

## AS SEEN BY OTHERS

### The Quebec Bridge.

Engineering News.—The task of the engineering committee (on the Quebec Bridge), is a very great one. Difficult as it would be under any circumstances, the progress and results would be certain beyond question to engage the most careful attention of the engineering world. As matters actually stand, this attention will be multiplied—by the stimulus of the intense interest awakened by the collapse of the first bridge. There will be a more anxious, a more rigid, scrutinizing of the conclusions and the designs produced by the committee. This fact renders their work correspondingly more delicate and of greater responsibility, and therefore more difficult. Judgment of fine metal will be needed. May it not be corroded by the steam rising from the ever-boiling pot of Canadian politics! May the committee accomplish its task successfully and worthily.

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### The Basis of Cost.

American Machinist.—The great activity in improving the methods of machine construction has for its prime object the reduction of cost, by which is meant reduction in wages cost. The cost of an article consists of three items—wages, material and burden—and it is the first of these which has been the subject of attack all along the line. It has been asked of late in a good many quarters if this effort has not gone too far and if, in the search for a reduced wages cost, the item of the cost of the equipment has not been largely lost sight of, and an outgrowth of this comparatively new question is the further one: Should not the aim at the largest possible output per dollar of wages be changed into an aim at the largest possible output per dollar of investment? For, to a considerable extent, the two aims are antagonistic.

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### Where Were the Fire Rangers?

The Globe.—It seems strange that after the destruction of a railway bridge had been discovered in the evening a train should be wrecked the following morning through running over the embankment. Operating expenses should not be reduced to the danger point.

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### The Dredgers Afraid.

The Yarmouth Times.—It is reported from Ottawa that several dredging contractors are arranging to sell their plants to the Government. Some of these political dredgers have been making big profits on contracts which were obtained without effective competition. They do not know what the election may bring forth and are disposed to protect themselves by transferring their business on favorable terms to a friendly Government.

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### Contract Conditions Again.

Iron and Coal Trade Review.—At the present time a great many municipal bodies are again inviting tenders for the supply of coal, and the singular conceptions displayed in the forms issued to the trade for signature of what it is right and proper to ask the seller to agree to, lead us once more to revert to the well-worn, but none the less important topic of contract conditions. Again and again we have insisted that reform in this respect is badly needed, and the opinions we have expressed are emphatically endorsed by the trade.

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### The Disuse of C. E. by Civil Engineers.

Engineering Contracting.—One who has occasion to refer to the technical periodicals and transactions of twenty years ago will find innumerable mentions of civil engineers by name, and almost always with the letters C. E. after the name. It was a matter of pride as well as a means of professional identification that led to the practice of using the

suffix C. E. Latterly this practice has almost died out—and why?

Unquestionably the practice came into disrepute because of its abuse. Men who had little more knowledge of civil engineering than is needed to run a compass imitated the real civil engineer, by adapting their title and using its abbreviation after their own names.

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### Cost of the Tunnel.

Gue'ph Mercury.—The tunnel under the Hudson River, which is 1,833 yards, cost \$10,000,000. The Northumberland Strait, between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, is thirteen and a half miles, and in making the tunnel one could not commence on the edge of the sea. There would have to be an allowance of several miles on the island and mainland; so that the tunnel would be not less than sixteen miles, and at the rate per yard, at which the Hudson River tunnel was constructed the total cost would be \$160,000,000. The tunnel would be the first big submarine tunnel in the world, and Canada would have felt herself able to afford what Great Britain, with all her wealth, has not yet afforded—namely, a similar tunnel from the south of Scotland to the north of Ireland.

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### Danger in Flight.

The Hamilton Herald.—The first aeroplane tragedy occurred yesterday, when Orville Wright's machine, carrying himself and Lieutenant Selfridge, fell to earth through the breaking of a rod. The lieutenant was killed and the inventor was terribly injured.

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The problem of flight has been solved; but that is not to say that the aeroplane will soon (or ever) come into use for the carrying of passengers or freight. The tragedy of yesterday indicates one of the reasons why. The machine is necessarily in construction so fragile that the danger of breakage is real and ever-present, and the consequences of a breakage are almost sure to be serious. In our time at least, the strong probability is that the aeroplane will be an expensive toy and its use will be confined to men of leisure who love a pastime the more when there is a dash of danger in it.

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### The Steel Industry.

The Railway Review.—There is no lack of confidence in the steel industry over a return to almost normal conditions next year. Evidences abound on every hand. Structural steel necessities promise to be especially large. What the outcome of car building will be is not clear. Guesses have been made by some reputable railroad authorities that at least one hundred thousand cars will be required within the next six months. Railroads generally have permitted minor repairs to run behind and these necessities will soon add to the sum of new orders. Bridge building will be entered upon with considerable vigor. Inquiries for forty thousand tons are pending this week, but immediate orders are not probable for all of it. Inquiries for thirty thousand tons of rails are on the market. Each week develops unexpected sources of demand. The tone of the entire market is stronger and with low prices and the possibility of advancing prices, new business is presenting itself.

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### The Railway Board.

The Toronto Telegram.—Assume that D'Arcy Scott, K.C., had practised law in a public rights environment.

Would D'Arcy Scott, K.C., have been allowed to step from the solicitorship of a public ownership league into the assistant-commissionership of the Dominion Railway Board?

Assuredly not.

Nobody asks that a public rights zealot should be put next in authority to the head of the Railway Commission.

Everybody has a right to protest when an anti-public rights zealot is appointed as assistant to Hon. J. P. Mabee.

If only railway lawyers are eligible for legal vacancies on the Railway Commission, why was the local solicitor of the C.P.R. at Ottawa chosen instead of W. H. Moore, of the Canadian Northern, or H. B. McGiverin, champion of other railway interests?