

fire system. New York has \$21,000,000 in cash over and above the outlay on establishing Central Park. Mexico is spending \$100,000,000 on improvements. Buenos Ayres \$70,000,000.

The park system proposes to link together the existing spaces along the waterfront to the Humber River, up the Humber valley to Lambton, thence easterly by drives in the ravines to the head of Avenue road, thence easterly to a park above Eglinton avenue, to the Don Valley, to Riverdale Park, easterly again to Scarborough Cliffs, and back to the waterfront south of Ashbridge's Bay and on to the Island. Thirteen new parks would be included in this. Queen's Park is to be a point whence parkways run to connect it with the larger system. The establishing of twenty-eight new playgrounds in all the congested districts is no small part of the Guild's programme.

In carrying out its plans the Guild proposes the formation of a civic commission that would be a body with a continuous policy.

The report closes with an appeal to all citizens to interest themselves in the work.

### Calgary's City Hall.

WHETHER TO GO on with the work and complete the new city hall, or to board it up and abandon it entirely, has been the subject of debate among the citizens of Calgary for some little time back. The city's plight as regards its "white elephant," as the unfinished municipal building has been "dubbed," is an unusual one. Not that it is an uncommon thing for a city to experience the pangs of "outrageous fortune," by being assured that a certain building, fully equipped, can be built for a specific sum, and then to find that when the structure reaches a certain stage, an excessive additional amount is required to complete the work: but because the ratepayers in this particular case stubbornly balked when it came to approving of a further expenditure of over one-half the amount originally asked and authorized.

The practice, quite general among promoters of public buildings, of deceiving the ratepayers by underestimating the complete cost of a structure, in order to get the work under way, has a element of chicanery which is to be greatly deprecated. Originally, the city hall in question was to have cost \$150,000, but now an additional sum of \$80,000 is necessary to complete it. Had the proposition been put before the ratepayers clearly and frankly in the first place, the probability is that no interruption of the work would have occurred. A body of ratepayers, like an individual, is open to reason; they do not expect a better building than they are willing to pay for. Undoubtedly had matters been fully explained, and the \$230,000 asked for at the outset, the amount would have been forthcoming in the same *corp d'esprit*, as the sum originally voted.

Usually in a case of this kind, a community forks out the extra sum, and regards such a procedure as a matter of maladministration or a species of graft. Graft, however, does not enter into such a deal as often as is supposed. Every dollar spent in the building in question, has been fully accounted for in the statement of expenditure filed with the city. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that there was a phase of trickery in the erection of the city hall, which places a stigma on those who were identified with its construction. This is, indeed, unfortunate, as the architect and promoters are the victims of self-created circumstances: circumstances over which they had absolute control. If a building of a certain type, equipped and furnished a certain way, cannot be built for a certain sum, then let the ratepayers be told so frankly.

The ratepayers of Calgary are not, we believe, at heart adverse to voting the sum required for the completion of the structure, but by turning the proposition down in a recent plebiscite, they showed their resentment

at being "duped" at the time the erection of the buildings was first advanced. Such things have happened before, and will in all probability happen again, but never before, possibly, has a community showed its disapproval so strongly of this sort of procedure. Just so long as there is a tendency to underestimate the ultimate cost of a building, unnecessary interruptions and difficulties will arise, and those upon whom the work devolves will be charged with employing misrepresentation and shady methods at one stage or the other of its development.

Possibly the most logical way for a municipality to avoid the unpleasantness of an affair of this kind is to appoint a board of assessors, such as is demanded by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, to pass upon the plans and fix the complete cost of the building according to the market value of labor and the materials to be employed. The fees of such a board would be but a small consideration at the most, and the cost of the structure would—save possibly for a slight variance one way or the other—be definitely established to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Calgary will evidently be prepared to meet such a contingency when any like improvement comes up in future, and other municipalities will do well to profit by her present experience. As it is, the city hall stands to-day practically an abandoned project, and odium has been heaped upon the heads of those who were identified with its construction. One councilman at a recent meeting vented his spleen by suggesting that the building be turned over to the Alberta Government and converted into a Provincial Jail, but such an act was frowned upon as being wholly destitute of civic pride. Instead, there is a feeling manifest that the citizens are now in a more generous mood, and a petition will shortly be circulated among the business men and ratepayers requesting that the council and commissioners again submit the by-law at the next municipal election. It is quite possible that if sufficient signatures are obtained, the by-law this time will be adopted.

While there is nothing to show that the money originally voted has been in any way misapplied, nevertheless, the methods of carrying out the project, and the manner in which payments were made on the work, is being made the subject of a searching investigation.

One thing in connection with the whole affair, which is quite evident, is the fact that the practice of underestimating the ultimate cost of a building to be built of certain materials and according to certain specifications, results in no good. It not only operates against the interests of the architect employed, and his client, but also casts a reflection on the standing of architecture as a profession. Ignorance is no excuse, and wiles and guiles have no place in architecture. The policy of tricksters and artificers, is something to be greatly discouraged by practitioners in general.

### Discrimination in Favor of U.S. Products

NEARLY A YEAR AGO Toronto's city officials did themselves "proud," in defying the Canadian Customs authorities in an attempt to bring into the country plans for the new filtration plant, without the payment of the rightful duties. Their attitude in this matter was anything but becoming civic officials of a city that boasts so loudly of its loyalty, and shouts so vociferously the "Made in Canada" slogan. The contention of the offending authorities, in the protection of their almost untenable position was that it was impossible to secure an engineer in Canada with sufficient knowledge and experience to design the plant, Toronto had voted to build, and, while this was no excuse for the violation of our Customs laws, it was accepted for what it was worth.

But we are now presented with a case where the city has actually discriminated against Canadian pro-