

# Editorial

## "Business as Usual"

### ORDERS AND CONFIDENCE.

The opinion was expressed in these columns recently that the government authorities of Canada should do all in their power to continue public works in progress and to commence others. An announcement has come from Ottawa since then that the Dominion government will follow that policy. It is obviously sound economics. If the national machinery is stopped entirely—and the engineering profession is an important cog—only disaster can be brought upon the country. The advice given to Great Britain by a celebrated London authority is exceedingly applicable to the workers of the Dominion.

"Orders should be given," he says, "factories should be run, and everything should be arranged to maintain, as far as possible, the productive power and the income of the country."

"At such a time it is of the greatest importance that every one should endeavor to act as if great events were not impending. Were confidence seriously disturbed business would come practically to an end and our ability to face the difficulties that may be in front of us would be seriously impaired. Therefore, it is of vital importance that as far as possible, the events that are now taking place should not interfere with the daily life and the daily work of the nation."

"Every one, according to his ability, must endeavor to work hard in order that individual incomes and therefore the income of the whole nation, may be maintained at the highest possible level."

These are excellent sentiments and carried into practice will help considerably to overcome the adverse effects of war. Engineers, buyers and sellers of plant and machinery must give to the national situation at least their individual share of confidence and a share of business, even if it is somewhat reduced. To withdraw entirely both orders and confidence is inimical not only to their own interests but also to the general welfare of Canada.

### THE COST OF NOISE.

Have the efficiency engineers about whose work we have heard much in recent years, given attention to the factor of noise in the engineering field and in machine plants generally? There is an enormous waste of labor and energy apparent in large works and in big factories, as a result of noise. To the engineer, it is as cumbersome in the final analysis, as so-called hustle is to the American business man. In a recent conversation reported in Metallurgical and Chemical Engineering the superintendent of a large stamp-mill made the observation that "noise costs money." The reporter goes on to say:

"We have been discussing the use of stamps as crushing machines and the comparative merits of various devices for crushing ore. One of the arguments advanced by this superintendent against the use of stamps was the tremendous and never-ending noise produced by the falling weights. In his opinion the din was responsible for many misunderstood directions and orders to employees,

resulting in confusion, loss of time, and expensive mistakes. The point is readily perceived. The average mill employee is anxious to give the impression that he understands the boss's orders, and rather than ask a question for further information he will sometimes pretend to understand and then go and seek advice from a fellow workman. The order may be wrongly executed or not at all. The noise of the stamps contributes greatly to this condition, makes it difficult to give and receive orders, and undoubtedly causes many mistakes. The cost of noise may not be estimated exactly, but it is a real factor."

These are excellent contentions. It would be interesting to hear from the efficiency engineers operating in Canada, what they are doing in the course of their effective work, to reduce noise and consequently its heavy cost.

### PANAMA CANAL OPENED.

The opening to traffic of the Panama Canal on August 15th was a great event in the commercial and engineering spheres. The construction of the Canal, various phases of which have been described from time to time in *The Canadian Engineer*, is considered, and justly, one of the greatest engineering events of modern days. There has been expended to date on the purchase and construction of the Panama Canal a sum of \$360,173,375.33. These expenditures have been classified as follows to May 1, 1914:—

Administration .....	\$ 7,004,684
Law .....	60,109
Sanitation .....	17,208,154
Construction .....	206,117,831
General items .....	90,167,566
Fortifications .....	6,200,505

For the benefit of commerce, it comes into being when shipping is disorganized by war. It follows the opening of the Kiel Canal, which was built largely for war purposes. A peaceful vessel, the Panama Railway steamer Ancon, was the first to pass through the famous Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The battleships of belligerent nations may be among the earliest visitors to the great waterway. Their passage through the Canal is governed by regulations which were formulated in times of peace. They may not remain in the Canal for more than twenty-four hours, unless specially permitted. A war vessel of one nation must not follow the exit, from the Canal, of one of another nation, until after the expiration of twenty-four hours. The Canal has been opened at an inauspicious time. Rival battle-fleets are intent on serious gunnery. Commercial fleets are idle, lame or stealthy. But better times are in store. They may have come when President Wilson, in March, 1915, presides at the international celebration which will mark the official opening of the Canal.

A boat can make in eleven hours a trip through the Canal which otherwise would have taken thirty days. That is something the world's shipping will appreciate in due course. Europe is engaged at present in work of destruction. America, in the meantime, has completed one of the greatest engineering works of construction.