

that he would guarantee to build a "box" like the ferry shed in thirty days. The Mayor said that the principle advocated by the contractors was in his opinion correct, and that in future all such work would be advertised for tender.

This is an important decision for the contractors of this city, as there is no doubt, as pointed out by Mr. Dinnis, that if in these precarious times the working men need work, the business men also need business. It is a good thing also to nip in the bud the desire of civic officials to have the spending of civic money in their own hands, while not giving all classes of citizens an equal chance to make a living in the city in which they pay taxes.

Percentage Basis in Millwork and Contracting.

We continue to hear quite a lot about what is called the percentage basis in planing mill work and contracting work generally, and along with the reports of work being done this way there is occasionally a word to the effect that it is the coming thing, and that the chances are decidedly in favor of much of the building work of the future being done on what is termed the percentage basis. What we would like to know and to have specific information on is, what people generally regard as a fair percentage, says the "Woodworker." The general plan, as we understand it, is for the contractor or planing mill to figure on doing any given job of building, using the best practical efforts to keep the cost down to a reasonable basis, then charge in addition to the actual cost of the material and work a certain percentage as profit for the contractor of planing mill. It will be recalled that some such basis of figuring as this entered into the proposition that was up some time ago to have the Panama Canal dug by contract.

Evidently the magnitude of the job should have something to do with the percentage charged. We would like

to get straightened out on the things if this method is to become popular and general. To figure work on a percentage basis presents certain advantages, and probably, on the other hand, an equal number of disadvantages. In case of fire or some occasion where it becomes decidedly important to have estimates for rebuilding immediately, the percentage basis readily furnishes a short cut to letting the contract and getting the work started. All the contractor needs do is to get a rough estimate of the probable cost, then make agreements as to the percentage he is to be paid above the actual cost, after which he can get busy and frequently have the work pretty well under way by the time it would take him and other contractors to get at their competitive bids through figuring all items in detail. On the other hand, of course, it puts the man who gets the work done into position where he gets to know exactly what the planing mill will make in the form of profits, and practically eliminates the chance for big profits on the job.

There is, of course, some recompense in that while curtailing the chance for big profits, this percentage basis practically eliminates the chance for loss. In other words, it puts the planing mill work and contracting on what might be termed a more positive basis, like loaning money out at a certain per cent; you know beforehand what your returns will be, and at the same time you know that you cannot make what might be termed excessive profits. However, what we are after at the present time is not so much a pro and con discussion of the possible merits of the percentage basis system, as to seek information on just what percentage is considered about right on jobs of a given size, and other essential details, to make clear the idea of doing planing mill and contracting work on the percentage basis.

A PESSIMIST
is a man who turns out
the light to see how dark
it is.

Canada's Trade for 1907.

During the twelve months of 1907 Canada's total trade amounted to \$635,840,681, an increase of \$45,895,877, as compared with 1906.

The total imports were \$362,515,267, an increase of \$42,048,067, or about 12 per cent.

The total exports were \$273,325,414, an increase of \$3,847,810, or less than 2 per cent.

Of the total increase in imports, \$17,448,914 was in imports from Great Britain, \$19,121,983 from the United States, \$1,281,508 from France, and \$984,886 from Germany.

On the other hand, our exports to Great Britain decreased \$8,713,849; exports to the United States increased \$10,149,547; exports to France decreased \$43,920, and exports to Germany increased \$375,556.

Canada's total imports during the year from Great Britain were \$95,094,488, and the exports to Great Britain were \$126,347,931; imports from the United States were \$215,245,100, and exports \$117,536,998; imports from France were \$9,501,052, and exports \$1,872,424; imports from Germany were \$8,049,884, and exports \$1,872,659.

Engineers Fraternize.

After a luncheon at the St. Charles, at which some twenty-five members and their friends were present, the Toronto Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers held their regular February meeting at the rooms of the Engineers' Club, 96 King street west, last Thursday evening. This was a joint-meeting, many members of the club also being in attendance.

After the formal business of the evening, the chief item of which was the presentation and carrying of a motion requesting the Board of Directors to take up the matter of the subdivision of the Associate group of the membership, the technical subject of the evening was taken up. This involved a paper presented by Mr. Walter T. Moody, of the Schenectady Section, who very thoroughly treated the subject in hand, namely, "Feeder Regulators."