

REPORT SAYS GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTROL NEW RAILROAD EXPENDITURES.

THE majority report of the Railway Inquiry Commission expresses the opinion that instructions should be given by the government forthwith, without waiting for further action on this report, to the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific companies to discontinue all expenditure on works in hand, unless and until express permission is received for their continuance.

This part of the report continues as follows: "It is to be anticipated that difficulties, more or less great, will need to be overcome before a final settlement can be reached with the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern Railway Companies. We realize that, if the matter were dealt with in the ordinary manner, it might be a matter of months, if not years, before a final settlement was reached. The pressing public interest demands that the matter be not so treated.

"We will enumerate certain other matters that will not brook delay. In the West the Canadian Northern is not giving, and is not able to give, adequate service to the grain-growers in some important districts which are dependent on its lines. The situation in the Goose Lake district is highly unsatisfactory. The branch is in bad shape and is not fit to do the business offering. There is absolutely no room for doubt as to the lack of freight cars and the resulting inconveniences, and even in many cases distress. In the East the position of the Grand Trunk is most unsatisfactory. Beyond question the system immediately requires at least 200 more locomotives and at least 10,000 freight cars. If coal famines are to be avoided, and the proper winter movement kept up, the line from Burlington Junction to Fort Erie urgently requires double tracking. The question of electrification ought to be taken into consideration forthwith.

"If things go on as at present, the traffic conditions of this year will in all probability return in an aggravated form next winter. The old equipment will be a little older, the roadbed will be in a little worse condition. And the situation in Eastern Canada has been so bad this winter, that there has been much difficulty, specially at Grand Trunk points, in maintaining a supply of grain and flour from the West. It is imperative that strong and efficient action be immediately taken.

"Recognizing the probability of delays, caused by the efforts of the companies to secure better terms from the government, we think that, in order to protect the business interests of the country, the government should immediately put itself in a position to obtain orders appointing receivers for the Grand Trunk and Grand Trunk Pacific systems. We recommend that, at the present sitting of the House, an act be passed constituting the Board of Trustees, so that, in case receiverships are necessary, the trustees may, on the application of the government, under its existing rights as a creditor, be appointed receivers. They would then be in a position to take, through the courts, the necessary steps to vest the properties in the Dominion Railway Company so as to constitute the new system that we have recommended. Should the companies show themselves ready and anxious to come to a prompt agreement, actual application to the courts would of course not be made.

"We feel that the appointment of receivers is not in the interest of the country's credit. It certainly is not in the interest of the companies, as the evidence of this report shows that the property of the Grand Trunk Com-

pany, if it were put into a receiver's hands, would leave little or nothing for the shareholders. The result of court proceedings would probably be to divest the shareholders of all interest, and to place the government in the position to take, to the fullest extent, the advantages of their legal position as holders of defaulting securities. But, though we hope receiverships will not be necessary, we think the government must face the possibility.

"In the case of the Canadian Northern Railway Company no proceedings in court are requisite. Under the provisions of section 24 of the Canadian Northern Railway Guarantee Act, 1914 (4-5 Geo. V., chap. 20), the Governor-General-in-Council has power, when authorized by Parliament, to declare by Order, if default is made by the company in payment of interest on the \$45,000,000 guaranteed securities (the interest on which is at present being found by the government) that the equity of redemption of the company is absolutely barred and foreclosed; and thereupon the whole property becomes vested in His Majesty.

"If receiverships become necessary, the advantage of appointing the trustees as receivers is obvious. The trustees, with the government behind them, and with the approval of the court, would be in a position to operate the roads as a combined system, to purchase much needed rolling stock, and to make essential improvements, in a way that no ordinary court receiver could do. Receiverships in the ordinary sense would only result in greater traffic congestion than ever, and in losses . . . at large."

SEWAGE TREATMENT ESSENTIAL.*

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Progress in water purification constitutes one of the brightest pages in the history of sanitary engineering in America during the past 25 years, but much remains to be done both as regards its general adoption and its application where local conditions call for special treatment. Apparently, progress in water filtration has been somewhat retarded through efforts to make chlorination serve as a substitute under conditions where it is not entirely adequate. Chlorination has done much to improve public water supplies. But it is not a cure-all, and its limitations are far more clearly appreciated with the practical proofs now existing than when academically recited six or eight years ago.

Under certain conditions chlorination secures public water supplies of good quality without filtration. The great difficulty lies in gauging the proper amount to be introduced. For many water supplies subject to chlorination without filtration, real difficulties are encountered in so adjusting the dose of chlorine as to guard against objectionable taste and odors on the one hand, and inadequate destruction of objectionable bacteria on the other.

Present-day consideration of sewage disposal as related to water supplies assumes that the primary source of supply is not grossly polluted and that any sewage affecting its purity has been treated in order that its filtration for domestic use may not be rendered ineffective through the overloading of the filters. The methods adopted must involve the recognized principle that any water filtration process must begin by the treatment of the sewage before it is allowed to contaminate the source of water supply.

*From "Conservation."