

PERSONAL vs. SURETY COMPANY BONDS.

One of the greatest hardships and one of the most abused requirements under which contractors work is the deposit which accompanies tenders and the guarantee bonds which they must furnish. This should not be so, for, they are perfectly legitimate and necessary parts of all contracts. Deposits have been held for months while councils considered and reconsidered, private individuals going surety for contractors have been harrassed, until at last in sheer desperation many contractors are driven to the surety companies.

In some places the municipalities have taken the stand that the only bonds they should accept are those of surety companies. We give here with two clauses of the tender form which contractors bidding on contract work in Vancouver, B.C., must sign:—

“If this tender is accepted, the undersigned agree to furnish a bond in an approved corporate guarantee company for the proper fulfilment of the contract as required under the terms of the specifications, and to execute the agreement and bond in triplicate within six days after being notified so to do by the city solicitor. And in the event of default or failure on our part so to do agree that the Corporation of the City of Vancouver shall be at liberty to retain the money deposited by to the use of the corporation, and to accept the next lowest or any tenders, or to advertise for new tenders, or to carry out the works in any other way they may deem best; and also agree to pay to the said corporation the difference between this tender and any greater sum which the said corporation may expend or incur by reason of such default or failure, or by reason of such action, as aforesaid, on their part, including the cost of any advertisement for new tenders; and to indemnify and save harmless the said corporation and their officers from all loss, damage, cost, charges, and expense which they may suffer or be put to by reason of any such default or failure on part.

7. And propose the Company as surety, which is willing to become bound with the undersigned for the due performance of the contract for which this is a tender.

.....
Contractor's signature.

.....
Witness.

The undersigned hereby offer to become bound for the above-named contractor in the usual bond for the fulfilment of the above-mentioned contract if awarded to

.....
Signature of Surety.

This seems to be going to an extreme. It may at times be advantageous for a municipality to be freed of the trouble of investigating the standing of each bondsman, but, on the other hand, it is the corporation in the end, not the contractor, who pays dearly for the monopoly that has been created. Surety companies fill a very necessary field, but we cannot see the necessity nor yet the wisdom of placing all contracts under their control.

Many of the largest contracts in Canada are carried on without any bond requirements. In these cases the work is well and faithfully done at the very lowest prices. A large contractor working under a strong, fair engineer cannot afford to be dishonest. An engineer working free of municipal or party politics can very easily secure good work without the expense and delay on guarantee company red tape.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The decision of the Attorney-General to refuse to permit argument in the courts of Ontario against the Government's right to enter, through the Hydro-Electric Commission, the field of electric generation and distribution should help clear up the cheap power situation in Ontario. Of course, no one supposes that this will end litigation, but it will be taken as an indication of the stand the Government intends taking, and should encourage the municipalities to proceed with their schemes.

CURRENT NEWS

New Brunswick

ST. JOHN.—The Intercolonial water tank at the island and yard, with a capacity of one hundred thousand gallons, burst on December 13th. Its collapse broke the bridge across Marsh Creek, broke the windows of the dynamo-room and storeroom, and the flood swept two men from their feet and slightly injured them. The tank was of wood, with steel bands, and it is supposed these bands were corroded. The loss is ten thousand dollars.

Ontario.

OTTAWA, ONT.—The Railway Commission has ordered a daily inspection of the electric bells at all railway crossings. Another order is that where freight cars are used on main line trains they must be equipped with air-brakes, steel tyres, and metal trucks as designed for passenger service. Where these requirements are not complied with on account of exceptional circumstances trains must not be run at more than thirty-five miles an hour.

OTTAWA, ONT.—A deputation headed by C. L. Owen, M.P. for Northumberland; Mr. Mulholland, Liberal candidate in that constituency; Mayor Doxsee, of Campbellford, saw Hon. G. P. Graham, Minister of Railways, and M. J. Butler, Deputy Minister, Dec. 14, and laid before them their views in respect to the route which should be followed by the Trent Valley Canal through Campbellford. The council, board of trade and manufacturing interests of Campbellford were represented. Somewhat divergent views were expressed by the delegation.

Alberta.

LETHBRIDGE.—This city will buy and operate coal mines for the benefit of the city's needs. Forty acres will be purchased from the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Co.

As announced in The Canadian Engineer some time ago, the Canadian Pacific are building at the Angus shops, Lachine, ten consolidation engines. The following are the main dimensions and equipment:—

Weight on drivers.....	168,150 lbs.
Weight, total	192,350 lbs.
Cylinders	22½ in. x 28 in.
Diameter of drivers	58 in.
Boiler, type	Wagon top
Boiler, working steam pressure.....	180 lbs.
Heating surface, total	2,797 sq. ft.
Tubes, number	240 (2-in.), and 24 (5-in.)
Tubes, length	14 ft. 1¾ in.
Firebox	8 ft. 5/8 in. x 5 ft. 5/4 in.
Grate area	43 sq. ft.
Water capacity	5,000 Imp. gals.
Coal capacity	10 tons
Axles	Mild steel
Bell ringers	Little Giant
Brake-beams	Simplex truss
Brake-shoes	C.P.R. standard
Couplers	Tower
Headlights	C.P.R. standard electric
Injectors	Hancock inspirator
Journal bearings	C.P.R. standard
Superheater	Vaughan-Horsey