

MANITOBA ENGINEERS' WAR COMMITTEE

AT a special meeting, held April 22nd, in Winnipeg, the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers appointed a "War Committee" to promote in every possible way the co-operation of engineers with the military authorities, in order that the engineering and construction man-power of Canada may be used in the war with the utmost effectiveness.

The members of the committee are Harold Edwards, consulting engineer, who is the convenor; J. G. Legrand, bridge engineer, G.T.P.; D. T. Main, works manager, C.P.R.; Guy C. Dunn, division engineer, G.T.P.; and G. L. Guy, electrical engineer, Manitoba Public Utilities Commission. The committee has addressed the following letter to each of the members of the branch:—

"There is a great and increasing war demand for trained engineers and technical men. For any position in the service, the man whose civilian experience will be particularly useful must be found and given effective preliminary training for the peculiar and special conditions of active service. The right men for commissions must be discovered and helped along by special preliminary training.

Must Know What Material We Have

"Before the best system of training can be organized, we must know what material we have. The War Committee enjoins the earnest assistance of the members in order to make this inventory of the engineering man-power as complete as possible. Therefore, fill in the enclosed blank immediately.

"In addition to filling out the enclosed blank, the members should canvass their acquaintances who have had engineering or construction experience, and who are likely to be called in the near future. Knowing what the experience of the available men has been, preliminary training can be adapted to the needs of the greatest number.

"We have reason to expect instruction (from special instructors, who have seen active service in France) along the lines indicated on the inventory blank.

"Remember that the man of 55 can be trained to do work that in many cases will set free the man of 30.

"In view of our special training as engineers, it is our duty to strive to bring home to the minds of the people what this war really means. We must not forget that the German government has requisitioned every engineer, every chemist, every man, in fact, with technical experience of any kind, in order to utilize their special knowledge for the successful prosecution of the war, and for the winning of the great industrial struggle which must inevitably follow in its wake. Canada expects every man to do his best in the great cause, and this branch of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers proposes to help to work out the methods of preliminary training that will prepare engineers to do their utmost whenever they are called. Therefore, give your country your leisure and enthusiasm. Fill out this blank and get others to fill one out also."

Questionnaire for Manitoba Engineers

Attached to the above letter was a questionnaire seeking the following information:—

"Name; birth date; married or single; if married, number of children; are you physically fit; what military experience and training have you had; in what lines have you had your best experience? Check off below:—

"Railway—construction, operation, maintenance or shops and rolling stock; general building construction;

mining and quarrying; surveying and mapping; highways—construction or maintenance; electrical engineering—power and lighting, wireless, telegraphy or telephony; automobiles and motor transports—driving or repair; municipal engineering—sewer or water supply; machinery—manufacture or repairs; chemical engineering or analytical chemistry.

"What experience have you had as an executive in charge of men? Will you give two evenings per week for instruction and training that will fit you for more effective service?"

ENGINEER OFFICERS' PRELIMINARY TRAINING*

By J. G. Legrand

Bridge Engineer, G.T.P. R'y., Winnipeg

WHAT help to the military authorities can the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers give by way of suggestion or actual service? That is the question which the present special meeting has been called to consider.

In January, 1916, I addressed to the general meeting of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers a communication suggesting that they memorialize the government and offer their services along the following lines:—

"That the society should appoint an engineer of national standing, who should be their representative with the government. Whenever any question requiring special technical knowledge should arise, this representative should be called into consultation, and he immediately should put himself into communication with engineers having special knowledge along the lines in question."

If this suggestion had been accepted, all the members of the engineering profession would have been able to render useful service during the war, and not only millions of dollars would have been saved, but thousands of precious lives would have been spared.

It is just such an organization of technical skill that has proved Germany's strength during the present war. Every engineer, every chemist, every scientific man has been requisitioned by the German government and forced to devote his entire energies and special knowledge to the prosecution of the war.

All Trained To Do Almost Anything

In a free country like Canada, force would not have been necessary, but every individual would gladly have placed his services at the disposal of the government.

This offer was actually made. There appeared in *The Canadian Engineer* of January 4th, 1917, an article entitled "Engineers Will Offer Services." It appears from this article that Mr. O'Hara, Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, intimated that the government did not understand clearly just how engineers might like to help, and suggested to Mr. MacLachlan, secretary of the Canadian Electrical Association, that the engineers should get together and present some definite plan of action to the government. Mr. MacLachlan might have answered Mr. O'Hara that it is not for an officer to ask a soldier what he is willing to do, but that it is his place to command, and that he would find, in the case of engineers at least, that all have been trained to do almost anything, and that some of them could give useful lessons on organization and prompt execution.

*Abstract of address delivered at special meeting of Manitoba Branch, Can.Soc.C.E., April 22nd, 1918.