

Editorial

THE ENGINEER AND HIS PUBLIC STANDING.

Much has been said recently as to the place of the engineer in the community, and 'rightly so. It seems to be very difficult for the general public to recognize the importance which attaches to the work of the engineer. Yet if the hand and brain of the engineer were to be taken away only for a week, virtually all the activities of the modern world would be paralyzed. But few seemingly give the matter a passing thought. The foundry, machine shop, draughting room, etc., and the equipment and mentality with which they work, are the underpinning and keystone of the present era.

Sanitation is bound up with public health, transportation with the question of food; water supply, printing, practically every service making for efficiency and convenience, together with every article of use, owes its present state to the work of the engineer.

In view of this, is it not entirely justifiable and, in fact, only proper that the engineer should assert himself as a factor in the community? It is safe to state without qualification that to the engineering section of the community the remainder of the people are in everlasting debt.

To the engineer himself who possesses imagination, a liner on her passage, an express train at full speed, a bridge spanning hundreds of feet, inspire a reverent feeling. While aware that they are common enough features, he realizes their magnitude and all the effort needed for their design and operation. The public, on the other hand, does not concern itself much with these things. Its valuation is superficial.

Only in the measure that the engineer asserts himself by means of the newspaper press, the school, the platform and literature, as is so clearly brought out in an article by F. W. Hanna on page 256 in this issue, will the engineer ever occupy his rightful place.

It is safe to assert that the administrative capacity in his possession is so general that his hand might safely guide and control in a more general sense.

The first step, however, is recognition. The community at large must understand that though generally silent, he is able and experienced in complex problems affecting quantities of men no less than in those dealing with quantities of materials. He may not be able to split hairs, not being trained in legal casuistry, but where practical administration is concerned, he should continue to find wider and greater opportunities than ever.

ORGANIZATION FOR HIGHWAY WORK.

While organization for the carrying on of highway work is only a means to an end, yet without proper organization neither construction nor maintenance can be carried on with the maximum of efficiency and economy.

The organizing of their forces is one of the real problems of those who are responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads. While there may be individual members of the working force who possess unusual skill, the results are bound to fall short of the ideal unless these various skilled units are welded together and

made to do efficient team work through the assistance of organization.

Different conditions call for different forms of organization and no hard and fast rules can very well be laid down which will fit into all situations. There are, however, certain well-defined principles which are applicable in almost every case. Of these, perhaps the most important is that of delegating to each subordinate sufficient authority to enable him to produce the result for which he is personally held responsible.

Of course, it goes without saying that an organization cannot be efficient which does not have as the responsible head, an executive upon whom is imposed the task of securing certain definite results. Under him should be other executives upon whom are imposed certain duties along the line of general rules, but to handle the details without interference. Right here is where more otherwise model organizations have come to grief than through any other one cause, for men cannot and will not do their best work if there is any danger of interference.

If an organization is to continue and do its best work this principle of non-interference cannot be too carefully watched.

WORK OF JOINT COMMITTEE OF TECHNICAL SOCIETIES.

The Joint Committees of Technical Societies, embracing representatives of all the engineering societies in Canada, are meeting regularly in Toronto and in other centres.

The membership represented by these committees embraces about 10,000 engineers in Canada.

Each society is in touch with its members and each and every member is requested to send to their representatives suggestions of a practical nature that may tend to help the Canadian forces in the field or aid in solving the many problems now before us or likely to arise because of the war.

It is the one ambition of these technical men to serve. Many of them are too old to go to the front and many others, through the important positions they occupy, are doing better service here in Canada than they could perform in other spheres of usefulness.

While the Joint Committee is devoting a great deal of time to the work already allotted to them, they will be glad to take up any new work that appeals to them as within their scope, if any of the members will send them ideas along that line.

Inventions that will aid any branch of the service will be confidentially investigated and worked up by practical men, and if likely to be of service will, with the consent of the inventor, be forwarded to the proper authority for test and acceptance.

Suggestions for aiding recruiting for the engineering corps, employment of returned soldiers, research work connected with war materials or for processes of national importance will be taken up so far as facilities permit.

Correspondence on any of these subjects requiring technical advice or reports, should be sent direct to the