government employees, and residents of the capital of the State, to which bids for all county bridges should be sent. The duty of the committee would be merely the opening of the bids, and the recording of the amounts. The inspector of bridges, who should also reside in the capital, should then examine the bids, and report to the county commissioners, which, in his opinion, is the best bridge for the money (i.e., which he would advise them to accept), and which bridges are up to the specifications, and which not, leaving the final decision to the commissioners.

A summary of his report should be advertised in certain of the engineering-papers, say the two which have the greatest circulation, so as to let the public see that there has been fair play, and to clear the inspector of any imputation of unfair practice. The advertising of the report, including the price for each bridge and the estimated weight of iron in same, would serve to prevent any connivance between contractors and commissioners; because any decided departure from the recommendation of the inspector would immediately awaken suspicion.

No bids without an estimated weight of iron should be received; and, should the inspector doubt the genuineness of the estimate, he could easily check it.

Then, too, the bridge should be weighed at the railway station nearest the site; and, if the weight be found wanting more than a certain per cent of the estimated amount, the contractor should be fined.

In this way the only possibility of fraud would be an agreement between a certain bridge company and all the members of the committee for the latter to insert the contract price in their bid so as to make it just a little lower than that of any other competitor. Considering that the committee would be composed of a number of the most prominent state officials, the probability of such a fraud ever occurring reduces to zero.