

ESTIMATING.

Perhaps there is no more difficult piece of work for a contractor to undertake than that of making up an estimate of work he intends to tender for. Fear on the one hand that he will make his prices so high that a rival contractor will underbid him, and a dread on the other hand that he may overlook some portion of work, or material, or rate the labor so low that loss is certain to follow. Hemmed in on one side by Scylla and on the other by Charybdis, the contractor finds it hard to navigate successfully through a long specification and perplexing series of details, without he has some faithful guide—or helm as it were—in which he can put confidence. The practiced estimator, the man who knows the ropes, so to speak, never trusts to luck or chance when figuring up to put in a tender. He will have a memorandum or a sheet of paper before him containing a list of every possible item required about a building similar to the one estimated on, with the prices of the items attached, the cost of preparing, putting in place and completing. The memorandum or sheet will also contain the prices of all sorts of materials, stones, bricks, lumber, etc., etc., with marginal notes, giving hints and suggestions as to the best and most economical methods of performing the various kinds of work. He will have at his hand tables of quantities so that he may be enabled in short order to figure up the amount of stone wanted, the number of bricks required, of slates or shingles, of rough joists, studs, rafters, collar beams or other timbers; the amount of laths or number of yards of plastering, and of painting, cornice, etc., etc. A "tickler" or "reminder" of some sort is absolutely necessary for correct estimating—that is if there is such a thing as correct estimating; which we very much doubt—and these are easily acquired if a man sets himself about to get one. Keep a good sized memorandum book always on hand, either in pocket or in your office. Keep track of all the work you do each day, the amount and quality of materials and cost of same, cost of labor and time employed; add to these entries, as you may think will be of future use, such remarks as may occur to you, and condense and copy these entries in a suitable book, from time to time keeping each class of work by itself or under its own head—thus, for doors, make memoranda of cost of different styles of doors, pine, whitewood, hardwood, etc., cost of hanging, trimming and hardware for same. Door frames might be put under the same head, including all kinds of door frames, interior, exterior, single and double, for brick, wood or stone, with and without transoms, including everything that may be necessary to complete the work, even to painting and finishing them. Memoranda of this kind, made from actual experience, are worth to the estimator their weight in gold, for with them he can arrive at once at the actual cost of work similar to that estimated for. It takes some time and considerable labor to prepare a book such as I speak

of, and the young contractor will meet with many difficulties in the search after reliable data for it, but, if he is persistent, and lets no opportunity slip in gathering up material, he will soon find himself the owner of one of the best and most reliable "Estimating Reminders" that can be put together.

The great value of a reminder of this sort lies in the fact that the party using it is the party who compiled it, and its weak, as well as its strong points, are known and provided for.

The art of estimating is the most difficult and most troublesome of the contractor's labors; and the man who cannot tie himself down to close application should never attempt to make an estimate, for like "learning," there is no "royal road" to the art. Time and labor under the very best conditions are required to arrive at anything like correct results, and without a "reminder" or other similar aid, it is next to impossible; in fact, the figures are merely the results of labored guess work.

TRANSOM LIGHTS.

It is customary to make all transoms of fan-lights the same thickness as the doors below them and to leave the rebate in the stile the same as for the door. This is a mistake, we think, so far as outer doors are concerned, for where the sashes are the same thickness as the door and there is no difference in the rebate, it follows that no stops can be put around the transom light to make it weather-tight and hold it in place. It is suggested that the sashes be left the same thickness as the doors, as they always look more in keeping with the surrounding finish this way than if thinner, and that the rebate above the transom bar be one inch deeper than the rebate for the door, which would admit of a one inch stop being planted all round the transom sash when in place. This, it is suggested, would make a much better job and a much tighter one than the usual way of finishing about a transom light.

The writer is aware that there are other methods of fastening and finishing transoms than those mentioned, but as they are only adopted in the most expensive buildings, they are purposely overlooked here and the more general methods are discussed. This matter of purposely

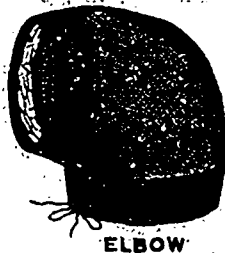
"stopping" a transom light may not appear a startling one, but it is one of those little things that is deserving the attention of those workmen who desire to make the best of everything they do.

With inside transoms the conditions are different, as in most cases they are so arranged as to be adjustable, to open and close at will. There are cases, however, where the system suggested in the foregoing would be just as well suited to the inside transom as to the outside, and where it can be applied, it is our opinion it ought to be, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made. This not only applies to transoms with square heads, but to semi-circular and elliptical transom lights, or transom lights of any shape.—The National Builder.

TO PRESERVE WOOD.

A writer in the Technical Review of Natural Science, of Jena, Germany, in a review of the various processes of impregnating wood in order to preserve it, says that he considers the carbolienum avenarias to possess merits of a high order, as it requires no machinery or apparatus, but simply a brush for painting or an iron tank for immersing the woodwork. He says the use of this article is based upon the essential fact that a good system of impregnation must efficiently prevent every degree of the rotting and decaying of wood, even in unfavorable conditions, and it must also be so cheap that no obstacle of this kind will exist to its use in great quantities—must be easily employed and furnished ready for use—another desirable point being that the impregnation be such as will give an attractive color to the treated woodwork. The writer states that these qualities are combined in the substance in question, it being a carbonate of oil of 1.14 specific gravity, and having components which are energetically antiseptic, its boiling point being 557 degrees Fahr. He considers impermeable coatings, which are so much resorted to, as of little value when the wood at the time of their application is not perfectly dry and seasoned, as they prevent, as must naturally be the case, the evaporation of the humidity contained in the wood, especially in certain cases, and rather promote decay.

Frank Squibb, plumber, Hamilton, is said to have assigned to C. Freeman.

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