

Editorials

ENGINEERS AND GOVERNMENT

The science of government, or more especially its practice, is something which affects every individual ruled. If his life be not particularly touched, his pocket certainly is.

One English premier defined the task of government as that of making virtue easy and vice difficult. In other words, encouragement of right and suppression of wrong are the main features of public administration.

In a democratic country, under all existing systems, there are almost as many drawbacks from perfection as under an autocracy. In literal fact, beneficent autocracy is by no means an inherently bad thing.

History has, however, shown that save in exceptional cases unbridled power leads too often to license and abuse. Moreover, commonsense prefers collective responsibility and direct popular control.

Another English premier, not in office at the time, proposed in a speech an ideal system to combine the two. A single individual was to be chosen by popular vote, and into his hands was to be committed absolute power and responsibility, the time of office to be limited and the occupant to be executed at its termination. This latter provision was an unfortunate necessity but it was argued that it would provide against abuse of power.

Ideal systems have been many. The best known, perhaps, is that of More's "Utopia." Meeting practical conditions, however, the populace may be said to be the shareholders in the national concern; the elected representatives, the board of directors; while the executive administration is delegated from parliament as a whole and is responsible thereto and so indirectly to the people at large.

As in a commercial concern, it is necessary first that the directors have valid qualifications and that the executives have expert knowledge of the business.

The legislature is the nation in miniature, or should be so representative. Once having elected its member, the constituency in voting has delegated its authority into the keeping of that individual.

It is important, first, that all interests of the populace be represented, and second, that its affairs be entrusted to men of real capacity. While commercial interests bulk largely, labor also is increasing in strength and agricultural interests have a good showing; but many professions full of able and public-spirited men are excluded.

The engineer is very rarely found active in public affairs although he has had a training which qualifies him for office in no mean or unworthy manner. This condition must be changed at an early date. The engineer's actual stake in the community is very large; the interests of which he is custodian are incalculable; he is a man of considerable mentality, fertile in resource, and trained in expedient. Upon his shoulders in normal times rests a large administrative load. Why should not the country have the benefit of his experience? No one is more fitted; no one more highly trained. Think it over and, in coming elections, if you are nominated for any public office whatsoever—whether as reeve or premier—accept! It is your duty to the profession.

THE GRAND TRUNK PRESIDENCY

Members of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers will rejoice that one of their number has been elected to the very responsible position of president of the Grand Trunk Railway System. Howard G. Kelley's engineering and executive ability is well known and there is no doubt but that his presidency will mark a new era for the Grand Trunk, provided that a Canadian board of directors is formed which will be more closely in touch with affairs than is the present board, and provided that Mr. Kelley is given an entirely free hand and permitted to use the dividends for betterments if he so desires.

The Grand Trunk System is a large one, even on this continent of large railway systems, and Mr. Kelley's work will be arduous and fraught with the gravest responsibilities, not only to the shareholders of his road but to the country of which he is a citizen.

The latest available statistics show that the Grand Trunk operates 4,788 miles of track, not including over 1,500 miles of sidings. The length of its operated road-bed is a little more than 4,000 miles, of which over 700 miles is double-tracked. The system is divided into three operating divisions, *viz.*, the eastern division, including thirteen districts; the Ontario division, having fourteen districts; and the western division, with five districts.

The Grand Trunk has an equipment of 1,143 locomotives and about 41,000 cars. The gross receipts of the system for some years past have been between \$40,000,000 and \$50,000,000 per annum. About 20,000,000 tons of freight are hauled each year, and about 12,000,000 passengers are carried. The share capital of the road is approximately \$250,000,000 and the total assets exceed \$500,000,000.

The system also controls many other important railway companies, such as the Central Vermont and the Grand Trunk Pacific, the figures for which are not included in the above statistics, which will also come under Mr. Kelley's jurisdiction.

Mr. Kelley has taken over his new duties at a somewhat critical period in the Grand Trunk's history. The Drayton-Acworth report indicates the size of his problem. Shortage of cars and motive power will no doubt worry him not a little, and his troubles will not be lightened by the changed aspect of the Canadian Northern competition under government ownership, nor by the strong tendency toward public ownership of his own railway.

Mr. Kelley will have need for all the ability and capacity for work with which he is rightly credited. We believe that the Grand Trunk directors have chosen wisely. Mr. Kelley will have the best wishes of all engineers throughout Canada in his endeavors to strengthen the position of the Dominion's pioneer railway.

THE NEXT WAR LOAN

Canadians will be asked to subscribe to another war loan during the coming fall. The amount will probably be \$150,000,000. As the third war loan has only recently been entirely placed with the ultimate investor, the natural market for the next loan is restricted. It is therefore every Canadian's duty to save money NOW.