

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS.

Proceedings of the Tenth Convention.

THE tenth Convention of the Ontario Association of Architects was held at the School of Practical Science, Toronto, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 11th and 12th of January, the President, Mr. J. W. Power, of Kingston, Ont., in the chair.

The minutes of the last annual meeting having been read and confirmed, the President's address, which elicited hearty applause, was read as follows:

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:—As President of the Ontario Association of Architects it affords me great pleasure to welcome you to this, the seventh annual convention of this association since incorporation, and wish you a prosperous new year. During the year my great inability to fill the office of President as it should be and has been by those who have held the position before, has been very forcibly impressed upon me. I can but feebly express my appreciation of the honor conferred upon me by electing me to the position which I occupy to-day as President of this Association. Living, as I do, outside the city of Toronto, I have been in some respects greatly handicapped, and in this connection I would offer my thanks to the Toronto members of the council for the efficient transaction of so much of the business.

I am sorry to have to record the loss by death of one of our oldest members and a former member of council—I refer to the late F. J. Rastrick, of Hamilton, Ont.

It is not my intention to weary you with a review of architectural progress during the year, especially in view of the continuance of the hard times of the past three years and the slight foundation at present existing upon which to build our hope of improvement. The pages of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER and other architectural and engineering journals have no doubt kept you informed regarding works of any importance.

As to the proposed amendment to our act, we have but little new to report since our last convention. We will no doubt have a report from the Legislative Committee, but as a connecting link, I might state that at the time we were before the Bills Committee we had hopes that they might recommend that the question of examinations be taken up by the House as a government measure. If this recommendation has not been made—and I very much doubt if it has—I feel that we could very properly, after trying for nearly eight years to work and educate our students under an unworkable act, petition the Minister of Education to take up and carry on this portion of the work in connection with the School of Practical Science, and establish a professional degree, along the same lines as the professional degrees in engineering.

I would further strongly advise this convention to take up the scheme laid before us at the last convention by our then president Mr. H. B. Gordon, as to the grading of members, on the lines of the Royal Institute of British Architects. I will now read his remarks and proposals on this subject, but before doing so, let us dwell for a few moments on the subject of education, and go back to the days of Vitruvius. Writing on the subject of architecture and architects, he says of the former that 'practice and theory are its parents. Practice is the frequent and continual contemplation of the mode of executing any given work, or of the mere operation of the hands for the conversion of the material in the best and readiest way. Theory is the result of that reasoning which demonstrates and explains that the material wrought has been so converted as to answer the end proposed. Therefore the mere practical architect is not able to assign sufficient reasons for the forms which he adopts, and the theoretical architect also fails, grasping the shadow instead of the substance. He who is theoretical as well as practical is therefore double armed—able not only to prove the propriety of his design, but equally so, to carry it into execution. A student should be apt and ingenious in the acquisition of knowledge; deficient in either of these qualities he cannot be a perfect master. He should be a good writer, a skilled draughtsman, versed in geometry and optics, expert at figures, acquainted with history, informed on the principles of natural and moral philosophy, somewhat of a musician, not ignorant of the science of law and physics, nor of the motions, laws and relations to each other of the heavenly bodies. By means of the first-named acquirement he is to commit to writing his observation and experience in order to assist his memory. Drawing is employed in representing his designs. Theory is common to and known to all, but the result of practice occurs to the artist in his own art only. Practice also can lead to excellence in any one art: That architect therefore is sufficiently educated whose general knowledge enables him to give his opinion on any branch when required to do so.'

It is manifest that since the days of Vitruvius both the knowledge required and the functions to be discharged by an architect have enormously increased in volume and complexity. To realize this, one has only to glance, among other things, at the many styles which have arisen and had their vogue since Vitruvius' day, with all of which some acquaintance is supposed to be necessary for the development of modern methods of construction, sanitation, decoration and what not. To put it shortly, a young man having acquired the knowledge implied by the passing of an examination such as we have been considering will have a

well laid foundation for his training, but the superstructure must be built up by practical experience under others. All this is in keeping with our act, and if the examinations were conducted by the Department of Education through the School of Practical Science, the degrees and all the conditions would be precisely similar to those laid down by the School for the establishment of the following degrees, namely, Civil Engineer, Mining Engineer, Mechanical Engineer and Electrical Engineer. Furthermore, the School is thoroughly equipped in every particular. The staff is beyond question, the apparatus and machinery are of the best, and the library by all odds the best in the Dominion, excepting only the Parliamentary library at Ottawa, and that for this particular branch may be also inferior. Under such conditions the taking over of these examinations would be a boon alike to the Public, the Profession and the School.

