

would be good reason for making the commercial clauses into a separate treaty, as we have several times pointed out; but we have experience of the Washington treaty that the denouncing of the fishery clause did not affect the rest of the convention. It is not probable that this Commission can settle the Alaska-Canada boundary; though in spite of the opinion widely entertained and often expressed, we are of opinion that this is the most important matter before the Conference. It will probably have to go before disinterested arbitrators.

During the adjournment of the Quebec Conference it is not probable that the activity of special interests desiring to give a particular direction to a treaty which they regard as in embryo, will cease; the American agents instead of attempting to influence the commissioners at Quebec will try to make themselves felt at Washington; the interests which have Canada for their home will, as usual, address themselves to Ottawa. It is for the framers of the policy to whom the treaty, if one be made, will be due, to see that general interests are not sacrificed to private aims and ends. No doubt the two run into one another at certain points; but there are such things as the public interest and welfare apart from any private interest. Whenever the two come into collision, the private interest must give way. It is conceivable that the sealing question might be so dealt with as to create a claim for compensation. When a private interest says a particular thing should not be done unless in exchange for one special form of compensation, the attempt to found a public policy on views of personal gain is evident, but where there is statesmanship at the helm, such narrow aims cannot be accepted as a guide to public policy. Compensation cannot always be in kind; if equivalents are equal though of different sorts, that is all that can be expected. When there are a large number of questions to be settled it is obvious that, if a satisfactory result is to be reached, one must be offset against another, sometimes without special regard to compensation in kind.

IMPROVE THE SHORT HAUL.

Remarkable improvements in transportation have been accomplished within the last half century, and yet, when we consider the needs of the country, it is safe to say that as much more remains to be done during the next fifty years. Railroad and steamship have reduced the charges of carrying goods long distances, but equal improvements have not been made in the just-as-important short haul. Before the products of the farm—commodities in which Canadians are most interested—have been brought to the railway station the cost of carriage has gone far towards eating up the profits which should result from production. Few people have any definite idea of the cost of carriage by animal power. This naturally varies under different circumstances of travel, the most important item in connection with the cost being the kind and condition of roadway over which the load is hauled. From carriage over asphalt at a cost of 2.70 cents per mile it is estimated the cost of transporting a ton weight will rise to 64 cents over dry sand. These costs are estimated on level roadways and increase when, as is usual in Eastern Canada, the goods must be carried up and down hills.

It is truly remarkable that no improvements worthy of note have been made in carriage by the short haul during the last half century, while within that period such revolutions have taken place in transportation over long distances. With the growth of large commercial centres it is becoming of greater importance that better facilities of communication should exist with suburban communities.

W. T. Bonner, of Montreal, discusses in a recent number of *The Electrical Engineer* the feasibility of establishing suburban electric railways for the carriage of both passengers and goods, a problem which was also discussed at the recent electrical convention in Montreal. Different attempts are now being made to introduce these lines, which, if successful, must work out a revolution in local traffic. Mr. Bonner's scheme is an elaborate one, and is briefly this: The electric railway should extend into the country, having local stations at frequent points, where the farmers could deposit their produce to be forwarded by train to the city market. A combination vehicle might be used, so constructed that it could be moved over the ordinary roadway by animal power and shifted to the railroad for transmission by electric power without unloading. Mr. Bonner states this most interesting arrangement, which goes far to make the plan of electric suburban carriage practicable, as follows: "The farmer or merchant need have no ownership in the rail-wagons. On a signal or other notice to the electric railroad, a rail-wagon may be placed on a convenient farm switch or siding. The farmer readily unships the wagon from its rail truck by simply hitching his horses to the wagon and driving off, leaving the rail truck to stand where it is until he returns with the wagon loaded for the market."

The carriage of goods need in no way interfere with passenger traffic, the two easily regulating themselves to different hours of the day. Cereals and heavy farm products could be carried during the night, while garden truck and dairy produce would naturally move in the cool of the early morning. This mode of transportation would be of special value in carrying milk to the creameries and cheese factories, which, drawing supplies from a larger area of country, would be able to conduct production on a more extensive scale.

One of the best features of this scheme is that, unlike most revolutionary changes, it will not throw out of employment a large invested capital and numerous employees. The farmer, his "help" and horses will not find time hang idly upon their hands when the necessity of long drives to the city market has been removed. As we have frequently pointed out, there is great need of intensive cultivation in Canada, and most farmers could obtain proportionately higher returns by an application of more capital and labor to their land. The plan which has been outlined is not visionary, but practicable, and will, it is safe to say, soon be realized in the more populous farming districts.

BANKING FACILITIES IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

It is only by comparison with banking institutions in other countries that we in Canada appreciate the worth of our own facilities. There can never be an absolute standard of excellence in banking systems; they must vary according to the different needs of the countries in which they exist. To compare the banking system of Canada with that of England or Australia would be idle, so different are the industrial conditions of the three countries. A fairer comparison may be made with the United States, although even here allowance must be made for certain differences in bank requirements. In one direction the systems of both Canada and the United States are called upon to meet the same conditions, viz.: the needs of agricultural conditions, and here it must be said the comparison is more favorable to Canada. By the branch system so common to the chartered banks, the villages and towns of the Dominion possess almost equal facilities in the