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The Canadian Engineer

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A reader is anxious to secure copies of the Canadian Engineer for May 3rd, 1907, and is willing to pay 25 cents a piece for these. Perhaps some of our subscribers can accommodate him.

TRANSPORTATION.

A few years ago in Canada the great question of national concern was population. Now it is transportation. Large areas, that a few years ago were but sparingly settled, have become prosperous communities. New railroads are required before they can be constructed. Even with early and late sailing our steamboat lines cannot care for the lake traffic.

Inter-provincial trade has greatly increased. The products of the farm, forest and mines required a road to the

markets of the world. A producing people are a spending people. The homes all over the land required the luxuries from our large centers. The transportation companies were taxed to their utmost, the rolling stock was crowded to its fullest capacity. Accidents increased, until 1907 rolled up a total three times as great as 1906. Largely because our channels of transportation were crowded.

Nor can any speedy remedy be applied, ships require much time to build, the double-tracking of railways is, if anything, a slower task. The transportation problem of to-day is not being solved, indeed cannot be. We are now working at the problem of the future. To originate and give form to a sound transportation policy for Canada's future requires broad-minded imaginative men. We must not think of to-day alone but plan for the to-morrow. And plan, not sparingly, but generously, for are we not adding to our numbers at the rate of a quarter a million a year?

If Canada is to become the great nation we wish it to be there must be conceived a comprehensive transportation policy.

IRRIGATION.

In Canada irrigation is in its infancy. In the United States even yet it is much of an experiment. Many sections of Canada, however, are now supplied with or are carrying on irrigation work. Many more such schemes will follow and at the present time the Governments of Canada and the Provinces interested should watch carefully projected legislation and should themselves prepare a programme leading to a more careful regulation of irrigation companies, if, indeed, they should not at once enter upon a policy of public ownership and operation of all irrigation schemes that are larger than the works required by an individual for and on his own property.

Some day sections of Canada will have a sad awakening to the fact that irrigation ditches do not always irrigate. For years in some localities ditches have been opened, distribution drains built, but a kind Providence supplied moisture and they were not required. The settlement grew year by year the ditches were extended. This has been repeated: and yearly too irrigation companies have collected their water rates. Should a really dry season come the ditches could not water a tithe of the land and where shall the blame for such a condition be placed.

The Government regulates the business of our fire insurance companies; it superintends the investments and inspects the securities of our life insurance companies; hail insurance companies must operate under limitation laid down for them, but the irrigation companies, the insurance companies of the waste land, have escaped so far those regulations and restrictions which should limit the operations of such public corporations. This is not as it should be. It should be the duty of some responsible person or board to specify the delivery of a ditch for a certain section. Some general specification should be framed and enforced governing the sale of water rights by the irrigation companies. This is just as important as the chartering of the company and restricting its powers of diverting water.

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Mr. Graham told Mr. Borden that the report of the Quebec Bridge Commission would be brought down as early as possible. He was urging its preparation.