Mr. Gordon's scheme is outlined by him in these words:

"Meantime we might consider whether the gaining of some present title of distinction indicating educational standing and proved architectural ability, might not be a desirable stimulus to those in the Association. In the Royal Institute of British Architects there are three grades of membership, namely, Fellows, Associates and Honorary members. The first two (except in special cases) have to pass examinations before they are privileged to use the title of distinction. Thus the affix of A.R.I.B.A. means something to a British architect and gives him a definite standing before the public. Possibly it might be well for us to make a distinction in our membership. For instance, it seems but reasonable that those young men who have passed the Association's examinations should be placed on a higher level than those who have come in merely because in some manner or other they have been practising architecture at the time of legislative action. It is also evident that young men who have only recently passed their examinations should not be placed in a higher grade than older men who have spent a score or more years in the honorable practice of their profession, and whose works are a testimony of their ability. The inauguration of any system of degrees is beset by difficulties, but if the general idea met with approval, no doubt some practical method of arranging the matter will be suggested. It might be possible to have the ordinary members designated by a simple O.A.A. Those who have passed the examinations and thus become graduates, distinguished by G.O.A.A., while the older men, whose work and position in the profession justifies the honor, might by a recommendation of the council and vote of the convention, be elected to the position of Fellow, with the right to add F.O.A.A. to their names. I would suggest that it be referred to a committee or the council for consideration and report, to be presented here tomorrow."

As Mr. Gordon points out it is but fair that those young men who have lately passed and are now studying, together with those who have worked hard for nearly nine years, devoting their time and money in trying to educate students and raise the standard of the profession, should get some recognition. The distinction may not be recognized by the general public, but it is gratifying to know that it is a fact nevertheless, as is attested by the frequent letters asking for information—the last that came under my notice being dated Dec. 14th, from one of the Library Committee of the Underwriters' Association at San Francisco, asking for a copy of Mr. Burke's paper on slow burning construction, which the writer had heard of as a most valuable contribution to the subject. I mention this as but one of many instances that go to show that we are making headway—slowly you may say—but, nevertheless, surely.

Take for instance the class of buildings going up to-day in many of our towns and cities (by this I mean buildings of similar size, height and cost) and compare them with those of but eight years ago. The difference is quite evident to the ordinary eye, not to mention the vast improvement in detail, sanitary matters and construction. I would here suggest that the circular letter of the Committee on Building By-laws, have this or some similar request added: "that it be read before the Council or other body to whom it may be addressed," for there are buildings erected and others in course of construction which many of us know are not as they should be, and while not perhaps dangerous, are fast becoming so, and from other causes than decay. If copies of the circular were sent out now, just after the terrible London disaster, they might help to open the eyes of the public to the grave responsibility resting upon municipal bodies and officials.

We are often struck with the absurdity of some of the remarks made at meetings of some of the Boards of Health, as to causes, complaints and remedies in such cases. The standing committee on building by-laws or city improvement might consider the advisability of suggesting the class of available men for such boards, as in some cases the choice seemingly gets little consideration.

I am very much pleased to hear of the great success and good work being done by the local or Toronto Chapter of this Association, and can only hope that it way continue.

You will see by the agenda that the time usually devoted to paper reading will on this occasion be taken up by practical talks. We may consider ourselves particularly fortunate this year in having so many subjects of importance brought before us by practical men; I trust the discussion may be full and all the points brought out.

We are all pleased, I am sure, to see the marked headway which the Province of Quebec Association is making, and the vigorous steps taken in its interest by the Council. The State of Illinois is also to be congratulated on the admirable bill they have been granted by General Assembly.

Many of us no doubt have read the discussion which a short time since was going on in Montreal, as to the strength or carry-