

Editorial

EMPLOYMENT OF ALIEN CONTRACTORS.

Canadian contractors have been very much disturbed during the past year by the award to United States organizations of a number of contracts which could have been carried to successful completion by any one of dozens of Canadian contractors. The recent award of a contract for a gun-cotton plant at Trenton, Ont., to a New York State firm will add fuel to the flames. It is understood that the main sub-contractor on this Trenton job is also a New York State firm.

The Canadian Engineer is advised that this contract, like many of its predecessors, is on a cost plus percentage basis and that tenders were not publicly advertised and called for among Canadian contractors. This is rank injustice to a group of men who have been very hard hit by the war and who have unquestionably proven their ability and integrity. Canadian contractors have built most of the buildings in Canada and they can do as good work as American contractors.

It is high time that the Dominion Government and the various provincial governments were made to realize that Canadian contractors must be given an opportunity to bid on all their work. What is the reason behind the award of so many of these contracts to American firms upon a percentage basis? Is it favoritism or disbelief in Canadian ability?

TOWN-PLANNING DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA.

The time necessarily occupied in the development of any specific town-planning scheme of any magnitude has made it difficult to gauge with any degree of accuracy the progress that may have been made. At the same time, it must be said that the great public advantages which must follow the increased control over the development in any area which is the subject of a town-planning scheme render it very desirable that where such districts exist some scheme of town planning be undertaken.

Social and economic forces are of enormous influence in determining the character and extent of a city's growth. Where development runs counter to economic laws, reaction is sure to follow. One of the fundamental and controlling forces in the growth of communities is uniformity of development. Where buildings are scattered over great areas it becomes very difficult to supply adequate service in respect to transit, water, gas, streets, sewers and other utilities.

In this connection, and as indicating the increasing interest in the subject of town planning and civic improvement in Canada, it is interesting to note that the Civic Improvement League, which is purely educational in character, has done a great deal to awaken and maintain interest in this work. In every province there is being shown an unusual activity in this subject on the part of all classes in the community. A recent issue of "Conservation of Life" contains reports from branches all over Canada. To have accomplished this, especially at the present time, when the attention of most people is necessarily directed to matters connected with the prosecution of the war, shows how the subject has gripped the Canadian public.

CANAL TRANSPORTATION.

It is difficult to determine exactly in dollars and cents the actual direct return to the country for money expended in canal construction in Canada. Such expenditures are for the general advantage of the country and it is not easy to say just how this advantage accrues.

A highway, whether on land or water, is not usually a "paying" public enterprise; at least not as such things are commonly considered. The day has passed when public officials even think of making highways "pay." They very rightly look beyond that and take into account the development that is more than likely to be brought about if such highways are provided. The contribution which the present canal system in Canada has made to the development of the Northwest, for instance, cannot be measured in money, yet no one would be so foolish as to maintain that the contribution has been anything but a very real and genuine one.

Arguments have been put forward that the large cost of building and maintaining this or that waterway is prohibitive. While the involved expenditures may be out of the question so far as the present is concerned, it is well to point out the error of estimating the future waterway possibilities by the volume of traffic which obtains at the present time. That is hardly fair in view of the great increase in the volume of traffic which has followed canal construction in Canada up to the present.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

The Design of Steel Stacks.

Sir,—I have read with interest the letter by Mr. H. M. White, of the Dominion Bridge Co., Montreal, in your issue of November 16th, regarding the article on "The Design of Steel Stacks," printed in your issue of September 28th.

Mr. White's statement that the designing curves given in the article are correct and convenient for use justifies their introduction and use, and really expresses the main purpose in presenting the problem.

I acknowledge the two numerical errors pointed out. These, while inexcusable, having occurred in the hasty preparation of the original paper, would have been corrected had I known that the article was to be reprinted. These do not, however, occur in any of the preferred solutions. In each case where more than one analysis was given, the one given first was the preferred solution and the one used in plotting the curves.

It is interesting to note the lack of consistency on the part of the critic. He closes his letter by stating that nothing new was given in the original paper, yet spends a large part of his space in ridiculing the secondary solutions as though they were being given for the first time, while as a matter of fact these assumptions have long been used by other designers.

It may be well to have still another solution proposed for anchor bolts, though no evidence was given in the letter that would prove the critic's assumptions any better