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FUTURE OF THE J. C. T. O.

AT a recent meeting held in Toronto, the members of the Joint Committee of Technical Organizations debated the future of that body and the possibility of incorporating it along permanent lines. After a thorough discussion, it was moved that the J. C. T. O. be disbanded, and this motion was carried, but subsequently a motion for reconsideration was presented, and it was decided to refer the question of whether there should be a permanent J. C. T. O. to the joint legislation committee which will meet at an early date to discuss the Engineering Institute's draft bill for registration and licensing of engineers.

This joint legislation committee will consist of a small number of representatives from each of the six main technical societies in Toronto, and, according to the present program, the fate of the J. C. T. O. will be left with that committee.

At the above-mentioned meeting of the J. C. T. O., an excellent suggestion was made by A. H. Harkness, consulting engineer, Toronto, who favored the suspension of the J. C. T. O. as at present organized, but suggested the formation of a permanent committee consisting of the executives of all the technical societies in Ontario. "Questions of common interest could be discussed by this committee of executives," said Mr. Harkness, "and joint action could be taken in all such matters with the assurance of having the entire membership of all the societies behind all decisions made by the committee. In important matters, it is to be presumed that the executives would receive instruction and guidance at general meetings of their respective societies."

The work done by the J. C. T. O. during the war demonstrated that co-operation, even among societies, is desirable. The joint legislation committee will find some way, surely, of perpetuating this co-operation.

CONSISTENCY OF CONCRETE

PERHAPS the most prolific source of disputes between various investigators engaged in concrete research work has been the lack of any generally accepted method for determining the consistency of concrete mixtures. What one laboratory calls normal consistency, may be considered a wet mix by another laboratory or a harsh mix by some other investigator. Consistency and flowability have also been somewhat confused.

The U. S. Bureau of Standards has devised a "flow-table" test, based on the determination of the increase in diameter of a sample after it has been jolted a given number of times by a table arranged to be lifted and dropped through a definite height by means of a cam mounted on a suitable shaft. Professor Abrams, of the Lewis Institute, has introduced a "slump test," by which he measures the slump or spread of a small sample after the mold has been suddenly removed. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario have a "chute test," by which they determine the angle to which a steel chute must be raised before a bucketful of concrete in the upper end of the chute will flow to the bottom of the chute. Capt. Edwards, who devised the surface area theory, judges consistency merely by the appearance of the mixture, as do many other investigators. Every laboratory seems to have its own favorite method of determining uniform consistency.

One of the problems that will be studied this year by the Concrete Committee of the American Society for Testing Materials will be the determination of some test for consistency that will be accepted as standard practice by all investigators. This committee, which will hereafter receive the co-operation of a dozen or more of the best-qualified laboratories in the United States and Canada, will no doubt succeed to a great extent in standardizing laboratory work in concretes to the same degree that work on many other materials and mixtures have been universally standardized.

Letter to the Editor

PRESENT STATUS OF REINFORCED CONCRETE DESIGN

Sir,—I have been interested—besides somewhat amused—at the rather radical article in your issue of January 22nd, under the title of "Present Status of Reinforced Concrete Design." There is considerable that is valuable in it and any appeal to engineers and to the public to keep up to the times should receive the support of everyone interested in the sound and conservative advancement of engineering design and construction.

The writer of the article seems to have a somewhat antagonistic attitude, however. Possible zeal and interest have led him on a bit and so I cannot but feel that his statement, "Many people have the opinion that because something is in print in a text book it must be absolutely authentic and unquestionable," is also not unquestionable. Following this, however, there are a few lines in which the writer gets something off his chest, so to speak, that has been there for some time, as it seems to me that this was a challenge to text book writers and users of text books. I am not a text book writer but I am, owing to the character of my present work, a user of text books to a considerable extent and furthermore, I can lay claim to personal acquaintance with several writers of text books.

For the above reasons, then, permit me to say a few words about text books and their writers on their behalf. As a rule, text book writers (I speak of the reliable books) are men of experience, men who have played the game, men who are, unlike the producer of the above mentioned article, conservative in their statements, and who do not put things into print that have not received the test of time, technical criticism and sound experience.