

The desirability of improving the railroad arrangements along Toronto water-front is patent to a child. On elevated tracks trains would save many minutes coming in and out of the city; which as far as operating expenses are concerned, would shorten the distance between Toronto and Montreal by several miles. The amount of time saved by business men during the year would be enormous. Time is money to the traveller. On the score of improved railroading and general business efficiency, the investment would yield excellent returns. It would be practically impossible, of course, to raise the factories along the lake to the level of an elevated track, and so absolutely eliminate all risks to non-railroad traffic. But there should not be any more difficulty in handling the traffic from warehouses and docks along Toronto water front at night than there is at New York in moving the enormous cargoes of vessels into and out of the dock sheds, when ordinary business is suspended.

The situation is virtually the same as it was seventeen years ago, only more so. In chances for engineering distinction, it is infinitely better than it was then. There is little chance for adequate Dominion assistance for harbor improvement, so long as the sewerage of Toronto is emptied into the Bay. The citizens have turned down last year's council's proposition for dealing with the problem. The by-law authorizing the construction of the bridge on Yonge Street, across the tracks which are a danger to all traffic, and especially the multitudinous traffic to the Island during the summer, was also defeated; so that the City Council is without any specific electoral mandate, and is looking for a policy.

Two new factors have come into the situation. The plans for the new Union Station have been submitted to the civic authorities, and have not been warmly received. The disclosures of plans for the entrance of the Canadian Northern from the east through Balmy Beach and Kew Beach, precipitated Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific schemes for new entrances to the city, in order to obviate the heavy grades which greatly militate against expeditious handling of east-bound traffic from the city. The Minister of Railways has hung up the matter of access from the east for two months until the engineers representing the main interests concerned can find *modus vivendi* which will not destroy the only sylvan retreats by the lake shore which are left to the citizens of Toronto. Mr. C. B. Smith has been appointed by the city to assist and advise the City Engineer. The Board of Trade has also appointed an engineer; and, as an illuminant of the difficulty, the City Council has offered five hundred reprints of the Wellington report to be suitably distributed. The Wellington report is valuable as containing a wise engineering scheme, and as a moral for municipal governors who are either afraid, or have not the capacity to deal with a big question in a big strong way. It is a weakness in civic government that is subject to complete overthrow once a year, that, instead of propounding comprehensive, economical plans indicating real leadership, they have to go back half a generation for inspiration, after having tinkered at the business, to the disgust of their constituents. If ordinary business capacity had been employed, during the stages leading up to the present position, the Council of Engineers which has practically been established, would have been asked to report upon some definite or alternative plans which commended themselves to the public men charged with dealing with the question.

When a business man thinks of structural alterations to meet new business conditions he tells his architect and builder what he wants to do; and it is for them to say whether his ideas are practical. Though the re-organization of transportation facilities inside of Toronto is an engineering problem, the complications arising from the proximity of waterfront and railroads thrusts upon the city the duty of finding some scheme which will serve the city as a whole, while not prejudicing either of the interests of the concern.

Railway transportation must be improved, harbor facilities must be extended. To do either or both of these is to benefit the business connected with both, and though the engineers may be trusted to propound wise and practicable measures to meet existing and future conditions, it would have been better if there were more direct and coherent inspiration from the powers that be. As the city stands to gain by a revision of its transportation services, public opinion must be the governing factor in determining how it shall be done. Seeing that the City Council can be ejected, *holus, bolus*, from office once a year, and new men might spoil the execution of large projects, the city must decide broadly on a policy and delegate the carrying of it into effect to men of proved capacity and tried integrity.

What is required is some body compounding the function of a Board of Directors and a public commission. "The Canadian Engineer" has reason to believe that if the city would undertake to bear a part of the cost of what would be a great public improvement, and facilitation of business, the railways could be persuaded to fall in with the idea of forming a Terminal Company. The bonds required for such an undertaking would be very heavy. They should be guaranteed by the city, (possibly by the Province), in conjunction with the Railroad Companies; in which case representatives of the Province, of the City, of the Board of Trade, should be on the Board of Management. The function of this Company would be to control and manage not only the Union Station, but all tracks entering or within the city limits. The existing railways would use all these tracks in common; and railways hereafter desiring entrance into the city could be placed upon an equal footing with them. The Terminal Company would handle all cars once they came within its sphere, and collect and distribute all freight within the city. Four tracks, one each for east and west bound freight, and one each for east and west bound passenger traffic, would serve to handle Toronto business practically for all time.

Now, if the principle of some such scheme as this, could have been endorsed by the city, the railways, and the mercantile organizations, the council of Engineers would have a task thoroughly in keeping with the character of their profession. If a great community will only make up its mind as to what it needs; engineers can give it. In the present case the engineers are looked to for leadership. So it is up to them. Good luck to them.

SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

The report of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, for 1906, shows that society to be in robust health. Possibly never before in its history has the growth in membership and in financial surplus been so pleasing, and never before has the society entered upon a new year with a brighter promise for the future.