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The Canadian Engineer

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NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.

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THE PURPOSE OF ADVERTISING TENDERS.

It is generally understood that the purpose of advertising for tenders is to secure competition and the lowest prices. Engineers in the employ of the corporations and municipalities have another purpose, namely, to make it clear that they are not playing favorites, but that contractors and supply houses having the material to dispose of may have equal opportunities to secure the contract, and thus remove from the engineer any semblance of awarding the work to friends at inflated prices.

The engineering department that refuses to advertise work or would make it impossible for any but the initiated to tender, will, sooner or later, find themselves the subject of public inquiry. It is not necessary that the department be corrupt, or that their purpose and method be other than honorable. All the public mind will grasp will be the blunder, and gossip will add the rest.

Several examples of refusing to advertise work, making the time limits so short that only those "in the know" can tender, have been brought to our attention recently. One of the most prominent of these has been the steel rail contract on the Transcontinental Railway. Under date of August 23rd the Commission called for tenders for supplying approximately 7,500 gross tons of 80-pound steel rails. The tenders in question are to be in the hands of the Commission by September 14th. The time allowed for the prospective tenderers to secure copies of the specifications is too short; in fact, the conditions limit the contract to three mills. A further condition requires that the quantity be delivered within sixteen days. This again narrows down the number who are apt to compete to those who would have on hand 5,700 tons of 80-pound rails.

This is just one illustration of many where the engineers have no doubt unintentionally made it appear as if they were anxious to limit the competition.

The engineers should be the first to encourage, in a matter of this kind, full publicity. It pays the client, and it will pay the engineer from a professional standpoint.

STREET LIGHTING.

Fundamentally, street lighting is a protective measure, and a street lighting system which meets the requirements of the chief of police usually answers the lighting conditions required by the average citizen and the man of moderation.

Street lighting not only discloses dangers of the road and footpath, but it checks and prevents crime. The saying that one arc lamp is as good as one policeman is not new, and when applied to populated districts is true.

Uniformity in street lighting, while possible, is not always wise from an economic standpoint. Certain districts require heavy lighting in the early evening. Other sections, because of the brilliant store lights, are sufficiently lighted by the ordinary street lighting, and when the traffic ceases automatically the street lighting regulates itself.

Any system of street lighting which is based upon a fixed number of lights per mile of street or upon a uniform kind of light will not give the best results. So many things regulate the necessity for lights at certain distances and the presence of trees, etc., so vary conditions that public lighting requirements are essentially non-uniform.

ROOSEVELT AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Theodore Roosevelt, speaking before the members of the Ellicott Club at Buffalo on August 25th, stated:—

"We claim to be a civilized people. As such we ought to be able to dispose of our sewage without putting it into our drinking water. State and Nature must combine in preventing further contamination, and in making the purity of lake water as absolute as possible."