

# Canada Law Journal.

VOL. XLIII.

OCTOBER 15.

NO. 20.

## *BILLS OF LADING.*

A condition of things exists in connection with railway traffic in this Dominion which is as extraordinary as it is objectionable. It is probably not known to the public, that, (1) since Oct. 17, 1904, the forms and conditions of four railway companies, then in use and produced to the Board of Railway Commissioners under the Railway Act, have been declared legal and binding upon the public by what amounts to statutory authority; whilst those in use by all other companies in Canada remain unaltered in that respect, and subject to dispute, and may be judicially declared to be illegal and valueless. (2) That the forms and conditions so declared to be legal and binding on the public have apparently been so declared without examination or consideration.

The four railway companies above referred to are the Grand Trunk Ry. Co., the Canadian Pacific Ry. Co., the Canadian Northern Ry. Co., and the Pere Marquette Ry. Co.

On the 17th of October, 1904, a far reaching order was made by the Board of Railway Commissioners. It recites "that the above named companies brought to the Board their forms of bills of lading and other traffic forms, in compliance with s. 275, sub-ss. 1, 2 of the Railway Act, 1903; that these companies are the only railway companies in Canada which have, up to the present moment, complied with the statute; that there is much diversity in the forms of the several railways; that the whole subject is of very great importance and will require that much circumspection should be exercised in examining into the contracts and forms which the Board hereafter has to approve, and also into the question of limitation and liability on the part of the carriers."

The order goes on to say: "The Board does not deem it