

plaint was heard that contractors could make no money owing to the prevailing low prices. After a long period of inactivity, anxiety to obtain work was such that prices were cut much below the point where a fair profit could be realized. In some trades, as for example, plastering, the desire of some contractors seemed to be to secure an extraordinary share of the available contracts. To accomplish this bids were lowered below the profit line, and the whole trade suffered. It is most desirable that during the present season contractors should in their tenders allow for a fair margin of profit, to which they are entitled. Unless there is united action in this direction, the improved conditions which have now set in, so far as revival of building enterprise is concerned, will add little to the prosperity of contractors. In Toronto a few speculative builders are resuming operations. It is not probable, however, that building of this class will assume large proportions, as the loan companies, who were heavy sufferers by the building boom in the early years of this decade, will be certain to adopt a very conservative policy with regard to loans for this kind of enterprise. An encouraging sign of returning prosperity, so far as Toronto is concerned, is to be found in the recent sharp advance in real estate values, amounting in some localities to \$15 per foot, within a period of six to eight months. A rumor has been current to the effect that it is the intention of some of the unions of workmen connected with the building trades to demand an increase of wages. We trust that no obstacle of this nature will be thrown in the way of the returning tide of prosperity for which all have been waiting. Under the agreement made with the employers, the workmen have been paid the same rate of wages during the years of depression as prevailed in times of greater activity, and to this cause, in conjunction with the increased competition brought about by scarcity of work, is due the absence of profits experienced by contractors for several years past.

Compensation to Workmen.

A just fate overtook the Bill introduced by Mr. Crawford in the Ontario Legislature to provide for compensation to workmen who might be injured through accident while in the discharge of their duties. Some of its provisions were altogether unfair to the employers, and would have resulted disadvantageously both to employers and employees. For example, the Bill made it compulsory for the employer to notify the Government of any accidents that might occur to any of his workmen, regardless of whether he might have been informed of the occurrence or not, the penalty for default being \$100—half of which sum was to go to the informer. Thus, a workman who might sustain a slight injury, and make no mention of it to his employer, could arrange with an acquaintance to lay information with the Government against his employer, and to divide the spoils. Legislation of this nature should not be introduced for the purpose of catching the workman's vote, but should be framed in the most careful manner, so as to equitably apply to all interests involved.

An Interesting Fact.

Architects and plastering contractors will be interested in a test which was recently made by a plasterer in Toronto of the qualities of metal lath. The test was the outcome of the offer by a firm of manufacturers to sup-

ply metal lath at a considerably lower price than that of a competing firm. The plasterer, who is one of the most experienced men in his line in the city, undertook to decide for himself which material would in the end prove the cheapest and, all things considered, the best. In the presence of the agent of the company offering the cheapest lath material, he had two pails filled with plastering material made up in exactly the same manner, and with this he proceeded to plaster a piece of each kind of lath measuring 48" x 15". The result showed that about 60 per cent. more plaster was required to cover the cheaper lath than was necessary to cover the more expensive kind, and that by using the more expensive kind of material, the contractor would effect a saving equal, if not greater than that which it was claimed the use of the cheaper lath would give him. There was an additional advantage due to the fact that it required much less labor to apply. The actual amount of plaster used for the pieces, 48" x 15", was 19 pounds as compared with 31 pounds.

The Licensing of Architects.

THE results of the operation of the law enacted by the Legislature of Illinois compelling architects to pass examinations and take out licenses, as set forth in the report of the Board of Examiners just to hand, are encouraging and satisfactory. During the period beginning September 21st, 1897, and ending the 11th of February, 1899, the Board passed upon 787 applications for licenses, 714 of which were granted and 73 rejected. There has been no opposition to or wilful violation of the law, and no prosecutions have therefore taken place. On the other hand, application for licenses has been made by almost every person claiming to be an architect within the State. This is certainly a wonderful showing in behalf of legislation of this character, and affords the strongest possible argument in favor of extending the law throughout the United States and in other countries. There is now a bill before the legislature of California which will require all architects of the State to take out a license at an initial cost of twenty-five dollars and an annual cost of five dollars thereafter. In Quebec the principle has received recognition, and architecture is now a close profession. We have no doubt that in Ontario likewise legislation of a similar kind will be enacted. The Society of Civil Engineers have now a bill before the Ontario legislature which is designed to close the ranks of that profession to all but duly qualified persons. If this bill should pass, there will remain no argument for refusing to place the profession of architecture on the same footing.

Many substitutes as a pigment have been offered from time to time for white lead, but there is nothing which will beautify and at the same time preserve that to which it is applied as will white lead. The characteristics of the good article are its affinity for linseed oil, its opacity and covering properties and its durability as a paint.

A British Columbia paper is authority for the statement that the Masters' and Servants' Bill was introduced in the Legislature by Mr. Macpherson, of Vancouver, to prevent Mr. Tompkins, a Brockville contractor who has carried out a number of contracts with the C.P.R., from importing Ontario workmen to perform work in British Columbia at wages 50 per cent. below what would have to be paid to local workmen.