

Editorial

CONTROL OF THE NORMAN DAM.

Many of the problems which enter into the Lake of the Woods investigation are approaching decision by the International Joint Commission. Some of these essentially admit of adjustment upon a monetary basis. With such phases of the investigation the citizens of neither country are very seriously concerned, because any reasonable adjustment of compensation decided upon by the commission will doubtless be acceptable to both countries. There are, however, other phases of the investigation which involve questions of principle or public policy of the individual countries and which necessarily will have to be decided upon national, rather than international, grounds. For example, a problem in which the Canadian public is most vitally concerned now that its import is being generally understood, is the question of national or international control of the Norman Dam—a structure on the Winnipeg River, wholly in Canada, and some 60 miles to the north of the international border.

It has always been fully expected that the commissioners for each country would safeguard the national assets of the other country. But if there should be any effort to compromise the national status of the Norman Dam in Canada, the Canadian members of the Commission are not expected to sacrifice Canadian rights.

It is well known to those of our readers who have followed the Lake of the Woods discussion that the control of the levels of the lake rests very largely with the operators of the Norman Dam. The first public intimation of the stand taken in regard to these operators was a "Letter to the Editor" written by the Hon. Commissioner Jas. A. Tawney, and published in the July 6th, 1916, issue of *The Canadian Engineer*. Leaving aside all question as to whether Mr. Tawney intimated by this letter that he had formed judgment in respect to a matter on which the evidence was not yet entirely presented, the suggestion made by Mr. Tawney that much of last spring's flood damage on the Lake of the Woods watershed might have been avoided by international control of the Norman Dam, was a most surprising expression. Hesitating to "rush in where angels fear to tread," *The Canadian Engineer* at the time made no editorial comment in regard to Mr. Tawney's letter. But we understand that the commissioners have now proceeded so far in their discussions of this phase of the Lake of the Woods case, that reticence in regard to it is no longer necessary or advisable; therefore this journal wishes to place itself clearly upon record as being utterly opposed to any arrangement which will place—in any degree whatsoever—a Canadian structure, located entirely within Canada, in the hands of the people of any other country, even those of our most esteemed and friendly neighbor.

In our opinion, dams such as at International Falls, extending from the main shore of Canada to the main shore of the United States, could be under international control, but in no sense is the Norman Dam an international structure.

If the Commission were to designate the highest and lowest levels to be permitted, the Dominion Government (either directly or co-operatively with the Ontario Government) undoubtedly will be prepared to give assurance

that the specified levels will be maintained and that the dam will be operated according to such findings of the Commission as may be acceptable to both governments. Complementary to this operation an international consulting board might well be organized; the members of this board to keep accurate record of conditions on their respective sides of the boundary. Such an organization could make certain that the operators of all the structures on the watershed are at all times thoroughly conversant with existing data and also with what the board might regard as the probabilities. The office of this board would become a reference centre at which all data would be deposited and from which any information could be secured quickly. Attached to the board could be operating engineers through whom the board would administrate the international structures. Such international assistance doubtless would be received most kindly, but the physical control of the Norman Dam—that is, in actually carrying out the recommendations of the Commission—should be a national matter made effective by co-operation between Canada and Ontario.

In any discussion of the policy attaching to purely national structures, a word may be said upon the subject of national honor. When either the United States or Canada pledges its word that certain matters will be attended to in order to conform to the findings of the International Joint Commission, surely that should be sufficient. In a matter like the control of the Norman Dam, the people of Canada will regard their national status and honor of much more value than are the millions of dollars of shipping, power, lumber, farming and other interests involved. They will cheerfully contribute their share of any reasonable monetary settlement in which the members of the Commission may acquiesce; but when the force of the statements in Mr. Tawney's letter above referred to, is fully appreciated by the people of Canada, they will fully expect that any recommendations approved by the Canadian commissioners will ensure no compromise of Canada's national honor or of this country's actual rights in the ownership of its own structures.

The Canadian Engineer has ascertained the opinions of many of the members of the engineering profession, and in addition to this has been able to obtain representative opinions of many citizens who are not engineers, and it is found that the latter opinions coincide with those of the engineering profession: namely, that if a public vote were to be taken in Canada upon this question, there would be a landslide against international control of the Norman Dam.

PLANNING AHEAD.

When Sir George Foster some months ago issued a call to action to the business men of Canada, they failed to respond.

We as a people are surprisingly slow in our work of planning ahead at this important period in the history of Canada and the British Empire. One is inclined to believe sometimes that the triple task of operating a nation, conducting part of a great war and planning for the peace period, is too big for us. Great Britain is per-