

Editorial

HUMAN ENGINEERS.

Occasionally one who is regarded as a leader in the engineering profession will come out strongly and make claims that this or that cannot be done because it is opposed to good engineering practice. Frequently he will proceed to show why it cannot or should not be done in that particular way. Yet, where other engineers have a voice in the matter, this engineer's opinions may be overruled, and what he has previously claimed cannot be done, successfully accomplished. After the work has been completed and everything is in perfect running order, you will usually find this first engineer loyal to those whose judgment was chosen in preference to his own. At the time he used his best judgment, and his fellow-engineers knew it. He simply had to be shown.

Engineers are continually being confronted by something new—something on which data are unavailable. It is at this point where experts, who, to a large degree, draw their theories from past experiences, are often at variance, one with another. It cannot be avoided, and simply because an engineer errs in one connection is no reason why in the future his opinion should be tabooed.

It may be pointed out how many times our greatest judges render decisions that are diametrically opposed. It is, therefore, not illogical to assume that engineers will occasionally make mistakes. The fact that an engineer does so proves that he is human, and we all love human engineers.

THE ENGINEER AND HIS READING.

"Your account for another year's subscription is at hand. Will you kindly cancel the subscription, as I am arranging to receive *The Canadian Engineer* from another party after he has perused his weekly copy."

The above letter recently received from a subscriber gives us an opportunity of saying a few things on the subject of the engineer and his reading—a subject which, we are afraid, too many men give too little thought to.

If this particular reader has felt that owing to present conditions it would be better to read this paper, as it were, second-hand, then it is poor economy. It is more than likely that the real subscriber to the paper will take out of the issues as they come to him such portions as he feels are likely to be of service to him, and many times the "economical" subscriber will be handed a paper from which the best material has been removed.

In these days of keen competition it is essential that one keep at least abreast of the progress in the engineering profession. After graduation, the young engineer should not fall into the habit, altogether too common, of forgetting how and what to read. On the other hand, it is a habit which needs careful cultivation and the engineer who encourages it without making the mistake of trying to read too much, is sure to find it of real value in his work.

In his reading, it is not enough merely to read those articles in his technical paper that deal specifically with that phase of engineering work with which he is most concerned. He should endeavor to keep himself posted not

only in that branch in which he is more particularly interested but in those lines of work which are in some degree related to it.

Too many men confine their reading too closely to the branch of the profession in which they are concerned, and to some extent are making specialists of themselves. That is well so far as it goes, but it is doubtful if he would not be a better engineer by adopting a broader programme so far as his reading is concerned.

The field of the technical journal is a fairly extensive one. It combines the text book plus the function of a newspaper. Let an engineer use his technical papers intelligently and he will find them a real investment and not an expense.

It will give him a complete summary of projected engineering work all over Canada which has, or ought to have, a commercial value for him. Furthermore, it will give him a presentation of articles on different phases of engineering work in which he is now, or may at some future time be, more particularly interested.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF A. F. MACALLUM, BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The American Society of Municipal Improvements has among its members the leading municipal engineers of the United States and Canada. For the year just ended the honor of presiding over this body fell to Mr. A. F. Macallum, M.Can.Soc.C.E., commissioner of works, Ottawa, Ont.

The following extracts from his presidential address delivered on the occasion of the annual convention, October 11-14, at Newark, N.J., will be of interest to Canadian municipal engineers generally:—

The society has now reached that position in its development that in most cities and in the latest text books upon municipal works the specifications as revised each year are considered as standard. This has been of considerable benefit to municipal engineers not always versed in the physical and chemical properties considered necessary in different materials. It has also eliminated the type of specification sent out by commercial institutions which were too often misleading inasmuch as clauses were in them that either limited competition or made it impossible. By continuing the policy that this society has always adopted in appointing to the different chairmanships of committees men recognized as authorities in their particular branch of engineering I have no doubt as to the success that will continue to follow their efforts.

In the majority of municipalities throughout the United States the engineers are voted in on a political ticket at each election. In the lack of continuity, different methods adopted, probable change of policy and lack of familiarity in municipal work, these municipalities must inevitably suffer. The fact that the man with the best qualifications politically may not be the best one from the standpoint of efficiency is, I believe, slowly but surely dawning upon municipalities, and attempts are being made in the appointments of commissioners, city man-