

COMMISSION TO SURVEY INDUSTRIAL SITUATION

The announcement was made to the Senate this week by Hon. Gideon Robertson, minister of labor, of the appointment of a commission, composed of five or seven men commanding the complete confidence of the nation, including labor and capital, to proceed to all centres of industry in the Dominion, survey the situation in all its aspects, ascertain all the facts and report to the government before May 15 upon the possibility of the joint control and operation of certain industries by capital and labor. It is understood that the names of those composing the commission will be announced shortly.

OHIO MAY RESTRICT BOND SALES

A bill has been passed by the Ohio House of Representatives and will be discussed by the Senate next week, restricting the investments of banks operating under charter of that state. There is no limitation in the bill regarding investments in Ohio municipal securities, but it provides that in the case of American municipal securities outside the state of Ohio, the banks can purchase only those of municipalities having a population of one thousand or more and a net debt not more than 10 per cent. of the assessed valuation.

The bill as originally drafted contained a clause especially referring to Canadian securities. It provided that the banks could purchase obligations only of the Dominion or provincial governments and of municipalities having a population of at least one hundred thousand and a net debt of not more than 5 per cent. of assessed value. The Investment Bankers' Association, however, which includes several Canadian members, protested against this clause and it was amended to enable banks to purchase obligations of municipalities having a population of ten thousand or more and a net debt of not more than 7 per cent. of assessed valuation. Sinking funds, waterworks bonds and other "self-sustaining" securities were, of course, not to be included in the net debt. Securities guaranteed by the Dominion, a province, or a municipality rank the same as a direct obligation. School districts were entirely excluded from the list of municipalities, whose obligations might be purchased by banks.

MONTHLY BANK CLEARINGS

The following are the bank clearings for the month ended March 31st, compared with the corresponding month last year:—

	March, 1919.	March, 1918.	Changes.
Montreal	\$433,296,193	\$305,158,929	+ \$128,137,264
Toronto	308,074,864	246,559,204	+ 61,515,660
Winnipeg	130,749,848	182,505,002	— 51,755,154
Vancouver	45,039,214	37,633,399	+ 7,405,815
Ottawa	28,393,489	23,677,409	+ 4,716,080
Calgary	21,394,618	26,689,701	— 5,295,083
Hamilton	21,159,267	19,799,662	+ 1,359,605
Quebec	18,575,247	15,929,438	+ 2,645,809
Edmonton	13,854,024	13,091,114	+ 762,910
Halifax	16,503,187	14,457,473	+ 2,045,714
London	10,879,835	9,179,200	+ 1,700,635
Regina	12,113,835	12,212,186	+ 98,351
St. John	10,570,256	9,169,416	+ 1,400,840
Victoria	8,244,065	7,267,730	+ 976,335
Saskatoon	6,397,855	6,660,566	— 262,711
Moose Jaw	5,390,116	4,711,094	+ 679,022
Brandon	2,208,254	2,471,144	— 262,890
Brantford	3,586,062	3,907,855	— 321,793
Fort William	2,308,447	2,553,839	— 245,392
Lethbridge	2,325,452	3,253,970	— 928,518
Medicine Hat	1,461,411	1,927,294	— 465,883
New Westminster	2,057,044	1,576,375	+ 480,669
Peterboro	2,873,909	2,715,629	+ 158,280
Sherbrooke	4,416,073	3,335,467	+ 1,080,606
Kitchener	3,411,797	2,441,025	+ 970,772
Totals	\$1,115,284,362	\$958,884,121	+ \$156,400,241

BANKRUPTCY BILL DISCUSSED

A second reading of the Dominion Bankruptcy Bill was given in the House of Commons on March 28th. Hon. Hugh Guthrie, who moved it, referred to the fact that Canada has had no act of this kind since 1880. There was one in Canada from 1875 to 1880, but it was repealed in the latter year because it did not work well. Since 1880 some of the provinces have enacted legislation along bankruptcy lines. The effect, he said, would be to abrogate and annul provincial laws. In the new legislation an article had been made to unify the various provincial laws as far as possible, to abolish all priorities and preferences between creditors, to grant expeditious action in regard to insolvents, to make insolvency action less expensive and discharge from former obligations. He said the phraseology of the English legislation was followed as closely as possible. Corporations would be subject to the terms of the bill, which would apply to all except banks, railways, trust companies and insurance companies.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY DEFAULTS INTEREST

Reports received at Ottawa this week state that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway has not met the principal or interest of the \$10,000,000 loan due on April 1st. On April 3rd, Sir Thomas White made the following statement in the House of Commons as to the present position of the government:—

"I cannot, of course, forecast what the course of these negotiations will be, but my view is that the Grand Trunk Railway Co. of Canada will come into the possession of the Dominion government. I am not in the position to say that definitely, because we have not reached an agreement in the negotiations. My hon. friend (Mr. Cahill, of Pontiac) probably has in mind: 'Supposing that our negotiations with the Grand Trunk Railway Co. of Canada continue in their present unsatisfactory condition, what will the government do?' I stated the other day that the Dominion had many remedies which it could pursue. For example, when legally action could be taken, an application might be made to the Exchequer Court for foreclosure under the first mortgage securing bonds of the Grand Trunk Railway Co., guaranteed by the Dominion government. There are other mortgages under which the Dominion government, in the event of default, can proceed, and there has been default to foreclose an offer for sale. Then the Dominion government is in a position to sue on obligations which have matured."

ONTARIO BLUE SKY LEGISLATION POSTPONED

The Ontario government has decided that its legislation to regulate the sale of securities will not be as strict as was originally intended. In fact, no legislation at all may be enacted during the present session, as it has become apparent that an act of this kind must be framed only after a careful investigation of the subject.

One change which was decided upon as a result of a conference with a representative of the Bankers' Association was the addition to Section 4 of the draft as given in *The Monetary Times* last week of a clause to the effect that the act should not apply to commercial paper or mortgages on real estate in Canada, nor to a sale or attempt to sell by a pledge of shares pledged in good faith and not for the purpose of evading the act, nor to a sale by a company of its shares to its existing shareholders for actual cash.

The province of Manitoba has also amended its Sale of Shares Act this session. The amendment provides that the commissioner may, if he sees fit, select two residents of the province to constitute with himself a board to sit on any application. In such cases the applicant must deposit with the commissioner the sum of \$20. Such a board may also be constituted at the instance of the applicant. The decision of the majority of such a board is to be final. This amendment, which was assented to on March 14th, was urged by the Winnipeg Board of Trade.