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INSPECTING.

No one will question the necessity of good design. Safe and reliable construction is expected. But design and construction are both apt to receive severe tests unless the inspection be careful, thorough and sane. Good design will suffer unless there be good construction, but too often good construction fails because of indifferent and careless inspection.

We do not mean to infer that all contractors and manufacturers try to scrimp their work, that they all require watching—we know different. But we also know that you cannot trust "all the people all the time"; hence the necessity for inspectors. Some inspectors help the work, some hinder, and the engineer who has the

appointment of such officials should be just as careful in the selection of these men as in his choice of assistant engineers.

An inspector should be a man of experience, not some youth who knows neither what is to be done nor how to do it. Far too many engineers send out young inspectors, who interfere where interference does harm, antagonize the contractor, and tempt him to resort to sharp practices. An inexperienced man will require of the builder refinements of work and material that are not necessary, and because not necessary, not wise. A good inspector will help, not hinder the contractor. He will be an inspector, not a detective—a man with knowledge of the matter in hand, so that he can tell right from wrong, good from bad; a man with the courage and the ability to enforce good workmanship and secure good material; a man who will never act as though he expected to be placed on two pay rolls.

There are two systems of inspection now in vogue: one, the appointment of an official paid by the purchaser or constructor, responsible to his superior for employment and advancement. Naturally, he grows to look upon the contractor or manufacturer as his great enemy. In the other case the inspection is carried on by inspection companies, who secure future business because of satisfactory service rendered in the past. This should be the more satisfactory system. The inspector is not the employee of either parties to the contract. He should feel free to give a "square deal." More than that, he should be an experienced man. Inspection companies pose as a body of experts, and experts they should be. But as in many other things it is not a matter of systems, but of men. A good man working under a poor system may bring good results. and a good system of inspection will come to grief the moment it attempts to serve two masters.

And while on this subject allow us to say that we believe a few engineers are making a serious mistake in not being more careful of inspection. They design well, and then turn the plans over to the contractor or owner. The work is completed. In a short time failure is in evidence, and the design is condemned when the disaster should have been laid at the door of the erector. Engineers will show great wisdom by insisting on thorough and competent inspection.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is stated that the Canadian Government is about to enforce the Dumping Clause on steel sheets of a less thickness than 14 gauge, the mill company at Morrisburg having informed the authorities that they are now making these thinner sheets. But we are told that the Morrisburg mill is making only small sheets, and cannot produce the larger ones which form so great a proportion of the requirements of commerce and still have to be imported. A very natural question comes up, whether for the sake of protecting the producer of a comparatively small article it is equitable to impose a heavy duty upon goods not made in Canada. And the larger sizes of steel sheets thinner than 1 gauge are not produced here, as we are informed. There is room for both importer and consumer to complain if the Dumping Clause is set in motion on inadequate grounds.