

PERSONALS

CARLETON EMERSON DAVIS, who will preside at the convention of the American Water Works Association to be held next summer in Montreal, Que., is chief of the Bureau of Water, Philadelphia, Pa. He graduated in 1893 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduation



he was assistant engineer at Manchester, N. H., for one year, and then spent four years as assistant engineer on the construction of extensions to the water works at New Bedford, Mass. After several years as resident engineer on the construction of additional water facilities for Newark, N. J., Mr. Davis was chosen as engineer in charge of water works, sewers and municipal engineering for the Isthmian Canal Commission,

Panama. In 1905, he was engaged by J. Waldo Smith, chief engineer of the Board of Water Supply, New York City, as head of the reservoir department in that city, which position he occupied until 1912, when he resigned to accept his present post at Philadelphia, which includes operation and maintenance as well as the assessment of revenues aggregating \$5,500,000 per annum. Mr. Davis has also charge of all extensions and improvements to the Philadelphia water works. He was elected president of the American Water Works Association last June at the meeting held in Buffalo, N.Y. For the past twenty years he has been a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

A. FRANK WICKSON, of Toronto, has been elected president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada for the next twelve months. ALCIDE CHAUSSE, of Montreal, was re-elected as honorary secretary.

C. D. HARRINGTON has been appointed vice-president and manager of Anglin-Norcross, Ltd., a recent amalgamation of two large construction companies in Montreal. Mr. Harrington is an engineering graduate of McGill University.

H. T. ROUTLY, construction engineer of the Ontario Department of Highways, has resigned. It is stated that Mr. Routly tendered his resignation last July, but it was not accepted until October 1st. The duties of his office are being apportioned among the other members of the department's staff.

Letter to the Editor

QUANTITY SURVEYS vs. "PAYMENT"

Sir,—I notice in your issue of September 18th, an article outlining the "Kelley System" of payment to contractors for estimating. I have studied the so-called "Nelson" and "Kelley" plans, and although I may be somewhat dull, I cannot for the life of me understand how either plan could be proposed to take the place of the quantity surveyor.

At the present time, engineers and contractors are trying to get away from conditions that they recognize are unfavorable both to the profession and to the owners who

have to pay for the work. The cost of living has in some way to be brought down from its present high level, and, owing to the high wages existing, it seems to me that the only way in which we can reduce the cost of building is to eliminate so far as possible these bad conditions,—eliminate the unnecessary duplication of our work and create efficiency in every department.

Following this argument it seems that the first bad feature to be eliminated is the taking off of quantities by each contractor and having this done by a competent man who specializes in this work, issuing plans, specifications and bills of quantities complete to each contractor tendering.

By introducing the quantity surveyor, every contractor figures on the same bill of quantities. We thereby eliminate the excessive cost of taking off the quantities by having *one man do the work once*, and not a dozen times or more according to the number of contractors figuring. It is very easy to be seen that every contractor figures (in his overhead charges) the cost of taking off quantities and estimating work which he never obtains. Therefore, those who pay for the work executed, also pay for the work which the contractor has done on other tenders of which he did not receive the contract. So, by introducing the quantity surveyor, we eliminate the duplication of work, and also lower the cost of such work to the owners.

Why should Mr. Kelley receive 7½% commission from the contractors? Why should the local agent receive 7½% commission? It seems to me that this system is what might be called, in somewhat slangy language, a "skin game," and, as far as I can see, would by no means tend to raise the status of the contractors in the estimation of the engineers and owners.

In the past many people have looked upon a contractor as almost a crook, and it is undoubtedly a fact that many men who are to-day in the contracting business are better equipped for other spheres of operation rather than the contracting business, and it seems to me that this so-called "Kelley" system would bring into operation many more men of that description.

The contracting business to-day is every bit as much of a profession as is engineering, and it is up to the contractors and engineers to wake up and put themselves in a position where they can claim the respect and admiration of the community. This cannot be attained by any easy-money scheme, such as the "Kelley" plan, to my mind, is liable to become.

The article in question makes no distinction between "taking off the quantities" and the "estimate of cost." We cannot eliminate the cost to the contractor of *estimating*, for he is the only man who can estimate the cost of his work, and this is absolutely a part of his business.

Quantity surveying, however, is a very intricate and necessary branch of the civil engineering profession, and we all know that work done by a man who specializes in any particular line is far better than that done by a "Jack-of-all-trades."

The whole of the questions in the "questionnaire" seem to point to the fact that the whole system is designed as a method of getting easy money and should not be recognized by any contractor, engineer or architect, it being detrimental to the profession in every way.

We can go just as far as we like along the lines of the "Nelson" and "Kelley" plans and never get anywhere but in bad repute with the public. Each plan proposes payment of money for work done which is *absolutely unnecessary work*, and the sooner we come to recognize the fact that the quantity surveyor is absolutely the one and only answer to the question, the the better it will be for the profession.

I think that all those in the engineering and architectural professions will soon see that it is to their advantage to insist on the quantity survey being put into general operation, and the societies of the professions to insist that a bill of quantities be issued together with the plans and specifications.

EDW. H. BECK,
Chief Engineer,

The Lake Huron Steel Corporation, Ltd.
Goderich, Ont., October 2nd, 1919.