

Editorial

ROYAL COMMISSION ON SEWAGE DISPOSAL, GREAT BRITAIN.

After sixteen years' work, the ninth and final reports of the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal were issued on March 31st, 1915. Previously submitted reports of this investigation have been commented upon in these columns as they appeared. The ninth report deals with the discharge of manufacturing waste that cannot be removed through sewer systems, and also with the disposal of refuse in rural districts. A summary of this report appears elsewhere in this issue.

The Royal Commission has done a great deal toward standardizing and placing before sanitary and municipal officials in Great Britain all available information pertaining to the subject. The first report was of an interim character and merely presented some conclusions concerning effluent and sewage purification. The second covered the purification of domestic sewage discharging into streams as presented in a number of scientific papers. The third dealt with the discharge of manufacturing effluents and the relations between local authorities and manufacturers. The fourth was of a somewhat special nature and pertained to the pollution of tidal waters with special reference to the contamination of shell fish. The fifth report took up again the purification of domestic sewage, dealing chiefly with the relative merits of the various methods available for town sewage purification. This report was an exceedingly useful and important one, and the recommendations contained therein have been largely adopted by the Local Government Board and applied to many systems recently installed. The sixth report dealt with the purification of distillery wastes. The seventh had to do with nuisances due to green seaweeds in sewage-polluted estuaries. The eighth took up the question of standards to be applied to sewage discharging into streams and of the determination of these standards by tests. This fixation of a general standard was a decided advance upon previous accomplishments with respect to disposal work. It contained provisions for the fixing also of special standards to cover special conditions. The object of the proposal was to devise "a system whereby a local authority should not be required to incur any further expenditure on sewage disposal than would suffice to prevent the occurrence of actual nuisance." The subject matter of the ninth report is as noted above. The final report is a recapitulation of the conclusions of the earlier ones.

The benefit of the work of the Commission to the sanitary side of engineering, when considered in connection with the immense annual expenditure involved in the matter of sewage disposal, places the findings and recommendations among the most important works upon the subject. It is quite true that conditions vary in different localities and in different countries, and that the report deals primarily with conditions obtaining in England. But at the same time there are numerous conclusions and presentations to which sanitary engineers in other countries have and are directing their attention. Canada has her own problems in this regard, and those who are bent upon solving those problems appreciate the immense amount of labor which the Royal Commission has accomplished and brought to a close in Great Britain.

T. H. & B. GRADE SEPARATION, HAMILTON.

In our issue of September 4th, 1913, we gave an outline of the railway situation in Hamilton as it stood at that date. Since then considerable progress has been made—at least the problem seems to have been narrowed down to something more definite. At that time the city was applying to the Dominion Railway Board for an order to compel the T. H. & B. Railway to move its tracks from their present location on Hunter Street in the centre of the city to a common right-of-way along the G.T.R. tracks in the northern section. The case was argued before the Board in December, 1913, and the Board ruled that it had not the power to order the deviation of the railway more than one mile from its present location. As part of the proposed common right-of-way lay more than this distance from the T. H. & B. the city gave up the idea of forcing the railway to move.

At the meeting of the Board in Hamilton on December 10th, 1914, the original petition was pressed, *viz.*, that the railway be ordered to depress its tracks through the centre of the city. The railway presented its alternative scheme for elevating its tracks. In order to get those two propositions on a common basis it was arranged to have a meeting of the engineers of the parties interested to go over them and agree on the estimates of cost. Meetings have since been held in January and April 7th, 1915, in Ottawa, and on February 10th, in Hamilton. The outcome of these meetings has been some modification of the plans as outlined in the article referred to above. The estimates of cost as now agreed on are as follow:—

For track elevation	\$673,000
For track depression	965,700

These figures are exclusive of land damages.

The matter is now in shape for consideration by the Board and they will probably take it up in the near future.

The attitude of the present Hamilton Board of Control and Council toward this question is apparently not one of aggression. One of the controllers is recently reported to have stated: "If the T. H. & B. desires grade separation and is willing to pay for it, the city has no objection, in fact, I think, would be pleased, and, if the city council has any say in the matter, I believe, would prefer track depression to track elevation." Other members of the council, however, who have carefully studied the two schemes, feel that the city could afford to pay handsomely for the removal of the tracks from Hunter Street and the opening up of streets now practically blocked rather than permit an embankment to be built through the centre of the city and have several main streets depressed through subways. However, at most, the friends of the depression scheme do not seem to expect immediate action, but if the question could be decided favorably now it would at least relieve the present uncertainty of a large number of property owners who might be affected one way or another.

To aid legislatures in revising road laws and framing new road legislation, a series of papers dealing with existing road laws in each state will be issued under an arrangement made by the American Highway Association with the Bureau of Municipal Research of New York City.