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Principal Contents of this Issue

	PAGE
Pape Avenue Sewer, Toronto, by R. T. Grant Jack	25
No Power for Concrete Ships	28
Proportioning the Materials of Mortars and Concretes by Surface Areas of Aggregates, by Capt. Llewellyn N. Edwards	29
The Pay of the Engineer	33
U.S. Engineering Council Activities, by A. D. Flinn	35
Sampling Deposits of Road Stone and Gravel in the Field Engineer's Library	36
Notes on the Presumptive Test for B. Coli, by Max Levine	37
New Incorporations	39
Abrasion Test for Stone, Gravel and Similar Aggregates, by H. H. Scofield	40
Design and Operation of Sewage Treatment Plants, by H. A. Whittaker	43
Personals and Obituary	45
Construction News	48
Where to Buy, An Engineering Trades Directory	48
	60

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

ALTHOUGH it has reached a very high standard of service, both to its members and to the profession generally, as well as to its country, those who direct the American Society of Civil Engineers are evidently uncertain as to whether or not the society might be still further improved so that it "may take its proper place in the larger sphere of usefulness now opening to the profession." At a meeting of the Board of Direction held June 18th, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:—

"The development and application of the sciences in recent decades have caused profound changes in the social and industrial relationships of all peoples. The engineer has been a leader in this progress. Sociological and economic conditions are in a state of flux and are leading to new alignments of the elements of society. These new conditions are affecting deeply the profession of engineering in its services to society, in its varied relationships to communities and nations, and in its internal organization.

"A broad survey of the functions and purposes of the American Society of Civil Engineers is needed in order that an intelligent and effective readjustment may be accomplished so that the society may take its proper place in the larger sphere of influence and usefulness now opening to the profession. Such a survey and readjustment can be accomplished successfully only with the aid of the membership throughout the country.

"Any steps toward changes in organization must lead to a revision of the constitution of the society, which has

not been materially modified for many years, during which the society has grown rapidly and has established twenty-two local associations of members. The constitution should be revised only after securing the views of the membership of the society as to what its purposes and activities should be and as to the instrumentalities through which these purposes and activities should be carried out.

"Any changes in organization must take into account all the conditions above indicated, and also the relationship of the American Society of Civil Engineers to other engineering organizations and to the public. Therefore:

"Resolved, that a committee be created to report on the purposes, field of work, scope of activity and usefulness, organization, and methods of work of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and to make recommendations concerning these matters; the committee to consist of one member chosen by each local association of members, and seven members at large appointed by the president.

"Resolved, that the president be instructed to select from this committee an executive committee of not less than five nor more than nine members and to appoint the chairman of this executive committee, who shall also be the chairman of the general committee.

"Resolved, that the president be instructed to prepare a precept for the general guidance of this committee.

"Resolved, that this committee be requested to present to the Board of Direction a preliminary report, not later than November 1st, 1918, so that it may be printed and distributed to the membership in advance of the annual meeting in January, 1919, at which meeting it will be presented for discussion."

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND RISING COSTS

PUBLIC utility companies throughout Canada are everywhere meeting the difficulty of advancing costs of operation, while their gross earnings remain practically stable. During the earlier days of the war, in Canada and in the United States, the situation was not felt very acutely, but, while other industries have been adjusting themselves gradually to the changed conditions, this class of industry has been feeling continually increased pressure.

There have been very few businesses which have advanced so rapidly during the past few decades as have utility enterprises. Street railway transportation; gas and electricity for lighting, heating and power; and telephones, have almost become necessities with the great majority of people. It has been this characteristic of near-necessity which has helped to maintain the favor of investors for public utility securities as compared with ordinary manufacturing industries which were, it was supposed, more subject to competition and to changes in public tastes. Now, however, manufacturing companies have been able to take part, and frequently a leading part, in the general programme of raising prices, and their income and profits have benefited accordingly. The utility companies, on the contrary, must nearly always secure the consent of public or semi-public bodies before raising rates, and utility companies have, therefore, greater difficulty in increasing their income in proportion to the increased cost of labor and materials.

This condition of affairs cannot be permanent. While, generally speaking, the return from bonds and stocks of utility companies has been maintained, it has been only with great difficulty, and conditions have be-