

Editorial

MONTREAL ENGINEERS PETITION CITY TO INVESTIGATE AQUEDUCT ENLARGEMENT.

Thirty-one of the leading engineers resident in Montreal have handed a petition to the city council and board of control, again calling upon the authorities to appoint a commission of prominent engineers for a comprehensive study and report upon the aqueduct enlargement scheme. The text of the petition is printed upon another page of this issue.

There is no doubt but that the city council should at once grant the request and appoint a strong and entirely independent commission consisting of at least three qualified engineers, a banker who is conversant with the city's finances—Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor would be most acceptable—and, as chairman, some prominent Montreal business man who has the welfare of the city at heart, and who has been efficient and successful in general business matters, but who has never "mixed in" politically. This commission should be given funds and authority with which to work unhampered, and its hearings should be public. If necessary, it should be made a Royal Commission, appointed by Quebec. The matter is worthy of it. Some ten millions of dollars may be at stake.

Whether they ever recognize the fact or not, the citizens of Montreal owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the engineers of that city who have brought this matter to their attention, and who have kept at it, despite all discouragements. To J. A. Jamieson, R. S. Lea and G. R. Heckle must go the credit for having first brought the matter to the city's attention. These three men had been appointed by the city as consulting engineers to investigate the break in the conduit which happened in December, 1913. About March 1st, 1914, in reporting upon the conduit, they made five recommendations, of which the very first was,—

"That before any further work is proceeded with, at least on the north side of the aqueduct, an investigation be made by a commission of engineers into the entire aqueduct scheme, which will include revised estimates of the cost of construction and the quantity and cost of the power developed."

This recommendation was never adopted, and the three engineers got a hearty "call-down" for touching matters not directly bearing upon the conduit. However, from evidence that they had uncovered in their conduit investigations, they were convinced that such a commission was needed in the public interest, and Mr. Jamieson refused to let the matter drop. He wrote many public letters to Controller Cote concerning the situation, and it was not long before other public-spirited engineers, such as Sir John Kennedy, Walter J. Francis, Phelps Johnson, R. A. Ross, Arthur Surveyer, Richard Durley, Ernest Marceau and many others, took up the cudgels and secured action by the Council of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers and by Montreal's Board of Trade.

It is plain, therefore, that the Montreal civic authorities have had this matter before them for more than two years. During those two years large sums have

been spent on the work—sums which a commission may say have been spent uselessly. *The Canadian Engineer* endorses the request to the Montreal city council that this work be stopped until a commission has reported upon it. The scheme may be sound, but it should be proven so, clearly and above-board. It is more imperative now, than ever before in the Empire's history, to prevent all economic waste. Remember the silver bullet!

WATER TRANSPORTATION IN CANADA.

In the March 2nd issue of *The Canadian Engineer* there appeared a paper on "Economic and Strategical Aspects of the Enlargement of the Welland Canal and of Construction of the Georgian Bay Ship Canal."

This paper was presented before the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers by Major R. W. Leonard, Mem. Can. Soc. C. E.

The following issue of the paper contained a discussion of this interesting theme, in which different aspects of the project were dealt with.

The question of transportation in Canada is receiving particular attention at the present time, this attention, undoubtedly, being accentuated by the fact that the war is expected to introduce new problems which will be intimately related to transportation in more ways than one.

A great deal of discussion has been given to the Georgian Bay Canal. Pamphlets approving and disapproving of the project have been printed and circulated by the thousands—special articles have appeared in all kinds of publications, and it is doubtful if any single engineering project has brought about so much discussion as it has.

In view of the importance of the transportation problem in Canada, it is to be hoped that the duties and hours of the Georgian Bay Canal Commission will be extended so as to include a thorough investigation of the whole subject of water transportation between the Lower St. Lawrence and Lake Superior by the St. Lawrence and lower lake route, as well as by the Ottawa and Georgian Bay route, and that the advantages and disadvantages of both routes be exhaustively compared with each other and also with lake and rail transportation via Georgian Bay, and by all rail routes via railways already built or hereafter to be built, because it is only by considering the Ottawa and Georgian Bay route as one of two great water routes and again by comparing these with the upper lake and rail route and with all rail routes that the Georgian Bay Canal project can be properly and intelligently dealt with.

If the Commission were empowered to extend its investigations along these lines, it would necessarily include some new surveys and estimates for dealing with the St. Lawrence and its canals and water power sites between Montreal and Prescott. Such surveys could be quickly made and at a cost which would be insignificant as compared with their value in enabling the Commission to arrive at conclusions which would be more satisfactory in every way.