

rear of the hall, and but for the prompt dispersion of the superincumbent weight, would undoubtedly have fallen to the ground floor, a distance of 14 feet, carrying with it to injury and death a large number of persons. There was a red-hot stove in the room, which must have added to the horror of the catastrophe. The floor is said to have been entirely supported by the outer walls of the building. To avoid the recurrence, in public buildings at least, of accidents of this nature, the municipal authorities would do well to appoint a competent architect to inspect and report upon the safety of such buildings. In order that human lives shall not in the future be sacrificed as the result of improperly constructed buildings, the Ontario government should follow the example of the legislatures of Quebec and Illinois, by enacting that no person shall be permitted to call himself an architect without having passed a qualifying examination to demonstrate that he possesses the requisite knowledge to enable him to adapt the strength of his structures to the purpose for which they are to be used.

A SUCCESSFUL departure has recently been made by the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects,

which might perhaps with advantage be copied by the Toronto Chapter of Architects. When papers are read by members or non-members, invitations are extended to those interested in the subject to be present and participate in the general discussion. Since this has been done the meetings have been very successful. At a recent meeting the discussion was so interesting and instructive that a special session was called to complete it and to give parties concerned time for further preparation.

The Victoria Square Project.

It is subject of sincere regret to all interested in the beauty and healthfulness of the city that the assessment commissioner of Toronto has seen fit to report adversely upon the proposal that the city should acquire the property opposite the new municipal buildings for the purposes of a public square. The commissioner in his report considers the financial aspect of the question at considerable length, and concludes that the city's proportion of the cost would be unwarrantably large. The report recommends that if the Council decide to acquire the property the plan which has thus far been under consideration should be abandoned and the scheme carried out as a local improvement, payments of principal and interest to extend over a period of not more than ten years. It is stated that special legislation would probably be necessary for this object. As to the financial drawbacks of the present scheme, we do not presume to speak with authority, but if it be deemed desirable that the project should be carried out as a local improvement, we see no reason why the payments should not extend over a much longer period than ten years. The improvement would be one of a permanent character, the cost of which should not be entirely borne by the present generation of ratepayers. We are decidedly opposed to the opinion expressed by the commissioner that "the small size of this property precludes it from being of much advantage as a public square." It would have a frontage of 248 feet on Queen and Richmond streets, and a depth of perhaps 200 feet. The cost, which is the chief obstacle in the way of the acquirement of this

property, which is almost entirely covered by buildings of trifling value, will certainly stand in the way of the city obtaining a large area for the purpose in the heart of the business district. It therefore comes to this that unless means can be devised for carrying out this project, we may as well become reconciled for all time to the inadequate view of the new municipal buildings at present obtainable and the absence of a spot in the business centre which would afford a resting and breathing place for citizens and visitors.

THE false notion which has induced some Canadian institutions to engage the services of foreign in preference to

Canada First. Canadian architects, seems in turn to be displayed by some Canadian architects in the purchase of materials for their buildings. Some of the most important buildings recently erected in Canada are literally full of American materials, counterparts of which we believe might have been purchased from Canadian manufacturers without disadvantage as regards quality or price. We do not advocate the purchase of Canadian materials simply because they are Canadian. On the contrary where a distinct advantage in quality or price lies with the foreign material, it is perfectly justifiable for the architect to purchase abroad. Where the quality and price are about equal, preference should be given to native materials. By giving Canadian materials first consideration Canadian architects can substantially aid the development and prosperity of many important industries engaged in the production of articles used in building construction. If on the other hand they show preference for foreign materials, our manufacturers will be deprived of much trade to which they are entitled and of the incentive to achieve the highest degree of perfection of which their art is capable. Not only so, but our artisans will be deprived of employment. "Canada first" is a motto which should obtain in business as well as in politics.

Effect of Fire-Proofing on Insurance Charges.

THE insurance authorities of New York appear to have come to a sudden recognition of the fact that buildings in the construction of which fire-proof materials are wisely employed, are an important factor in lessening fire losses, and should therefore be charged a preferential rate. In pursuance of this idea, the justice of which is self-evident, the companies are eagerly striving to secure risks on this class of buildings, and so keen is the rivalry existing between them that rates have to a large extent been demoralized. It may reasonably be expected that the example set by the insurance authorities of New York will be followed by those of other cities, and will prove a strong incentive to the use of fire-proof construction. In order that the fire loss and the cost of insurance may both be permanently lessened, however, owners, architects, manufacturers of materials and others interested should be careful to see that fire-proofing is properly done. It is not enough that the materials employed be themselves impervious to fire; they will be non-effective unless properly used. The Engineering News has recently published an article and illustrations showing the careless manner in which porous terra cotta has been placed in a so-called fire-proof building now under construction in Park Row, New York City, where, as it states, defects, such as broken skewbacks, broken flange tiles, misplaced keys,