

LORD SHAUGHNESSY ISSUES STATEMENT OUTLINING ATTITUDE ON C.N.R. BILL

Lord Shaughnessy, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, last Monday issued the following statement, outlining his attitude in regard to the C.N.R. legislation, and replying to the allegations made by Conservative members of the House of Commons, to the effect that the C.P.R. had been the inspiration for the opposition to the bill:—

"I wish to deny most emphatically the statement published in a number of newspapers, and evidently inspired, that the Canadian Pacific Company is offering organized opposition to the Government proposals about the Canadian Northern Railway. Up to the present time no effort of any kind has been made by the company to influence the vote of a single member of the House of Commons or the Senate upon the measure now before parliament.

"This reference to the Canadian Pacific is the same old threadbare ruse to which resort has been had on more than one occasion during the past thirty years when railway schemes of one character or another were being considered by parliament.

"It is true that the acquisition of the Canadian Northern by the Canadian Pacific was discussed by representatives of the parties concerned, but the discussion was at the suggestion of members of the Dominion Cabinet.

"After a time it was evident that no transaction was possible and negotiations were dropped.

"The fate, or destiny, of the Canadian Northern is not a matter of special moment to our company as a common carrier, but the company having enough interests in Canada naturally views with apprehension the possibility of the payment of an excessive price for the alleged equity of the holders of the majority of the stock, and feels that some less speculative and more direct means should have been used to fix the amount than the very uncertain process of arbitration.

"It is to be hoped that if the transaction is carried out, the country will not, in consequence, be saddled with heavy liabilities heretofore undisclosed, and that in fixing the amount to be paid under the arbitration proceeding no consideration whatever shall be given to personal investments in unfortunate ventures, such as coal mines, lumber mills, blast furnaces and other works alleged to have been undertaken for the advantage of the Canadian Northern enterprises, but being in fact private speculations of the promoters of the railway company."

The fall convention of the Portland Cement Association will be held at the Blackstone Hotel, Chicago, Ill., on September 10th to 13th, inclusive.

The contractors' plant of the Lyall-Mitchell Co., Limited, of Winnipeg, is being offered for sale en bloc or in part by the Traders Trust Company, of Winnipeg. The plant consists of hoists, motors, concrete mixers, gas engine, centrifugal pump, miscellaneous tools, etc.

A telegraphic despatch sent from Quebec city on September 1st by the "Canadian Press Despatch" Service, and published in daily newspapers throughout Canada, says that "reliable information authorizes the announcement that the centre span of the Quebec bridge will not be put in place before September 14th, probably later."

The filtration plant which is being built at Oshawa, Ont., by the ver Mehr Engineering Co. has four square filter tanks, constructed of reinforced concrete. Four filtering cones will form in each tank. The outer walls of the filter building will provide two of the four walls for each tank, one tank being built in each of the four corners of the building. The filtration principle will be the same as at the new Toronto plant. The Oshawa plant will have a capacity of 1,200 Imperial gallons per minute.

The road map of New York State, recently issued by the New York State Commission of Highways, shows 6,500 miles of completed state and county highways, 1,500 miles of state and county highways under construction, 4,300 miles of roads that have been improved by towns or counties, and approximately 6,500 miles of unimproved roads. There are about 80,000 miles of highways in the state, outside of the limits of cities and incorporated villages.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IN ONTARIO

Messrs. McCarthy and McCarthy, Toronto, solicitors for the petitioners in the case of the Electrical Development Company v. The Attorney-General of Ontario, before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, have prepared, for inclusion in the petitioners' brief, a "memorandum concerning recent provincial legislation and executive action in Canada, with special reference to the Niagara question in the Ontario legislature." The memorandum states with some fullness the economic as well as the legal and constitutional arguments against the legislation in question.

Among the general conclusions of the memorandum are the following:—

While the control and inspection of industrial undertakings may properly be entrusted to a public authority responsible to the people, such functions cannot with safety to the public interest be entrusted to irresponsible commissions.

It is still more disadvantageous to the public interest to endow irresponsible commissions with powers to expropriate private property and to conduct industrial enterprises.

Under the name of "public ownership" small groups of persons have been endowed by provincial legislatures, and in particular by the legislature of Ontario, with powers of an exclusive and monopolistic character, without adequate constitutional checks upon their proceedings. Such commissions have been rendered exempt from control by the legislature, and at the same time have been rendered immune from proceedings in the law courts.

The Ontario acts have placed many municipalities of Ontario wholly at the mercy of the commission in question, and have by so doing seriously infringed upon municipal autonomy. Experience has shown that, deprived as the governments and legislatures are of effective checks upon the commissions, these bodies have involved the provinces in financial obligations for which there was no parliamentary warrant. The embarkation of the province of Ontario in extensive engineering schemes, even if these were properly estimated and adequately investigated, is clearly inexpedient at the present critical time, when the resources of the province are already heavily engaged, and may ere long be still more heavily engaged in providing the means necessary for the conduct of the war and afterwards for the liquidation of its cost.

The schemes of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission cannot possibly be carried out without revision of the treaty between Great Britain and the United States respecting the international waterways.

The following practical suggestions may be added:—

1. That the attorney-general of Ontario should be strongly urged, on grounds of public policy, to grant a fiat or fiats in order that the legal questions connected with the development of power at Niagara may be thoroughly settled in the courts.

2. That the prime minister of Ontario be strongly urged, on grounds of public policy, to disclose without delay the terms of the report upon the Hydro-Electric affairs by Mr. Clarkson, C.A.

3. That at the present time no unnecessary public works should be undertaken.

4. That at the present crisis in international affairs no steps be taken which might involve Great Britain and the United States in renewed controversies over boundary waters.

5. That the legislation respecting the Hydro-Electric Commission in the years 1916 and 1917 be disallowed as contrary to public policy.

Plans for the establishment of steel and allied industries on the Pacific coast on a large scale, which were in preparation before the war, have now been revived and are about to be consummated, according to William H. Crocker, financier, San Francisco, who is interested in the undertaking. The plan involves the erection of large plants on Lake Washington, near Seattle, Wash. The plan involves the bringing in of pig iron from China and coal from Alaska, the development of the iron ore and coal resources of the Pacific slope, the manufacture of ship plates for the Government merchant marine, and the turning out of pig iron, steel, and varied steel products and by-products.