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STEEL ORDERS.

Considerable activity exists among the steel plants of the United States. New orders are being placed, held orders are being revived, and in some instances new contracts are being made.

The Illinois Central Railway have ordered from the Chicago mills 25,000 tons of heavy section rails for prompt delivery. This order is on an old contract. The Pennsylvania Steel Company has entered orders for 2,000 tons of rails for trolley lines, 1,000 tons for Long Island and 1,000 for Pennsylvania delivery.

There is a greater demand for light sections than for heavy sections, and considerable competition exists, the rolling mills taking orders at \$23.

In structural steel a large number of orders have been placed. Four thousand tons have been ordered for the steel viaduct at Denver, Col., and the Pennsylvania Bridge Company has been awarded Government contracts for steel lock gates at Hales Bar, Tenn., requiring 240 tons of steel. The same company will furnish five small highway bridges, requiring 250 tons of steel, for the Department of Public Works of New York State, as well as 200 tons for highway bridges in North Carolina. As previously noted, the Empire office building at Birmingham, Ala., will require 1,100 tons steel, and a hotel at San Antonio, Texas, 1,000 tons. The New York Central Railroad is asking bids for 2,000 tons steel additional for New York terminal work.

Although this volume of business is not unusually large, yet it indicates a revival of business.

DISTRIBUTION OF FREIGHT BY CITY STREET CAR SYSTEMS.

The Montreal Street Railway Company in their report give as receipts from freight carried for the year ending September, 1908, \$17,783. This revenue from an undeveloped business indicates the value of a freight handling franchise to street railway companies.

A street railway freight handling system would be a great gain to the shipper and the public at large. It would also be a tremendous gain to the manufacturer located away from the sidings and freight tracks of the railways. The reduction in time and cost of cartage would place the smaller manufacturers scattered throughout the cities on a more equal footing with the large concerns.

Such a system would reduce the pavement traffic and permit of lighter pavements, would give us less crowded streets and better service and would reduce the municipalities' share of cost of street paving.

Electric lines now run into most of our cities and towns of any size. The ease with which they can collect freight twenty or thirty miles distant and deliver it, within an hour, in the heart of commercial centres has given its patrons such an advantageous position that there is a growing demand for such service. A financial proposition for the railways, 'tis true, yet municipalities should be careful and not exact unreasonable conditions, and thus check the spread of a convenience that would be appreciated by residents of urban and suburban districts alike.