

railway officials of Australia as German contractors. Analogous cases to the above sometimes arise in Canada. We believe, however, that British firms are receiving fairer treatment than they did some time ago. There is still great room for improvement, however.

PANAMA CANAL EXCAVATION

The estimates of excavation remaining to be done after July 1st, 1912, in order to complete the Panama Canal, according to the Canal Record, show an increase of 16,903,000 cubic yards over the estimate of July 1st, 1911.

In the Atlantic Division, the increase is 295,000 cubic yards, chiefly to provide for silting in the finished channel not covered by the estimate of July 1st, 1911.

In the Central Division, an increase of 4,615,000 cubic yards is made to provide for an extension of slides and changes in the Obispo Division.

The Pacific Division has an increase of 11,993,000 cubic yards, of which 3,199,000 cubic yards are to cover excavation in the Canal prism, in the locks and dams, and silting in the finished channel, which has become necessary since the estimate of July 1st, 1911. The remainder—8,794,000 cubic yards—is for the newly begun excavation for the drydock, coaling station, and terminal at Balboa.

THE CANADIAN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION.

The first sign-post of the Transcontinental highway was planted on May 4th, 1912, in the town of Alberni, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The Canadian Highway Association, which is responsible for the inauguration of the idea of a highway from coast to coast, was formed at New Westminster, B.C., about eight months ago, and one of the outward symbols of the progress they have made, is this marking of the route of the Canadian highway.

The conception of a transcontinental highway is a magnificent one, and one which we hope will be carried to a successful conclusion. In his address to the Association at the recent Alberni meeting, President Kerr states:—

“As with the building of a new railway, so with the starting of this Canadian Highway, we have decided that the first actual step should be marked with fitting ceremony, and in this we have received splendid assistance from the towns of Nanaimo, Alberni and Port Alberni, our hosts on this occasion.

“From now on the route of the Canadian Highway is eastward, with Halifax as its destination. British Columbia has nobly done its share, thanks to the untiring energy of our Minister of Public Works, Mr. Taylor, and his able deputy, Mr. Foster. Over \$5,000,000 is being spent on roads and bridges in this province this year, and could we but procure the active co-operation of all the other provinces in Canada our task would be simplified, and our object realized within three years.

“The Province of Saskatchewan has decided to spend \$2,500,000 on roads this year, and a total appropriation of \$5,000,000 has been made for the roads of that province. This is to be spent within the

next two or three years. In Manitoba, only \$200,000 has been allotted for road-building. This sum is, in my opinion, inadequate to the needs of that province, for my recollections of Manitoba are anything but pleasant, and I know of some roads where this total amount could be expended and yet leave that particular road in an unfinished condition. Ontario is waking up to the need of good roads; this is largely owing to the activities of Provincial Commissioner of Highways MacLean, who has \$6,000,000 to spend on his work this year. In Quebec, we find that old province giving \$10,000,000 for road work, and I think I am safe in saying that there is more interest in good roads in that province than in any other in Canada to-day.”

If this transcontinental highway serve no other purpose than to arouse enthusiasm for the good roads cause, its inception would be justified. The thought of a first-class road running through province after province from coast to coast, is one which, if carried out, cannot do else than promote the good roads movement throughout Canada.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

It is understood that the steel work on the Quebec bridge will be begun by November next. The Quebec Bridge Commission has just completed an inspection of the progress made to date on the substructure.

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The citizens of Galt recently had a repetition of the floods which caused so much damage last spring. The recent heavy rain storms were the cause. The Provincial Government will soon be forced to move in the matter of flood regulation by the force of public opinion.

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The Provincial Government of Quebec has recently appointed a Parks Commission composed of Sir William Van Horne, W. D. Lighthall, J. C. Walsh, Senator Boyer, Dr. Lachapelle, Mayor Lavallee and A. Michaud, for the city of Montreal. To any one who is at all acquainted with Montreal, it will be appreciated that the step has been taken none too soon. The growth of the city during the last few years has been phenomenal. The narrow streets and thoroughfares, however, have caused an increasing traffic congestion which, if allowed to exist much longer, will have the effect of throttling future progress. There is ample room for work on the part of the new commission in developing a unified plan for the future growth of the city and for the relieving of the present congested condition.

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In putting a price upon any sort of work one realizes that there is a price at which under the most favorable conditions one can do the work. There are contingencies which arise in the course of a job which are not included in the ideal programme. Some of these can be removed by foresight and good management, others seem to come under the class of “unavoidable.” The bidder must not only decide the cost under average conditions, but must judge whether the conditions of the proposed job are average or special. He must balance the probabilities of unforeseen circumstances and decide how narrow a margin he dares to leave between the actual possible cost of the work and a living profit. The wisest heads are not commonly those who disregard difficulties.