

### W. J. FRANCIS ADDRESSES SASKATCHEWAN BRANCH OF CAN. SOC. C.E.

Regina, Sask., May 19th.—Walter J. Francis, of Montreal, who is a councillor of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, addressed the members of the Saskatchewan Branch of the Society last week at the Assiniboia Club. Mr. Francis told about the newer spirit now dominating the engineers of Canada, who feel that they should take a more vital interest in public life of the Dominion.

He called attention to the fact that there is not an engineer member of the Senate or House of Commons at Ottawa, and yet engineers are extremely important members of the community, whose work is necessary to the building up of the land.

The speaker then dwelt on the activities of the Society, and said that it is now preparing a memorial which was to be presented to Sir Robert Borden upon his return from Europe, calling attention to the fact that large engineering and other public works are being executed in Canada by alien engineers and contractors, and also giving instances of large public undertakings by Canadian engineers. Alien engineers, according to Mr. Francis, are being employed on the St. Lawrence River work and by the Dominion Railway Board of Engineers, and even one of the largest corporations in Saskatchewan is at present employing an alien engineer in the supervision of its largest structure.

The speaker also mentioned the Lindsay Arsenal contract, which was let by the Dominion Government to an American firm.

"We shall mention in the memorial that in future the government will be held strictly responsible for any similar cases. We shall seek full recognition for Canadian engineers from the federal and provincial governments," declared Mr. Francis.

Attention was also called by the speaker to the memorandum which was recently presented to the government in reference to the proposed plans for the industrial development of Canada. A suggested plan had been drawn up by four members of the Society and Sir Chas. Ross. One of the practical results of this was the appointment of the honorary advisory council on industrial and scientific research, which had received a government grant of \$200,000.

### AM. SOC. C.E. CANCELS ANNUAL CONVENTION.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has issued a circular to its members cancelling the annual convention which was to be held June 12th to 15th, 1917, at St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn. The circular states that on May 7th the War Department authorized the formation of nine volunteer engineer regiments for immediate service in France, and this action caused the executive of the society to realize that many members would not be able to attend the convention, so it was unanimously decided that the wise course to pursue was to abandon the 1917 convention. The next annual convention of the society will be held at St. Paul and Minneapolis provided that it is the desire of the membership in that locality, and thereafter the rotation of place for holding the convention in the various districts of the society will be maintained as previously. It is said that quite a number of other United States engineering organizations which hold annual conventions have taken similar action.

### TO DISCUSS REPORT ON MONTREAL AQUEDUCT

A meeting of the ratepaying engineers of Montreal who have been opposing the Montreal Aqueduct scheme, as at present constituted, has been called to discuss the report made to the city by Messrs. Vautelet, St. Laurent and McRae. Controller Villeneuve is also preparing a report on the same subject. A newspaper interview quotes the controller as saying that so far as he can see the report concurs with the opinion of the ratepaying engineers that the present aqueduct scheme is impracticable. He remarked, however, that only three questions had been definitely answered by the Vautelet-St. Laurent-McRae commission out of the seven which had been submitted to them, the others being "indirectly hidden" in the body of the report.

### WALL ST. COMMENT ON RAILROAD REPORT.

The Wall Street Journal says editorially:—"Further consideration of the majority report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the railways and transportation of Canada does not make it convincing. It is clear enough that the commissioners acted in good faith and were free from that taint of politics which is often the bane of public affairs in Canada. President Smith of the New York Central makes a suggestion that may well come from one of the most brilliant operating railroad men in the country, who knows how the Canadian railroads should be run to work out their own salvation, and does not particularly know or care where the money to do it comes from. The lack of indicated capital supply is the weakest feature of his minority report.

"But the majority report, while sincerely disclaiming any attempt at government ownership, goes much further than government ownership. The idea is to take 25,000 miles of railroad out of politics and to do so by creating a self-perpetuating committee to handle the most staggering railroad proposition even this continent has ever seen.

"Canada went crazy over railroad development and is now reaping the consequences. The attempt to save something out of the mess is praiseworthy, but the suggestion of Sir Henry Drayton and Mr. Acworth that a non-political commission could manage the proposition is visionary. Either the commission suggested would become more autocratic than government ownership itself in its worst form, or it would become the tool of the political party in power, because the patronage of 25,000 miles of railroad could not fail to tempt the politician, and there is nothing in the history of Canada to show that the politician would fail to succumb to the temptation.

"Mr. Smith's plan involves financing to an extent which he probably does not entirely appreciate, but at least it is sound railroad ownership on a common-sense basis, where the stockholder could take his risks and lose his money or make his profits as fate might determine. The Drayton-Acworth plan disclaims government ownership, which it can well afford to do. It proposes to send good money after bad, and to deprive holders of stock with no earning capacity of the only thing that remains to them—their equity in the railroad future."

### EIGHTY MILLIONS FOR AIR DEFENCES.

"Before summer, Canada will have a \$5,000,000 aviation camp located at Camp Borden," says "Flying," in its April issue. "It will be the largest permanent establishment of its kind on this continent. Fifteen concrete sheds 120 by 66 ft., lighted and heated by electricity, are now being finished, and when the barracks are done, the camp will accommodate about 2,000 men. This camp represents the first step taken by the Canadian Government in establishing its permanent air defences, for which \$80,000,000 are to be spent. Hitherto the greater number of aviators have been trained at Valcartier, but this camp will soon be given up for this kind of work, on account of the short season there, with its great amount of snow.

"There will be 160 experienced military aviators constantly on duty at Camp Borden, either trained by the experts of the Curtiss Company, or selected from 600 Canadian air-men now in service on the battle fronts of Europe. These 600 men form an available reserve of pilots, who have heard the shrapnel swish by them in actual battle, and know every detail of organization, as well as the work to be done in the air. Plans include training 5,000 aviators, but it is not expected that the training of more than 2,000 will be finished this year. As soon as pilots are graduated from the school they will be assigned to permanent camps, which will be scattered all over Canada."

### HERRON BROS. GET JUDGMENT.

Justice Masten last week at Toronto gave judgment in favor of the plaintiffs in the suit of Herron Bros. vs. Canadian-Stewart Co. to recover 90 per cent. of the price of piles said to be delivered to the defendants. The latter argued that a large portion of the piles had been rejected by the engineers of the Harbor Board.