

investment in mining stocks, is being locked up, and will not be again available for business enterprises of a more legitimate character for at least a few years to come. This condition of things must certainly have an injurious effect upon business in the older provinces, tending to prolong the period of inactivity which it was hoped might shortly come to an end. Architects, builders and supply merchants have reason to deplore this phase of the situation. Mining speculation should be left to home and foreign capitalists, who can afford to risk large amounts of money without jeopardizing their business interests.

To ascertain whether mortar contains too large a percentage of sand, and whether the sand has the necessary quality of sharpness, the American Architect recommends that the hardened mortar should be rubbed between the fingers. If the mortar be good, the sand will be firmly held by the mortar. Other methods suggested by the London Builder are, to dissolve some of the mortar in hydrochloric acid, which will attack the lime, leaving the sand, or to examine a thin section of the hardened mortar by polarized light through a microscope, which will show the shape of the grains and their proportion to the mass. In this connection recent experiments in connection with the rebuilding of the Union Station at Columbus, Ohio, are said to have demonstrated that refuse brick ground in a crusher are superior to sand for use in mortar for color work.

THE new Legislative Buildings at Victoria, B. C., are completed, and it is expected that in them the session of the legislature which will shortly be called will meet. It is estimated that the ultimate cost of these buildings will approach one million dollars. They are said to be handsome structures, forming the central architectural feature of the city and province. The citizens of Victoria are congratulating themselves that the erection of these costly buildings will destroy the possibility of the removal of the capital of British Columbia from Victoria to a more central point on the mainland. In view of recent developments there is a strong probability that, but for the circumstance mentioned, such a change would have taken place. The increase of population and business which must follow the development of the mines of the province will also remove the disproportion which at present seems to exist between the size and cost of the new legislative buildings and the requirements of a territory having a population of less than 100,000 people.

STEPS are being taken in Wisconsin to establish a "State Board of Architects," to consist of five or seven of the most competent and trustworthy architects of the state. The duty of the board will be to examine into the qualifications of persons who may seek to practice architecture within the State. A similar movement is on foot in California. The method of procedure proposed by the Ontario Association of Architects for guarding the interests of the public and improving the status of the profession, seems preferable to the one mentioned. Our readers are familiar with the object which the Association is seeking to attain. It is proposed to restrict the use of the title Architect to persons who shall be known as practicing architects at the time

of the passing of the Amendment to the Architects' Act, and to students who shall have given proof of their knowledge and ability by passing a satisfactory qualifying examination. Under this method, no hardship or injustice would be imposed on any one, while the status of the profession would, in the course of ten or fifteen years be materially improved.

#### Protection of Public Buildings.

THE partial destruction by fire of one of the Departmental Buildings at Ottawa last month, revealed a disgraceful neglect of duty on the part of the persons charged with the responsibility of keeping the protective appliances within and without the buildings in serviceable condition. When needed these appliances were found to be useless—the hydrants being frozen and the hose so rotten as to be incapable of withstanding the water pressure. As a consequence of this condition of neglect, and of the fact that it has not been considered desirable in recent years to place any insurance upon these buildings, the public treasury must now be drawn upon to the extent of probably half a million dollars to pay the cost of repairing the damaged structure. The staff of officials at Ottawa is large enough and expensive enough to leave no excuse for the neglect to which is largely due the loss which this fire has imposed on the country. The wisdom of entirely discarding insurance seems open to question. Is it not false economy to leave the country constantly exposed to the danger of losing property valued at millions of dollars for the sake of saving a few thousand dollars per year in premiums? We are surprised to observe that the provincial authorities of Ontario are following the example of the Dominion government in this matter, and are relying upon their fire protective apparatus and employees for the protection of the new legislative buildings. Incidental reference may fittingly be made to the fact, revealed by the Ottawa fire, that the Government Buildings are well constructed. The stone and brick work came through the ordeal intact, and if the building had been roofed with iron, in accordance with the plans and estimates presented by the architects at the time of its construction, the damage would have been trifling.

#### CHIPS.

The annual meeting of the Silica Barytic Stone Company was held at Guelph recently. The election of directors resulted as follows: Walter Mills, Ingersoll, president and general manager; A. C. Macdonald, Toronto, vice-president; Mr. Ewart, Ingersoll, secretary-treasurer; J. R. Stratton, M.P.P., Peterboro, and C. Kloeper, Guelph.

The Lake Medad Portland Cement Company is seeking incorporation, being composed chiefly of Hamilton capitalists. It is proposed to manufacture Portland and hydraulic cements, lime and builders' supplies at Lake Medad, a short distance north of Hamilton, and to erect mills for the purpose. The first directors will be: Ald. Dixon, Ald. Montague, S. D. Biggar, Lyman Lee, W. L. Cummer, M. Turnbull, W. A. Holton, A. Leitch, all of Hamilton, and Charles H. Holton, of Easton, Pa., president of the American Horseshoe Company.

On the 3rd of August, 1896, two men were killed by an accident while working in the Berri street drain in Montreal. The widow of one of the victims has since brought an action against the contractor, Mr. Jos. F. Houle, claiming \$3,000 damages for the death of her husband. It is contended that the contractor neglected to employ the usual precautions to provide against accidents. She alleges that it is customary to put lime in a newly opened drain, to absorb any noxious gases, before any one goes down into the drain. This, it is claimed, was not done. The contractor claims, on the contrary, that he is not responsible for the accident.

#### Qualifications of Architects.