Canada Law Journal.

VOL. XLV. TORONTO, AUGUST. Nos. 15 & 16

SHARP PRACTICE IN HIGH PLACES.

Some leading newspapers in the western section of the Province of Ontario have drawn attention to a matter which calls for notice in the columns of a legal journal.

It has been our duty to criticise various objectionable features of the legislation of that province in relation to a government emanation, known as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. Our criticism, however, has been tame in comparison with the language used by writers in England and elsewhere, who have denounced this legislation in a way that should bring a blush of shame to those responsible for it. It would seem from what now appears, that the mode of carrying out this legislation, which has been well criticised by others of high authority as "monstrous," "manifestly unjust," etc., is quite as objectionable as the legislation itself.

It will be remembered that by the Acts of 1906 and 1907 the Commission was given power to buy land for a line to transmit electricity at a very high voltage without the consent of the owners, but the provisions of the Public Works Act of Ontario were made applicable, thus giving machinery to settle values by arbitration, etc. It being found that to buy a fenced-in right of way, as is required of the existing transmission company, would largely add to the cost of power, the Act of 1909 gave the Commission the right to acquire easements for the location of their transmission towers and lines. But the Public Works Act was not made applicable to this right, so that it cannot be invoked either by the Commission or by the land owners.

It also appears that some of these owners along the line refused to accept the sums offered by the Commission and declined to permit a transmission line of such a dangerous character to go over their land, without proper protection in the shape of a fenced right of way and other safeguards. Just here a serious