

Editorial

HYDRO-ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT IN ONTARIO.

An announcement of no mean importance was that made last week by the Honorable G. Howard Ferguson, Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines for the Province of Ontario, to the effect that an agreement had been completed whereby the government takes over the entire business and assets of the Electric Power Company, including all their subsidiary companies, twenty-two in number. Under the arrangement by which these companies come under the jurisdiction of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, it is expected that not only will Central Ontario be served but North Bay and Nipissing District will be able to get the advantages of public hydro development.

It has been said that the strength of any nation can, to at least a large degree, be measured by the intelligence shown in the development of its natural resources. Water power in Ontario as a provider of human necessity is apparently destined to see great development during the next few years and the government is apparently determined that in order to fill the public needs for water power it is in the interest of the whole community that the water powers in the province should be developed as rapidly and as efficiently as possible.

By their very inherent nature, water powers are monopolistic. There is only one Niagara, and while the companies, both public and private, that control the power development possible through Niagara may control the water power of a large territory, a thousand companies could build steam power plants in the same territory.

Ontario is essentially the manufacturing province of the Dominion, and it is fair to assume that there will be a constantly increasing development of power of all kinds for industrial purposes. Present-day industrial and economic standards have made power a public necessity. Water power is a supplier of this necessity, and while the employment of water power is very old, more progress in its use had been made in the last twenty-five years than perhaps in all the years that have gone before.

Statistics show that we have coal for many years to come, but they also show that the economical deposits are being worked first and as the coal becomes deeper the cost of production increases very rapidly.

The popular notion is that when a water power is well constructed it costs so little to run that the power developed is the cheapest in the world. The facts do not appear to support this view, but rather disclose the fact that steam power is, under certain conditions, a very keen competitor of water power. Steam power is movable, flexible; water power is inflexible and not portable. Steam power can be taken to the factory in small or large units as may be required; on the other hand, the factory must, to a large extent, be taken to the water power.

Irrespective of the relative value of water power as against steam power, the fact remains that the announcement recently made by the Ontario Government is far-reaching in character and is significant in that it indicates that the government recognizes the importance of seeing to it that every section of the province is served so far as it is in its power to do so.

By this step it is said that many power developments will be made possible which have heretofore been held for a nominal rental, and unrelated as they should be to the industrial life of the community.

AN INTERESTING REPORT.

In this week's issue we publish an abstract of the report of the Quebec Roads Department, which was issued only a few weeks ago. In connection with this report there is one feature of it that should be specially noticed; that is the expedition with which it has been prepared and placed in the hands of those for whom it is designed. Hon. J. A. Tessier, Minister of Roads, and his associates are to be complimented upon the completeness of the report and the promptness with which it has been issued.

There are some very interesting features in connection with the report as indicating the very remarkable development that has taken place during the last twenty years in the good roads movement so far as Quebec is concerned. The table which is printed at the end of the article in this issue calls attention to the remarkable fact that whereas in 1895-96 the sum of money expended for good roads in the Province of Quebec was \$30.20, the amount of money spent in the year 1914-15 was \$6,140,273.13. This statement tells its own story.

PREPAREDNESS FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

A bill has been brought before the Ontario Legislature which is to create "The Trades and Labor Branch." By the establishment of this branch of the Public Works Department now it should be fully organized and ready to take its place as the representative of labor throughout the province, and will be in a splendid position to render great service when the great army of workers return from Europe. The branch is to be presided over by a superintendent who will have the powers and duties usually assigned to a deputy head of a department. Officers engaged in the administration of any of the laws relating to matters assigned to the branch will make their reports to the superintendent and will carry out instructions as directed by him.

For the present the branch will have charge of the administration of The Bureau of Labor Act, The Stationary and Hoisting Engines Act, The Building Trades Protection Act, The Factory, Shop and Office Building Act, and The Steam Boilers Act. Among other things, the duties of the branch will be to look after the general welfare of the industrial classes.

Another very important duty which will be assigned to this branch will be to enquire and report as to the establishment of new industries in Ontario, in any case where by reason of the production of raw material for such industry in Ontario, or the immigration of persons skilled in the particular industry or other circumstances which make it appear that such industries can be profitably carried on.