

actual load is a dangerous one : that is when the bridge is unfit for any traffic whatever ; so that, if such an order was really needed, it would, in itself, be, in the eyes of an engineer, a condemnation of the bridge.

Having seen something of the structures which require inspecting, let us now see what kind of inspection we have in this country, and the result of it ; and let us also see the inspection which we might have, and the results that might be produced. Looking first at railroad bridges, it might be supposed that no one could be so much interested in keeping such structures in good order as the companies which own those bridges, and which have the bills to pay in case of disaster. This is, of course, so ; but, in spite of the fact, the Ashtabula bridge broke down, on one of the best managed lines in the country,