

# The Canadian Engineer

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## The Canadian Engineer

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### PARLIAMENT AND THE CEMENT MERGER.

Of the many recent mergers, the Canada Cement Company appears to be attracting the greatest attention. The product of the cement plant has come into such general use that all classes are interested in the quality, quantity and price of its output, and when anything is done that has the appearance of affecting the output or its price there is a general interest expressed. Just now that interest is taking the shape of appeals to Parliament.

These appeals are worth considering. It will be noticed that it is not complained that the quality of Canadian cement will be injuriously affected; in fact, it may be expected that consolidation will improve the output, as all mills will have the opportunity of availing themselves of the best practices of the best mills in the syndicate.

Nor do they suggest that the output will be diminished. It is first and last with those now opposing the new order of things a question of price.

Few mills in Canada have produced cement at much less than seventy cents per barrel. In most mills the cost has been above that. Seventy cents to manufacture, twenty-five cents for management, another twenty cents for the middleman, and, say, twenty-five more for freight rates, and this will give cement to the consumer at one dollar and forty cents per barrel. Not an excessive price.

For the last year prices of cement have been below that figure—thirty and forty per cent. below, but it was well known that in some cases it was being sold below cost. Should such an uncertain market price continue, one of two things must result—mills close down or an inferior brand of cement turned out. Either would demoralize construction work. Neither will now occur—the merger will guarantee a good cement, the consolidation will mean a uniform price, a price at which cement can be well made; for it is just as necessary that the manufacturer be protected by a fair price for his product as for the workman to be protected by a fair wage clause in contracts.

The price of cement is not likely to advance very much. Cement was imported into Canada during the 1909 season when prices were low and uncertain, and if it came in when prices were low the American producer will not allow prices to go very high before he will come after Canadian business so strong that prices will remain around the dollar thirty mark.

### CURRENTS IN LAKE ONTARIO.

We publish in this issue a very interesting paper by Mr. F. Walter Thorold, B.A.Sc., on "Lake Currents Near Toronto." This question has been long discussed, and has been the subject of much theorizing. It is refreshing to receive some definite information.