Limited, with a capital of £500,000, is being organized in London, Eng., for the purpose of developing property at Danville, Que.