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## The Canadian Engineer.

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### CANADIAN WATER POWER AND ITS ELECTRICAL PRO- DUCT IN RELATION TO THE UNDEVELOPED RESOURCES OF THE DOMINION.\*

Canada with a small population and insufficient capital has nevertheless held a foremost position in the products of the forests and the fisheries, as well as in the quality of those cereals and fruits which attain their highest development in a northern latitude. In live stock she has not suffered by comparison with any other portion of this continent, while in dairy products she is pre-eminent. If she has not, until recently, made much progress in mineral development, it has been more from want of money than of mines. If she has been long in attaining a position as a manufacturing country, it is accounted for by the fiscal and financial conditions of a sparsely-settled country, the smallness of a home market, and the competition of greater capital and out-put, and therefore cheaper production elsewhere. Amongst the many partially developed resources of Canada, perhaps there is none more widespread or more far reaching in future results than her unsurpassed water power. The value of this has been enormously enhanced, first by the expansion of the wood pulp manufacture, and the introduction of electro-chemical and

\*Presidential Address read before the Society, May 23rd, 1899, by Thos. C. Keefer, C.M.G., President of the Royal Society of Canada.

metallurgical industries for which this country possesses the raw material; and, more recently, by the revolution which has been brought about by success in transmitting the energy of water falls from remote and inconvenient positions to those where the work is to be done. Electrical transmission brings the power to the work, and when the prime mover is water, we have the cheapest power, and perhaps nearest approach to perpetual motion which it is possible to obtain—one which is always "on tap," and, like gravity, maintained without cost and applied without delay.

An examination of any good map of our broad Dominion reveals, as its most striking feature, an extraordinary wealth and remarkably uninterrupted succession of lakes and rivers, suggestive of ample rainfall, the first great requisite in the occupation of any country. This feature would be still more impressive if all the waters could be shown on the map. Over large areas only the more important rivers have been explored and delineated; while in the surveyed districts many are necessarily omitted to leave room for other information to be given. These rivers and lakes have been the most important factors in the settlement of the country, as they formed the earliest lines of approach for the penetration and exploration of the interior, and for the exploitation of our forests. The lumberman followed the trapper and the fur trader, the axe supplanted the rifle, and thus the country was opened up by men who knew not only where to begin, but, by their calling, were best equipped as pioneers. The frontier, where not already occupied by the French, was necessarily rapidly settled in the first place by the Loyalists of 1776, who could not stand upon the order of their departure after their homes were confiscated. These found the rivers their earliest friends, from whence they obtained the means of shelter and of employment in the only industry by which money could then be obtained, viz., the floating of timber and potash to Montreal and Quebec.

Over a length of several thousand miles between Labrador and Alaska and over a width of several hundred miles, there is an almost continuous distribution of lakes, lakelets and rivers—the lakes of varied outlines, dimensions and elevations above sea level, and many possessing facilities for the storage of their flood waters. This power of storage has been largely taken advantage of by lumbermen to retain the needed supply for their spring "drive," into the main stream. In many places the outlet from the lake, or the connection between a chain of lakes, is a narrow cleft in rock where an inexpensive dam will hold back the water supplied by the winter's accumulation of snow. With the exception of her prairie region, the rivers of Canada differ from the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio, and the larger part of their tributaries, in that they are not naturally navigable from their mouths, or above