

the Imperial Act of 1900 relating to the issue of shares for public subscription.

A number of other clauses were introduced at the last session of the Legislature in the Act relating to Prospectuses. That Act seems to have corrected some of the difficulties of the Imperial Act which render that Act practically nugatory, but it still remains to be seen whether any decided advantage has been gained by its enactment. Here the clauses relating to the issue of shares for public subscription are of far greater importance and would no doubt have far greater effect. It is doubtful whether under the financial circumstances of this province these clauses should be adopted in their entirety. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that the public should be protected from improvident flotations. The very want of capital in this province brings about the squander of capital in flotation. On the other hand, restrictive clauses which would work no hardship in England may render the flotation of legitimate enterprises a matter of great difficulty in Ontario.

The sections relating to public utility companies also require the most careful scrutiny. The subject of public ownership is one which is up at the present time. It may be that public ownership and private operation is the most satisfactory solution of the difficulty. Capital should receive every inducement for enterprise. Many corporations now paying large dividends commenced in an humble way. Many of them were experiments, speculations. It is but fair and just that, enterprise should be handsomely rewarded. In a growing country like this, restrictions on the investment of capital must be disastrous when generally applied to the whole province.

Some franchises which were hastily and improvidently granted a few years ago are now saddled upon the public and are drawing exorbitant and burdensome profits. Here again is a case where the middle and safe position is the one to be strived for. While capital should not be deterred, the incubus should not be created.

It is a matter for consideration whether the brief sections of