

Safeguarding the Brooklyn Bridge

The recent Quebec bridge disaster, which a Parliamentary Commission found was due to a fundamental defect in the design, calls attention to the great care that is taken in the inspection of the Brooklyn Bridge, New York. No royal baby heir to a throne is nursed and coddled more carefully than this great structure, bearing as it does its amazing burden of traffic on swaying cables high above the East River. Like an infant prince, its nurses note hour by hour its impatient squeaks and groans, its peevish swaying from side to side, the rhythmic beating of its pulses. Medicines are quickly applied for even trifling disorders. Its daily toilet may be compared with the morning routine of bath, talcum powder, and manicuring of infant experience.

The minuteness of this nursing was shown the other day by an experiment of one of the engineering corps. He stood at the middle of the bridge where one of the great cables dips down to meet an iron beam of the swinging superstructure.

First he laid a sheet of paper on the beam. Then he fastened a strip of wood not unlike an office ruler, to a hanger just below the cable. The strip extended to the middle of the sheet of paper, and on the end a short lead pencil, extending downward, rested with its tip on the drawing card.

The appliance was like a seismograph for recording earthquakes or the arrow on a paper drum with which the weather men note wind variations. The pencil recorded on the paper the swinging of the great cable, backwards and forwards and from side to side.

As the pencil traced its triangular course the engineer noted the Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains passing on either side, noting the number of cars, their positions as the cable swung backward and forward, and whether they were crowded or empty.

The acting engineer explained afterward this was one of a series of observations taken periodically to safeguard the integrity of the bridge. In this swaying of the cables lies the safety of the millions who cross the bridge.

In fact, the central span is like a great hammock, as long as six blocks in upper Broadway, swaying slightly from side to side in the eight great cables with their wires long enough to reach from Brooklyn to Dublin. The wave motion causes the strain on the bridge, but it is resisted by the stiffening trusses. The surface cars—enough every month to form a continuous train from New York to Philadelphia—have little or no effect on the bridge. Neither have the streams of pedestrians, drays, automobiles. The plan for sliding platforms, now tabled for a time, would not alter the strain, as they would be merely a dead weight, instead of a shifting burden.

As the pencil recorded the oscillations it was seen that the trains of cars were the real burden. If they should be run on one side of the bridge in one direction only, the engineer explained, the effect would be very much like the sagging of a hammock when the hand is drawn heavily down one side. As the cars are constantly moving from both sides at once, however, the sagging gives place to a wave-like motion.

Nursing the big bridge means that day after day, whether in storms of snow or sleet, or in torrid heat, inspectors, bridgemen, and riggers climb like spiders to every part of the great structure, testing its 1,000,000 rivets, bolts, and slices, inspecting the cables and trusses, scraping and painting the weather-beaten parts that show signs of rust or wear. Many of the cables, saddles, suspenders, bands, sockets, bolts, trunnions, trusses, floor beams, and stays are examined every day. Thus every part of the bridge is gone over at least once in every six months.

Five inspectors are engaged in regular details. Every morning one of them walks over the spans, looking at every prominent feature and reporting the results to the Department of Bridges. Not a day passes that the joints and short suspenders near the middle, where experience has shown that breaks are likely to occur, are not inspected. A man is employed every weekday oiling and cleaning the suspenders over the East River. Here the oscillation and shifting of the bridge, under the heavy train service, demands special attention. Another man, especially trained for the service, oils and removes the dirt from the slip joints in the trusses of the centre of the river and land spans.

Messrs. Strange and Co., Ltd., Christchurch, are now showing those new and exquisite dress fabrics, 'Amazonians,' which can be supplied in dress lengths at an extremely moderate price. These fabrics have all the appearance and wearing qualities of the best French Amazon cloth....

OBITUARY

MR. PETER LEVY, NELSON.

There passed away on May 4, in the person of Mr. Peter Levy, a well known figure to old Nelsonians, and a man who had been associated closely with some of the most stirring events in the history of this settlement (says the Nelson 'Colonist'). Mr. Levy was born in Westmeath, Ireland, eighty-six years ago, and was for over forty years a servant of the Crown. He joined the 65th Regiment in 1844, and two years later he came out to New Zealand, landing at Auckland, the headquarters of the regiment. Mr. Levy took his discharge from the regiment in 1853, and in 1863 joined the Police Force in Nelson. He held the N.Z. war medal for active service at Wanganui, and he also gained the long service and good conduct medal in the New Zealand Police Force. In 1887 Mr. Levy retired from the Police Force, and was then presented with a silver tea and coffee service by his comrades and a few of the citizens who had learned of the affair. Since then Mr. Levy had lived in retirement. He leaves a widow and a large family of sons, daughters, and grandchildren, viz.—Sons: Mr. Michael Levy, Wellington; Mr. M. J. Levy, Postal Department, Nelson; Mr. Peter Levy, Wellington. Daughters: Mrs. John Hagen, Spring Grove; Mrs. A. Grant, Nelson; Mrs. T. Barry, Nelson; Miss N. Levy. The funeral took place on May 6, from St. Mary's Church, where the first portion of the burial service was conducted by the Rev. Father Clancy, who also officiated at the interment in the New Cemetery.—R.I.P.

MR. THOMAS JOYCE, GREYMOUTH.

It is with regret (writes our Greymouth correspondent) I have to record the death of Mr. Thomas Joyce, one of the oldest Catholic residents of Greymouth, who passed away at his residence, Omoto Road, a few days ago. The deceased was well known on the Coast, and in the early days was one of the most prominent public men who did good work for the advancement of the district. For over twelve years he was a member of the Greymouth Borough Council, and when he was forced to retire through ill-health he was presented with an illuminated address by the councillors and staff. He was also one of the original directors of the local Gas Company. The late Mr. Joyce was a native of Clifden, County Galway, where he was born 71 years ago. He came to the West Coast in 1864, and, after trying his fortune at gold-digging, he commenced business in Greymouth, where he resided until his death. He was noted for his charity, and was always ready to assist those in want. Deceased leaves a widow, three sons, and two daughters to mourn their loss. The funeral was very largely attended by mourners from all parts of the district. The remains were taken to the Catholic Church and thence to the place of interment, Very Rev. Dean Carew officiating both at the church and graveside.—R.I.P.

Messrs. Bradley Bros., Christchurch, designers in stained glass, and specialists in ecclesiastical memorial windows and leadlights, were highly successful at the N.Z. International Exhibition, when they secured the highest possible honors—special award and gold medal. The firm will be pleased to send designs and quotations to any part of the Dominion on receipt of particulars with sizes....

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FOR THAT COUGH?

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