

TORONTO BOARD OF TRADE COMPETITION.

THE following is Prof. Ware's report on the plans submitted in competition for the new Toronto Board of Trade building:—

DEAR SIR,—After a careful examination and comparison of the twenty designs which were sent in to me on the first of October for the proposed building for the Toronto Board of Trade, I have selected three which seem to me to be for one reason or another clearly the best.

These I herewith enclose to you for consideration by the Building Committee.

The task of selection has been an unusually difficult one, since all the sets of drawings which exhibited a marked superiority in any one respect, uniformly proved to be signally deficient in some other particular, equally important.

Nine of the designs present substantially the same arrangement of plan. They all show an area, or courtyard, in the north-eastern corner of the lot, enclosed by a building in the shape of the letter L. A corridor of similar shape runs through the middle of the building with offices on the outer side, lighted from the street; on the inner side of this corridor are two or three small offices lighted from the court-yard, and the lavatories, closets, staircase and elevators. The rooms for the Board of Trade are in the upper stories. In some of the designs the Restaurant is next to the roof, in some it is placed in the lower stories.

Two of the designs I send you exemplify these arrangements.

Five of the designs show an interior well-lighted shaft set against one of the party walls, some of them adding a smaller well, or ventilating shaft, set against the other party wall.

Neither scheme seems to have worked out very well.

Three of the designs show an area or external court, opening upon Yonge Street. Neither of these is sent to the Committee, for the lot seems to be too small for this device to be used to advantage. At any rate, all three of these plans afford less available floor-space than do any of the others. The irregularity of the shape of the lot, also, is in all of them, in spite of some very ingenious attempts to disguise it, exceptionally conspicuous.

Two of the schemes show an interior area, or light-well, with rooms all around it, and one which I enclose, shows no open space at all, the building covering the whole lot, and the centre part being lighted by a skylight.

In respect of external treatment and architectural style, thirteen have towers, twelve have steep roofs, in whole or in part, eight have the roofs flat, eight employ classical or renaissance details, six show more or less of Romanesque influence, and six are composed in a manner to which no name has as yet been given.

The elevations as well as the plans vary greatly in character and expression, as well as in merit. As I have already intimated, it happens unfortunately that the best plans do not have very attractive elevations, and that the most attractive elevations do not belong to very good plans.

In this state of things I am not able to recommend any of the designs, as they stand, for adoption by the Committee. The only service I can render them is to bring before them, as I have done, those which seem to me to possess substantial merit of one sort or another, hoping that they may find some among them so well suited to their ends that they will be disposed to recommit the drawings in question to their author for further consideration and amendment.

So far as concerns the general arrangement of the plan, I am disposed to agree with the chief part of the competitors in believing that the most obvious way of covering the ground is the best, namely, by building an L-shaped building on the two outer sides of an interior court.

The design marked with "TWO CIRCLES," shows better than any other of those which follow this scheme how large a number of well-lighted offices can be secured by adopting it. This design shows thirty-six offices, all of good size and shape, and covering together nearly fifteen thousand square feet. Even if one were content so as to bring the design down to six stories, the office space would amount to over twice thousand feet, which is as much as any of the good plans afford. The open area is sufficiently large, the stair-way and lavatories well lighted, and the halls and passages wide and open. This scheme is, moreover, the only one among them all in which the plan itself is noticeable for neatness and elegance of arrangement.

In this design the Restaurant is in the basement, the Board Rooms, which comprise a large circular hall, are in the upper story, and the sales are arranged in a stack which occupies the middle of the hall-way.

The design marked "TEN PER CENT." has most of the practical advantages already mentioned, but lacks elegance and style. The main difference, so far as concerns the distribution of the rooms, is this, that in this design the large hall of the Board of Trade is rectangular, the Restaurant is small and is placed at the top of the building, and the sales are scattered about in the offices. The amount of office space, both being regarded as six-story buildings, is about the same. The offices are in this building more numerous, but smaller and less desirable.

Unfortunately the external treatment of these two designs, though not without merit, does not seem to me to be, in either case, suitable or satisfactory. This is more to be regretted, inasmuch as neither of the plans is of such a character as greatly to influence the elevation, and in either case a different treatment might just as well have been adopted.

The rest of the plans are distinctly inferior, for the Committee's purpose, to the two just mentioned and, with a single exception, none of the elevations present any special features or combinations of features that it would profit the Committee to consider.

But the design bearing the title "UTILITY" (one of two thus designated), shows an external treatment so effective and original that it deserves to be urged upon the Committee's attention. It is seldom, in my opinion, that one comes across a design so noticeable as out of the common course which is at the same time so simple, rational and dignified. It was, moreover, to my mind, just the character suited to a business building which is at the same time the seat of a public institution.

The plans which accompany these elevations show about the same amount of office space as the other two. But the accommodation they offer is inferior, and the tortuous and eccentric arrangement of the rooms and passages forbid its serious consideration.

