

## ENGINEERING LEGISLATION MAKING PROGRESS

### British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec Acts Passed—Bills in Alberta, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Have Received Second Reading—Outlook Favorable

**L**EGISLATION providing for the registration and licensing of engineers has been introduced in several provincial parliaments within the past few weeks and has made notable progress. Following is a brief review of the status of this effort to increase the prestige of the profession and to safeguard the public against unqualified engineers:—

#### British Columbia

The bill incorporating the "Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia" was introduced and read the first time on February 13th. It was reported by the private bills committee on March 4th, given second reading March 19th, and went into committee of the whole on March 24th. It was given third reading and passed on March 29th. Considerable debate took place on the second reading, and at times it was quite stormy. The premier criticized the bill but agreed that he would not oppose the second reading. Several amendments were made in the private bills committee and in the committee of the whole, some of which have been referred to in previous issues of *The Canadian Engineer*. A more detailed review of the amendments will be published in an early issue. The bill as introduced was very similar to the bill introduced in the Alberta legislature, the text of which was published in full in the March 25th issue of *The Canadian Engineer*.

Following is a classification of the engineers who were behind the bill financially, made up from the list as at February 20th:—

Civil engineers, 175; British Columbia land surveyors, 16; electrical engineers, 17; mechanical engineers, 16; mining engineers, 22; draughtsmen, 1; chemical engineers, 5; naval architects, 1; mining surveyors, 2; forest engineers, 1; total, 256.

Although there was considerable objection from certain mining interests, a very representative body of mining engineers were behind the bill, including many of the best known men in the profession. Practically all of the prominent civil engineers in the province supported the bill.

The bill was in charge of Fred. W. Anderson, M.L.A., who is an engineer, and whose active and unceasing efforts prevented the bill from being thrown out or nullified to an even greater extent by more sweeping amendments.

#### Alberta

The bill incorporating the "Association of Professional Engineers of Alberta," the text of which was published in full in the March 25th issue of *The Canadian Engineer*, has passed the second reading and is through the committee, but still has to pass the third reading. It was so roughly treated in committee that the engineers who sponsored its introduction seriously considered withdrawing it, but as there had been such great difficulty in getting all the various engineering interests to agree on its provisions, the joint committee of engineers in charge of the bill decided to let it go through with a hope of improving it in future sessions. In fact, a fight is still being made to have some of the amendments modified before the third reading.

Practically all of the professional engineers in Alberta are solidly behind the bill. A satisfactory agreement had been made with the Alberta land surveyors and architects, so there was no opposition from those two sources. Unfortunately, however, the house had been stirred to great activity and independent "thought" by a chiropractor's bill which had been submitted and thrown out on second reading, instead of in the private bills committee, which is unprecedented in connection with private bills. The engineers' bill met with strong opposition during the second reading, and a division was necessary to refer it to the private bills committee.

The engineers had not made any lobby. The bill was submitted on its merits. It became apparent immediately when the private bills committee started to work that there was very strong opposition to anything in the way of forming a close corporation. There had been a good deal of misunderstanding about the bill. The idea had gained ground that if the bill passed, a farmer could not build a ditch or a road on his own farm without hiring an engineer. Some of the labor unions thought that the professional engineer was seeking to trespass on their private grounds.

An endeavor was made during two sittings of the private bills committee to fight the bill through as it had been submitted. Then there seemed to be no question but that the committee themselves would either throw the bill out, or else the house certainly would at the third reading. The bill was then changed so that the association of engineers to be formed will be merely a voluntary one, and anyone can practice in the province whether registered or not. The bill now merely patents the name, "registered professional engineer." With this change there was very little opposition to the bill in the committee, and it was finally passed and reported. It is confidently expected that the bill, as it now stands, will be passed in the house.

"Speaking to a number of my friends who are not engineers, but broad-minded men who take a general interest in things," says a Calgary correspondent of *The Canadian Engineer*, "I find that the general feeling is that the engineers could not expect to go before the house and at the first attempt, in dealing with an entirely new subject such as this, hope to get through such complete and comprehensive legislation as was submitted. The feeling seems to be that if the bill goes through as at present, it is all that the engineers could expect.

"The engineers' representative gave warning to the private bills committee that the engineers expect to make the best use possible of the legislation as it has been permitted to go through; that they expect to be able to show by their actions during the next year or two, that examination and registration of professional engineers is a desirable thing, and fully expect to come back to the house in a year or two and ask for amendments to the bill which would make registration compulsory. The bill as passed by the committee and reported to the house, has not been unnecessarily torn to pieces, which will very greatly facilitate the gaining of amendments in future years.

"The following has nothing to do with the Act, but the ideas may be of interest. The average man on the street has a clear conception of the difference between a lawyer and a lawyer's clerk, although it may be argued that the really smart clerk in a lawyer's office is just as good as the lawyer himself. The public understand the difference between a doctor and a chemist. Most people have some idea of the difference between a Royal Academician and a house painter. But when it comes to the engineering profession, the public seem to absolutely fail to distinguish between what would be called a professional engineer and a locomotive engineer, a stationary engineer or even a plumber or gas-fitter.

"There also seems to be a very great lack of appreciation on the part of the public regarding what they owe to the engineering profession. Anybody who will take the trouble to think for a few minutes, will soon see that practically every public utility has been invented, designed and executed by the engineer. Transportation facilities, the telegraph, the telephone,—all have been worked out by the engineer. Tie them up and you would practically tie up the business of the whole world."

#### Saskatchewan

The proposed bill incorporating the "Association of Professional Engineers of Saskatchewan" has not yet been introduced in the legislature of that province, owing to the antagonistic attitude of the members of that parliament toward legislation benefitting any profession. A committee of the provincial division of the Engineering Institute of Canada, of which Stewart Young, of Regina, is chairman,