

# THE QUANTITY SURVEYOR



APRIL 1980. VOLUME 36 No. 4

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS

## Editor

M. A. Wilkins, P/PIQS, ACI Arb

## Assistant Editors

W. J. Edge, MSc, FIQS

T. M. Cooney, FIQS

## Advertising Agents

T. G. Scott & Son Limited,

30-32 Southampton Street,

London WC2E 7HE

Telephone: 01-240 2032



Published by the Institute of

Quantity Surveyors,

98 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AT

Telephone: 01-935 5577

## Director

P. G. South, BA, ACI Arb, FBIM

## Secretary

B. R. Peck, FBIM

## Education Officer

G. E. Thomson

## Publicity and Information Officer

Miss M. B. Evans, BA

*The Quantity Surveyor* is free to all members of the Institute who are variously employed in Private Practice, Commercial Organisations (Building, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Services and the like), Public Authorities and Educational Establishments in the UK and most countries throughout the world where quantity surveying is practised.

£1 per copy

Annual subscription £12

The Institute does not, as a body, hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed in this journal.

All rights of reproduction and translation reserved.

Registered at Stationers Hall.

APRIL 1980

## CONTENTS

<i>Comment</i>	59
Interpretation of Contract Documents – <i>The Quantity Surveyor's</i> Contribution	60
“And Now for Something Completely Different”	62
An Analysis of the Accuracy of Some Builders' Estimating	65
<i>Practice Note</i>	71
<i>Book Reviews</i>	71
<i>Benevolent Association</i>	72
<i>Conferences and Courses</i>	72
<i>Correspondence</i>	73
Directory of Members in Private Practice	74
<i>The Institute</i>	
Institute News	75
Institute Diary	75
Branch News	75

The Index to Volume 35 is contained within the central pages of this issue.

## FUTURE EDITIONS

Next month's edition of *The Quantity Surveyor* will feature articles on the subject of finance with contributions from many of the major banks. This is the first time that the Journal will be devoted to a single topic and it is planned that this will be the first of many. We hope that members will welcome these specialist issues and that they will form a ready source of reference.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Annual General Meeting – 13th June 1980.

## COMMENT

The Government's Competition Bill is about to become law and, in the future, the name of Mr. Gordon Borrie, Director-General of Fair Trading, will become more familiar.

The Bill will provide the power to investigate anti-competitive practices and should Mr. Borrie believe such a practice exists he will refer the matter to the Monopolies Commission or seek a voluntary undertaking for the practice to be dropped.

There is little indication how the Office of Fair Trading will operate the Bill and it seems, at the moment, that most companies, organisations, etc., prefer to “await developments”.

When matters are referred in the future to the Monopolies Commission it will be for them to investigate whether the practice is anti-competitive or against the public interest. These points must have exercised the minds of the Institute negotiators over the past three years in discussions with the Office of Fair Trading on fee scales.

It could be argued that competition with reference to fee scales was always there under the old bye-laws (revised clauses passed by Council, see *The Quantity Surveyor*, February 1980, page 35), in that competition is not based on fees alone but on the service given. Further, it could be argued that it is in service that professionals should compete and it is in the best interests of the public that they should know what they have to pay, ie. the fee, when they are embarking on a scheme and selecting their professional team of advisors. It does, however, seem strange, particularly in the construction industry which invariably advises competitive tenders, to inflict one rule at one stage in the proceedings and yet maintain strictly no financial competition on fees at another stage. Regardless of politics, both the current and previous governments have left little doubt that the word “mandatory” was unacceptable in connection with fees.

The Institute has had discussions with the other professional bodies but ultimately it must be a decision for the individual bodies to consider whether to change their bye-laws. The Institute has decided that competition on fees will be in the public interest, however, having once made a bid

*Continued on page 60*