These then—the "TWO CIRCLES," "TEN PER CENT." and "UTILITY,"—being the three designs which, from one point of view or another, I find to be the best among those submitted to my judgment, I in turn submit them to the judgment of the Committee. To the foregoing comments I venture to add the following recommendations.

1. If the Committee find the general arrangement of the plans marked with "TWO CIRCLES" is such as to serve their purposes, and agree with me that its technical merits in respect of simplicity and elegance in the dis-

tribution of parts are of a high order, I recommend them to adopt this plan as the basis of their future operations.

If they further agree with me in that the external treatment of the design is unsuitable and unsatisfactory, but that the skill and professional resources manifested in this set of drawings are such as to promise, on a second trial, a happier result, I recommend that the drawings be returned to their author with a request to present a new design for the exterior under such further instructions as the Committee may give.

Such an adoption of the general scheme would not, of course, preclude the Committee from changing the plans in matters of detail, such as omitting the tower, using the basement for offices instead of for a restaurant, putting safes into the rooms, or substituting an oblong hall situated upon one of the side streets, for the circular room shown in the plans. This last is a feature common to most of the designs sent in, as well as to two of those here presented, and does not constitute, in my judgment, a special feature of those designs, original as to this competition, in any way to interfere with the Committee, or the author of this design, incorporating it into his composition, if it is desirable to do so.

2. The design marked "TEN PER CENT." has, to my mind, no advantages of plan over that just spoken of, and if the Committee agree with me in thinking that the elevation is not specially suitable or attractive, I think they may dismiss this design from further consideration. Should they, however, differ from me on this point, and find the elevation to be just what they would be best pleased to erect, then I should say that these plans, though not so good as the others, were good enough, and that the Committee had better adopt this design, substantially as it stands. This they would be warranted in doing, in spite of obvious faults in the details of the arrangement, since these defects could easily be removed by further study.

3. If, however, the Committee do not incline to this course, and if they agree with me in regard to the great merits of the design marked "UTILITY," in its external treatment, then I recommend that they take such measures as may prove practicable to combine this elevation with the other plans. Fortunately there is nothing in this elevation to prevent its fitting the plans of the design marked "TEN PER CENT.," if they were slightly modified, or even fitting the plans marked with the "TWO CIRCLES," if the large circular room were given up, and a rectangular room adopted instead, as has been suggested. I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM R. WARE.

Columbia College, New York, November 3, 1888.
P.S.—The envelopes containing the names of the authors of these plans are herewith enclosed, with the seals still unbroken. I have no knowledge or belief as to their identity.

W. R. W.

DEAR SIR,—In the report which I had the honor of sending to you two days ago, I recommended your Building Committee, in case they found the plans belonging to the design marked with "TWO CIRCLES" suitable and convenient to adopt them as a basis of procedure, and to ask their author to present different elevations, in accordance with such instructions as the Committee might frame. This I urged on the ground that the ability and resources displayed in this set of drawings were such that the Committee might safely place themselves in the hands of their author, at least provisionally, in spite of the unsatisfactory treatment in them of the exterior of the building.

I ought to have added—I ought to have remembered to add, for the point is a familiar one—that further evidence as to the professional resources at the command of the author of this design might and should be obtained by opening the envelope containing his name. This the Committee are perfectly free to do whenever they have reached a point where they cannot proceed intelligently without knowing who is who. They have never undertaken to come to a final choice in ignorance of whom they were dealing with. The incognito provided for in the instructions has fully answered its purpose already, and I ought to have suggested to the Committee to break the seals as soon as the question of the standing or resources of either competitor was brought before them, as it was by my first recommendation.

Please consider these suggestions as forming a part of the recommendations of my report, and believe me to be very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM R. WARE.

New York, Nov. 5, 1888.

A CRITICISM, ETC.

HAMILTON, March 6th, 1889.

Editor CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.

I HAVE much pleasure in congratulating you on the improved size and general appearance of your publication, and have no doubt that the profession, students and other subscribers will appreciate your efforts.

Excuse me if I criticise the illustrations of your last number. Your remarks on the arrangements of the Town House, page 16, are just and terse. There being no chamber plan, I would suggest to future contributors that they furnish basement and chamber plans, also elevations to a scale, or otherwise one is induced to think that the perspective has been "cooked" to make a picture, and so deceive, which is at all times condemnable.

The design for the new Board of Trade building is very creditable, and the plans well considered. I have no doubt the members of the Board of Trade will feel proud of the building when it is completed. I notice, however, that the point of view has been taken too far away; the view can never be seen as such, unless I am mistaken as to the locality. I recollect the old Board of Trade building as being situated at the junction of two narrow streets. If the perspective has been made for a picture, it is not honest to do so. Architects, I am sorry to say, are too much given to this kind of deceit, which mitigates