

TO IMPROVE RAILWAY BOARD

In no one particular has the Whitney Government proved more disappointing than in its appointments to important offices. In none of its appointments has lack of judgment been more conspicuously shown than in the creation of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

With the knowledge of the valuable service rendered by the Dominion Railway Commission fresh in mind high hopes were entertained when in 1906 an Act was passed in line with the policy of the Liberal party as set forth in their platform of 1904 for the creation of a Board with somewhat similar powers in Ontario. These hopes were checked when the personnel of the new Board was announced.

Probably the only thing which may be advanced as the Board's excuse for existence during its five years of life was its initial affirmation of a Provincial enactment that a two-cent-per-mile rate should prevail on all railways under the jurisdiction of Ontario—an administrative rather than creative act. In other matters where trying grievances have driven various municipalities to the point of exasperation, the Board's conduct has proved wholly disappointing to those who looked for either inclination or ability to afford relief. There has been a conspicuous lack of mandatory authority to enforce even such orders as have been made.

There have been unseemly squabbles between the members and judgments that have been at direct variance with enlightened public opinion. So farcical has the situation become that Mr. W. K. McNaught, Conservative member for North Toronto, of whose sincerity there can be no doubt, speaking at a meeting of the Conservative Club in his riding, on Monday, October 16, said: "Something will have to be done unless the Board turns over a new leaf. The Board was designed to look after the interests of the common people just as the Railway Board at Ottawa does. That is what the Government appointed them for, and if they have failed, they have failed to do their duty." The Premier, Sir James Whitney, was himself compelled by the force of public opinion to take cognizance of the matter, and made the tardy admission that, "It is evident there is a screw loose somewhere," adding that, "It is possible therefore that a reorganization may be necessary." It has taken the Provincial Government a long time to ascertain this fact, and with its customary lethargy no attention would have been paid to the needs of the public had it not been for the outcry occa-