

THE CORK HARBOUR ENGINEER, AND CITY SURVEYOR.

THESE two appointments are now vacant by the resignation of Sir John Benson, who has held both for the last quarter of a century or more. On the 14th inst., the Harbour Commissioners will, as they have announced by advertisement, proceed to the election of a professional man to act solely as their engineer. In thus separating the two offices, we think the citizens of Cork have, through their representatives, acted wisely, for the duties are quite distinct, and the professional training and knowledge required in each case even more so.

We shall watch with much interest this event, and we sincerely trust that the result of the election will be to place the "right man in the right place," or, more correctly speaking, in a place to be made right. We are well aware that, in the disposal of such situations by public bodies, party influences and political, even sectarian, prejudices weigh considerably with men who in their private capacity as citizens would act differently; and, therefore, it is to be feared—as indeed it has been rumoured in the present instance—a feeling prevails that some one or two local men will secure a considerable number of votes on the board, to the exclusion of competent candidates. However, we confidently expect that the gentlemen who represent the commercial wealth of the second city of Ireland will be found possessed of more common sense and independence than to hand over the destruction of their property to anyone, from such ridiculous motives. We would venture to say there is not one local man (eligible as to age, or likely to be a candidate) at all qualified for this post; but it is well known that there are many civil engineers elsewhere of great professional ability and experience in dock and harbour works, disengaged or about being so, by reason of the completion of the works on which they have been employed; and it is to be hoped that only a man of this class will be selected. The importance of the appointment cannot be overestimated. The results involved are almost of national consequence, because the making or marring of the noblest harbour and river in the world, and consequently the development or destruction of the port of Cork are dependent thereon. The salary named by the commissioners in this advertisement is from £400 to £600 per annum; the latter amount, we believe, they would be prepared to give at once to a qualified engineer; and it has been stated that they would even go so far as £1,000 a-year to secure a thoroughly suitable officer. It is much to be regretted that that was not set forth in their advertisement, as in that case men of position and ability might be induced to come forward as candidates.

There is a vast amount of work to be done before Cork can take rank as a first-class port. Docks, quays, jetties, river improvements, all on a large scale, and involving enormous expenditure of money, and the exercise of originality and skill in designing, and practical knowledge in execution—these are qualifications which cannot be possessed without education, lengthened personal experience, and grasp of mind; and great indeed will be the mistake made by the citizens of Cork if they are contented with less.

With regard to the other office—that of city surveyor—the general impression, not only with the members of the corporation, but amongst the citizens, appears to be that, as Mr. Robert Walker, superintendent, has for some time past been acting as surveyor, and has at all times given the utmost satisfaction, he should be confirmed in the appointment. This arrangement is not only an economical one, but most popular. Mr. Walker is an old citizen universally respected for his obliging habits and courteous manner; and being a thoroughly practical man, and enjoying a lengthened experience in the duties of the office he will now be called on to fill, his confirmation in the situation of city surveyor will give complete general satisfaction.