

Homer Hadley, President Western Washington Section, American Society of Civil Engineers

Ace Men of the Pacific Northwest

THREE YEARS AT WORK on one of the most difficult pieces of engineering ever attempted in Alaska; a year designing the famous concrete ships during the late war; several years with the Canadian Northern Railroad and the U. S. Geological Survey, during which time he traveled over a great portion of North America; and a personal investigation of earthquake damage in Japan and Santa Barbara, have not yet convinced Homer Hadley, recently elected president of the Western Washington Section of the A. S. C. E., that he has done anything out of the ordinary. "I have led a very quiet and sedentary life," says Mr. Hadley, who is District Engineer for the Portland Cement Association, in charge of the Washington and Northern Idaho territory.



Homer Hadley

Mr. Hadley's idea of a quiet life is evidently much different from the usual conception of that term.

Hadley is a product of the state of Ohio. He was born in the busy manufacturing town of Toledo in 1885. In 1905 he saw the advantages offered by the West and heeded Horace Greeley's advice. He attended the University of Washington for a while but did not graduate.

The young Ohioan's first longing to be an engineer was experienced during high school days. A chum had spent a summer with the U. S. Geological Survey and he returned with such glowing accounts of the work that Hadley resolved then and there to be an engineer and go out on government work himself. Unlike most young people, he stuck to his resolution.

His first actual engineering work was with the same Geological Survey. He was sent through South Dakota, and all over the great Southwest doing topographic work.

Following this, Hadley spent about ten years in railroad construction and location. Among the projects he worked on was the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad in Alaska. This road, financed by the Guggenheim interests, extends from Cordova to the rich Kennicott Copper Mine. Its construction was regarded as one of the most difficult engineering feats ever attempted in the North. Silt at the mouth of the river, sand bars, glaciers, rugged mountains and flood waters were all encountered and conquered. Supplies were carried in by pack train, by boat and often on men's backs. Z. E. Hawkins, a former chief engineer for the Union Pacific, was in charge of the engineering and M. J. Heney, who built the White Pass and Yukon road was the contractor. Mr. Hadley held several positions, from transitman on location to resident engineer.

During the next five years Hadley worked on Vancouver Island for the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern Railroads.

Finally, tiring of railroad work, and thinking that more progress could be made in other lines, Mr. Hadley turned to

structural engineering. He worked for several Seattle architects on large building projects.

Designed Famous Concrete Ships

During the late war Hadley was appointed to serve as a civilian engineer in Washington, D. C. Most of this time was spent in designing the famous concrete ships, which attained a great popularity during the war only to drop into oblivion in the post-war slowing up of ship building. According to Hadley, the concrete ship was given a fair trial but it failed to make the grade. "The concrete ship carries too much dead weight," he says.

After the war Hadley returned to Seattle and went back into structural engineering. He worked for several years for F. A. Narramore, the Seattle school architect, and helped design the Roosevelt and Garfield high schools as well as several grade schools.

In 1923 he was appointed to his present position with the Portland Cement Association, which has offices in the Seaboard Building in Seattle. Here his work is two-fold. It consists of extending the use of concrete and in securing good results.

Investigated Earthquake Damage

Two very interesting features of Mr. Hadley's work since holding his present position were his investigations of damage resulting to all types of structures in the great Japanese earthquakes of 1923 and the Santa Barbara quake of 1925. On both of these trips he was afforded a great opportunity to determine which kinds of construction best withstand earthquakes.

"No special kind of material," says Mr. Hadley, "can be called earthquake proof. Only the design of the building will determine its resistance. The stiff, rigid ones were the only ones which stood in both disasters." His report was published in the Proceedings of the American Concrete Institute.

Due, no doubt, to his railroad and Geological Survey work, Mr. Hadley is a great lover of the outdoors. He is married and has two children, a boy and a girl, and he lives in the Seward Park district near Lake Washington.—William K. Dickson.

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