

Editorial

AFTER THE WAR.

Senator Frederic Nicholls introduced a resolution in the Senate recently, calling for the appointment of a committee to inquire into and report upon the best methods of conserving and increasing our domestic and overseas trade, so that at the end of our present prosperity, we may not unduly suffer when the stimulus resulting from munitions orders and other war supplies is removed. After the war, trade and commerce will again be disorganized. New conditions will be met. In addition to conserving our present trade in natural and manufactured products, efforts must be made to increase our trade in foreign markets. The countries now at war, particularly those that have been devastated in Europe, will have to expend large sums in reconstruction, and will become customers of those countries which are most ready to supply the requirements promptly and at a reasonable price.

The Senator is one of the first of our prominent manufacturers to admit that in this country we have had little experience in either looking for or catering to an export trade, and if we desire to share in the volume of business that will be offering overseas, we can make our preparations none too soon.

Admitting that Germany in the past has built up her foreign trade largely through the help of the State, and admitting, as intimated by Sir Robert Borden, that State aid will be extended at even greater lengths after the conclusion of the war, it behooves us, said Senator Nicholls, to consider whether we in Canada will leave to the individual the development of the foreign trade that might naturally accrue to Canada, or whether the government of this country will, in some form, undertake to assist in the development. The Canadian government probably will have to take a more intimate interest in the active promotion of foreign trade. The British government for two years has been making its preparations for the encouragement of British trade and commerce after the war and the preparations are well advanced.

We have a number of commissions working on various problems. The government should be encouraged to seek the services of business men and experts, as is being done particularly in Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States. The war, and the period to follow, involve matters too large to be handled adequately by governments as they were before August, 1914. The problems we are facing, and will face, are sufficiently complex and serious to demand the attention of the most capable business men of the country, working in conjunction with the cabinet ministers and their deputies.

HANDLING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.

At this time, when every car on the continent is urgently needed, special attention must be given to methods of handling construction materials. Cars which are standing on sidings or in teaming yards, waiting to be unloaded, are doing nobody any good. Their idleness not only deprives shippers of their use when they are sorely needed, but their presence in yards which are

crowded is a nuisance. Incidentally delays in unloading them are expensive to the persons to whom their contents are consigned, on account of demurrage charges. As a matter of fact, however, these charges by no means represent the loss at present caused to the public by delays in unloading cars, and they should be much higher. Several years ago roadbuilders, for instance, discussed at length the difficulties caused by the practice of holding on sidings, for long periods, the tank cars in which road oil is shipped; and now, where any considerable amount of work is done with bituminous materials, large storage tanks are often provided so the cars can be discharged as rapidly as possible and returned to the shipper. Now that cars used in delivering brick, gravel, broken stone, cement and all other materials are so difficult to obtain, it is desirable to employ the same promptness in removing their contents as that which the roadbuilders generally show in the case of tank cars.

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE ENGINEER.

The new atmosphere created by the events of the past three years will make the general public intolerant of past methods of government. It will require facts rather than finely spun theories.

It has been the engineer who has saved Europe and all civilization by destruction. The same adaptable individual can save the future by reconstruction; the task is well within his powers. Statecraft is merely national engineering; large extension of solutions already made in various directions by the engineer form a solid basis upon which to build.

It is a mystery why the engineer is inarticulate; he knows and is seemingly content with knowing. Men of action are rarely glib of speech. It would seem as though we now choose our masters by the sole test of ready tongue and whirlwind delivery. Any man, however hesitant, who has a real grip of solid fact, can, with some practice, interest an audience. Hesitant delivery, if the sense is right, will be tolerated. Glib tongue and easy promises which always fail to mature are the ordinary experience of the existing system.

This much at least is certain, that as the creator of modern wealth, the engineer fills the pockets of the community. It is high time an exchange of commercial values be made. Every engineer should see to it that the opportunity now open should not be allowed to pass. A similar chance to exchange the men who do for the men who talk will possibly never recur.

The profession of an engineer is popular in the sense that, although it is not understood by the layman, the latter is quite able to judge cause from effect. Where the achievement is wonderful it is safe to infer that brains and capacity of a high order accompanied the material to produce the visible end. The man who designs bridges, builds docks and railways, and employs thousands on a single job, can surely apply this mentality and fertility of resource to aid in governing a country.

There are, doubtless, numerous reasons why the engineer does not figure in the national administration,