

### CIVIC INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE

THE city of Winnipeg is planning two ventures in the industrial field. Curiously enough, Winnipeg does not operate its own street railway or telephone service, and public utilities are considered more suitable for public ownership than are ordinary industrial enterprises. One of the schemes which is planned is a pulp and paper mill. Preliminary steps with a view to the erection and operation of such a mill were taken by the city council at a meeting held on April 21st. It is calculated that an initial capital expense of \$3,000,000 would be entailed for this purpose. The other scheme which is receiving attention is a milk distribution plant. It is figured that this would eliminate the high costs of distribution, incident to the operation of several companies. An expert was engaged to investigate the possibilities and he has reported that the annual saving to the city, as compared with the present method, would be \$235,000.

Before entering upon ventures of this kind, however, the city should thoroughly investigate a number of other experiments, which have been made by Canadian cities along similar lines, such as the Toronto civic abattoir and also of this kind carried on by United States cities. In a majority of instances the results have been distinctly unsuccessful. The fact that a city contemplates ventures of this kind has an injurious effect upon its civic credit, as borrowers in the distinctly favor municipalities which adopt a policy of retrenchment. The financial policy of the city of Winnipeg during the past few years, has attracted much commendation, especially its practice of including war expenditures in current account. The rather uncertain position at the present time of the Greater Winnipeg Water District's finances, in which district Winnipeg is the principal partner, is a sufficiently variable factor without the introduction of other industrial enterprises, the result of which is doubtful and in which more failures than successes have been recorded.

### THE CONTROL OF AIR TRAFFIC

THE action of the Canadian Pacific in applying for an air charter is one which is welcome to the public in Canada as it is desirable that this new industry should be operated along economic lines. This can be best assured by private management, subject to government control through an organization similar to the Dominion Board of Railway Commissioners. The control of this traffic will be entirely in the hands of the federal government as the British North America Act gives it all the power that is necessary for this purpose. Numerous difficulties will inevitably present themselves during the early years of operation; the work of the board will, therefore, be extensive and it should be composed of competent members. The subject of air traffic should also be referred to a committee of the House of Commons for the consideration of legislation.

The plans outlined by Mr. Grant Hall, vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in a recent statement, indicate that the air system will be operated in close co-operation with the existing railway and steamship service of the company. The same thing can be applied to the national railway system which should compete on the same basis as private organizations.

### EFFECT OF LOW MONEY VALUE

ACCORDING to Lord d'Abernon, who is distinguished for his work in overhauling the finances of Turkey and of Egypt, the depreciation in the value of money has been a large factor in bringing about unsettled industrial conditions. He points out that during the four years of war this was much greater than that from the year 1700 to 1900. This was due to the great increase during the war in the quantity of legal tender in circulation. Paper currency—having the power of legal tender,—is now outstanding to the amount of probably \$6,000,000,000, whereas in 1914, the amount was about £1,000,000,000.

"That means," he says, "that the amount of legal tender has increased very much more rapidly than the amount of commodities in use, and consequently, even if the quantitative theory of currency is not fully accepted, that must have a very important effect on the level of prices.

"Take the United Kingdom, for example. The amount of legal tender in circulation is from two to three times as great as it was in 1914. In France and in Germany there are still greater increases. As for Russia, the increase is enormous, although it should be noted that the precise effect on the world increase of prices of a great rise of local prices in any particular country is very obscure. This vast increase in the quantity of currency meant a fall in the standard of value of from 50 to 60 per cent.

"It is ludicrous to suppose that such a radical alteration in the value of the counters in which financial transactions are measured can be lived through without radical readjustments. In the second place, if these fluctuations are to continue, either upward or downward, it is almost imperative to establish a sliding scale in accordance with which financial obligations can be adjusted. Is it not of obvious advantage to arrange such a scale in advance, to be applied automatically, rather than to permit each fluctuation in the value of currency to fall on an unprepared world and to be followed by a series of struggles between the parties to money agreements, in order to arrive at a satisfactory settlement?"

What Lord d'Abernon advises is the adoption officially of one of the tables of prices of a large range of standard commodities as an index to the true value of money. Some prices on the list may rise and some may fall; but, provided the selection is sufficiently extensive and varied from the average, the exact value of currency can be scientifically and accurately determined. Lord d'Abernon would then refer all wages and minor salaries as they fell due to the index and would require the payment, not of the face value, but of the amount to which the table showed it was then equivalent.

The World Trade Club, the head office of which is in San Francisco, Cal., is urging the adoption of the metric system in measurements and weights. All countries have adopted such a system excepting Canada and the United States, which have applied the decimal principle to currency only, and Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, which have not adopted any of the important units of measurements. Such a system would unquestionably facilitate intercourse in trade and finance and would soon repay the effort put forth and the difficulty involved in obtaining it.

### ALBERTA LAND SETTLEMENTS ASSOCIATION FORM

"The Alberta Land Settlement Association was organized in the Calgary Board of Trade rooms last week, with an initial membership of forty-three persons and firms, representative of the principal firms in Alberta engaged in the business of selling farm lands. The association is for the

purpose of enabling the agents of the Dominion government in centres in the United States to bring prospective settlers into direct communication with reliable men and firms in Alberta who are able to supply the American requirements. O. N. Gilbert, of Calgary, was elected president; R. B. Welliver, Red Deer, vice-president. The appointment of a secretary-treasurer is left to the members of the executive in Calgary.