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EXTRA COST BECAUSE OF GUARANTEE.

With the turn of the year and the end of the holiday season both the engineer and the contractor are squaring away for another year of work. One matter that is a cause of great trouble to the contractor and expense to the public is the guarantee clause on contracts on public works.

Contractors who take public works must make a large deposit when tendering and put up a satisfactory guarantee when the contract is awarded. The deposit costs something; therefore he adds this cost to the contract price.

The guarantee money he never expects to get back, as petty repairs, etc., eat it up—so he adds this to his tender price, and the people pay the extra price.

Sometimes the guarantees are very obnoxious, and the engineer should endeavor to modify them, and when he must require them make them as mild as he can.

Why should a contractor be required to keep up a walk, pavement or sewer after it has been accepted by the engineer?

It was either good or bad. If good, why not accept it? If bad, why accept? The engineer had his specifications (cast-iron?), his inspectors, and he was over it himself several times. Then why require the guarantee? It adds very much to the cost.

Of course, the municipality should be protected, but the engineer should not accept the work until it is done as well as it can be done.

If this plan was followed the lowest bidder would be a more careful man.

Strict inspection and a less period or rate of guarantee would give better work, with less expense to the taxpayer.

A LESSON FROM CIVIC ELECTIONS, TORONTO.

The mayoralty campaign in the city of Toronto always excites considerable attention, and this year was no exception. One of the candidates early in 1909 conceived the idea of making himself popular with the electorate by advocating a system of underground railways. That the tubes were popular was plainly shown by the very large majority given in the plebiscite, but the defeat of the man who advocated the scheme should not surprise anyone.

He killed his scheme and his own chances of success by persisting in calling in a railway superintendent to prepare an engineer's report. The ratepayer said: "We like your scheme, but it is an engineering problem; therefore we endorse your opponent, who recognizes it as such."

Toronto's expensive problems are engineering problems. Toronto's City Engineer knows her needs, and if given a free hand will prepare sane and clear reports.