

cult one must be admitted—and the increasing demand of higher rates of wages (already greater than the educated, professional and mercantile staff) of those who work the traffic is an element to be met with tact and knowledge; but met it must be, or the earnings will become absorbed by the dictation of men who already wield the destiny of capital, and who do not stop at the living margin of their requirements, but add exactions and conditions that the management stand aghast at, and which are unknown in countries like England; but here on this Continent, the whole has to be met, and settled, and not until those who trade upon the working men, and who make their living and profit by Labour Unions, are put aside, and the men themselves rely on their superior officers, will there be “peace and goodwill.”

I will not detain you longer in regard to the smaller works, because I have not yet covered all the larger ones,—time will not permit my doing so. The question of “foundations” is of itself enough for one paper; and the “maintenance of railways” is so important,—I mean the economic honest maintenance, that a comparison of experience would be most valuable to our Profession. But here the accountant comes in and discriminates between “capital” and “revenue” charges, until we see the most irreconcilable comparisons per mile per annum, and which only end when “capital” has been exhausted and one purse has to provide for all wants.

I wish to say a word about the speculative railway builder, who poses as a philanthropist. He sees in Canada attractions of government bonuses, held out for construction, in addition to which he canvasses for bonuses from municipalities, together making about enough to construct a cheap and perishable roadbed, bridges and culverts. Then the project is put into the market and “floated”, and the whole bonded; the rails are laid, a sprinkling of ballast applied, and the contractor bids adieu, pocketing a balance; leaving the new line in the hands of the Railway Company, often to be worked at a loss, and with an ill-shaped, badly built, perishable undertaking, that becomes burdensome to maintain.

It is such enterprises as these that are disappointing to investors, and often reflect on our profession, when we have no power to prevent it; because the specifications for construction (it is rarely there are any worthy the name) are made to suit the circumstances. It is *that* or nothing, and often the engineer is left alone at the close of the work, blamable for results he has no control over; and the subsequent finishing of the work has to be done by maintenance, under a series of apologies.