

the business acumen of the builders of both the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern than this: that they kept their capital charges low in the early day of development.

Mr. Tye himself shows that there is no more severe condemnation which can be urged against the National Transcontinental and the Grand Trunk Pacific than their enormous cost through undeveloped territory. Development roads are needed in Canada, many miles of them, but development roads have no right to cost \$100,000 per mile, and there can be little excuse for the construction of the National Transcontinental except development.

The Canadian Northern to-day between Winnipeg and Edmonton is an infinitely better line than the Canadian Pacific of 25 years ago between the same meridians, and the money required for betterments comparatively trifling. The main line will then be, as it now is, for three-fourths of its length (to quote the same high authority again), "the best long-distance line in existence." This applies not only to its standards of grades and curvature, but to the selection of its general route and the territory which it serves. This is no reflection on the work of the C.P.R. men in earlier days. There were reasons for its more southerly location across the prairies and around Lake Superior other than the attainment of the best physical standards.

The C.N.R. started where the C.P.R. left off, and with the benefit of its experience as well as that of the American lines. If it had not profited by the lesson the reflection would have been on the executive of the newer road.

[NOTE.—The following paragraphs were not included in the manuscript sent to the Canadian Society, but are included in the manuscript sent to *The Canadian Engineer* with a note from Mr. Wicksteed to the effect that they are additional paragraphs.—EDITOR.]

Mr. Tye shows that the cost of the Transcontinental and G.T.P. is excessive. The writer heartily agrees, but granting the extravagance, are they altogether useless? and being built, is it quite unreasonable that a government should keep them in repair? One of the functions conceded to a government is regulation of rates and tariffs. What better check on unfair tariffs could there be than a first-class road connecting the main centres? The plea for the Trent Valley Canal was that it would put a check on freight rates.

The Intercolonial and the C.P.R. were first projected as "political" necessities, as a continuous binder between the provinces. The I.C.R. remained in the hands of the government, the C.P.R. passed into private hands and became a commercial power. The I.C.R. became a burden to the country, but not an insuperable one, and during the last months of military operations has been an essential factor.

May not the N.T.R. and the western section of the G.T.R. make the same plea for existence, that they may some day be a military necessity? The C.N.R. and C.P.R. are both vulnerable on Lake Superior and along the Fraser River, so are the St. Lawrence and the Welland canals. The N.T.R. and Intercolonial are safe, and while a possible difference with our southern neighbors seems a more remote possibility than ever before, quarrels do occur in almost unexpected ways, and "preparedness" is the best antidote and the modern by-word. Germany's experience seems to be that military railways are the best form of "preparedness."

A function which has never as yet been ascribed to any government is that of active competition with private mercantile ventures. Aside from the impossibility of

economical management which has been often pointed out, the ethical principles involved in a government's using its unlimited credit and power to destroy the business of a privately owned competitor seems altogether indefensible. Whatever may be urged for nationalization of all railways (and it seems to be very hard to make out a case), competition is unpermissible because of the inequality of the competitors.

HOW KITCHENER FIRED ITS CITY ENGINEER.

Under the above heading, The Toronto Star last Saturday published the following special dispatch from Kitchener, Ont. :—

A case of considerable interest was heard before Magistrate Weir yesterday when Alderman P. M. Bowman appeared to answer to the charge of offering material consideration to Alderman Jack Reid, contrary to the Municipal Act, if he would come back from Owen Sound and vote for the dismissal of Engineer Johnston.

There was also a second charge, that of offering Alderman Brubacher certain things in reference to his assessment if he would vote all right. From the evidence adduced the dismissal of City Engineer Johnston was a part of the propaganda of the Citizens' League, as Bowman told Reid that the Citizens' League would pay his expenses and railway fare if he would come back from Owen Sound and vote for the dismissal of Johnston at the April council meeting.

Alderman Brubacher in his evidence stated that he had been visited by Alderman Bowman, who told him that certain members of the city council couldn't understand why Brubacher was taking the position in favor of Johnston, and he (Brubacher) told them that he had always found him all right, and would support him. The witness was told that some of the aldermen were in favor of putting in the east end storm drain which affected his property. Bowman then told him that there was a meeting that night and "if you cannot vote in favor of Michel, you had better stay away from the meeting."

In the matter of Alderman Reid, he told of having been called upon twice at his home by Bowman to try and arrange for Reid to come back from Owen Sound to vote on the engineering question, and after he had gone to Owen Sound, of receiving a telephone communication asking him to come back. In the matter of who was to pay expenses, Bowman had said: "I believe the Citizens' League will pay them."

After hearing the evidence for the prosecution, Magistrate Weir adjourned the case until June 26th.

FUEL COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA.

Charles A. Magrath, C.E., D.T.S., chairman of the Canadian section of the International Joint Commission, has been appointed special commissioner to deal with the fuel situation in Canada. Wide powers are conferred upon him, including the fixing, if necessary, of prices. Authority will also be given to take over and operate as a war measure the mines in the Crow's Nest country, where operations are tied up by a strike. The coal situation and the outlook for next winter are considered so critical that the government decided that there must be a central authority having drastic powers of regulation of supply and demand. The action was taken under the War Measures Act. Mr. Magrath will enter upon his duties immediately and will work in conjunction with the Railway Commission in equalizing distribution.