



A FAIR ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT IT COSTS TO BUILD OF "SHODDY" CONSTRUCTION, IN A PANORAMIC VIEW OF TORONTO'S WAREHOUSE DISTRICT AFTER THE MEMORABLE FIRE OF APRIL, 1904, WHICH SWEEPED AWAY OVER SIXTEEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF PROPERTY, BROUGHT ALMOST TO A STANDSTILL THE BUSINESS OF CANADA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY AND LAID RUIN CLOSE TO THE DOORS OF MANY LARGE PROSPERING BUSINESS INSTITUTIONS. SUCH A DISASTROUS CONFLAGRATION WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE IN A DISTRICT OF WELL BUILT, PROPERLY PROTECTED WAREHOUSES.

Photo by "Galbraith," Copyrighted.

Modern Warehouse Construction

Interesting Data Showing the Hazardous Risks Fostered by Architects and Owners Alike in Building the Modern Warehouse of "Flimsy" Unprotected Construction. What Constitutes Fireproof Construction—Its Many Advantages Shown. Three Recent Examples Illustrated and Described

IT MATTERS not how perfect in architectural design, nor how cheap or expensive in cost of construction, a commercial building is an architectural failure unless it answers with the best possible degree of perfection the purpose for which it was intended, with profit to the owner.

This statement was recently made by one of Canada's most prominent architects, in his criticism of a piece of commercial architecture. The self evident truth of this broad yet positive assertion will be denied by no one, and still it would be interesting to know just what percentage of our commercial structures are architectural successes, in the true meaning of this axiom.

Warehouse construction is one of the most important branches in modern commercial architecture, and it furnishes the architect and engineer with many perplexing problems. In reply to the question as to how well these problems have been solved in the past by our architects, and how well they have accomplished the task in producing architectural success in warehouse construction, the reader's attention is called to the accompanying illustration, showing a panoramic view of the ruins of that portion of Toronto's warehouse section swept by the fire flood in 1904. Do the charred timbers, the partially standing walls, the twisted steel and blackened and water-soaked merchandise spell success or failure? When the flames swept from building to building, finding everywhere plenty of food, ripe and ready to be devoured, did it not impress the onlooker that something was wrong, and that in the construction of these buildings in the very heart of the city, wherein millions of dollars of merchandise was stored, and wherein were housed businesses in which millions of money was invested, many mistakes had been made.

It is a recognized fact that if the buildings in this district had been properly constructed, according to the latest approved methods of fireproof building construction, such a conflagration would never have been possible, and the millions of dollars' worth of property thus destroyed

would still be standing, to say nothing of the enormous amounts lost in suspension of business that would have been saved. Still we find some of the very firms, after all they suffered in this expensive experience, erecting structures that offer little or no protection against the great red plague, when for a small additional percentage in cost they could build for themselves structures in which they could conduct their business with a sense of security. There may have been some reason for the inflammable nature of the warehouse of ten years ago, but in this age that has given us every method, material and appliance at a reasonable cost, necessary to construct an absolutely fireproof structure there is no excuse for the erection of fire-feeding traps.

Such buildings are not architectural successes, either from the standpoint of the architect, or engineer, or the owner, it matters not how perfect they may be in design, nor how cheap or expensive in cost of construction.

Many architects believe they have produced a success in the construction of a building when they have accomplished the task of giving the owner just what he wanted. Suppose the owner insisted upon a certain plan, the architect gave it to him, and when the structure was finished the owner would find his plan did not work out as he had anticipated, the building would be pronounced a failure, in spite of the fact that the architect gave his client just what he wanted. This is as true with reference to the methods of construction and materials and appliances used as it is with the plan. It is immaterial what the owner's ideas are as to the advisability of the adoption of certain methods, or the use of certain materials or appliances. The work of the architect is measured by the finished building. It is the architect, or engineer, and not the owner, who should know the comparative merits of methods and materials adapted to suit certain requirements or conditions. It is incomprehensible why so many architects, who talk so much of professional dignity, permit their clients, however foolishly inclined the latter may be, to build of "shoddy" con-