

# The Canadian Engineer

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## The Canadian Engineer

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### BILL No. 81.

#### AN ACT TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL ACT.

At the last session of the Ontario Legislature, Bill No. 81, to amend the Municipal Act, was introduced by Mr. W. H. Hoyle, the member for North Ontario. The Bill was referred to the Municipal Committee for consideration, and because of the unusual features presented in it the Committee decided to have the Bill, together with several sections of the Municipal Act referred to or affected, printed and distributed.

This Bill is of particular interest to civil engineers, because it provides that every bridge constructed as a county bridge shall be in accordance with specifications (and, we presume, plans) prepared by the Department of Public Works of Ontario. The Bill goes further and gives to the county exclusive jurisdiction over bridges of

fifty feet and more in length, excepting those situated within the city or a separate town, and makes the county liable for the construction and maintenance of all such bridges.

The clauses which will interest members of the profession most are clauses (1), (2) and (3) of Section 618a of the Municipal Act:—

(1) Every bridge constructed by or under the jurisdiction and control of the corporation of a county shall be built of iron, steel or reinforced concrete and in accordance with standard specifications, prepared by the engineer of the Department of Public Works of Ontario.

(2) It shall be the duty of the said engineer to furnish the corporation of any county with such information as the council of the county may require with reference to the construction of bridges in the county.

(3) Where a bridge has been constructed by the corporation of a county in accordance with such plans and specifications and has been inspected and approved of by the engineer of the Department of Public Works, or any officer of the Department named by the Minister of Public Works, and is maintained and kept in repair as provided by the specifications of the Department, and is not obstructed or otherwise rendered unsafe by the action of the corporation, its officers or servants, the corporation of the county shall not be liable for any damages under Section 606 of this Act.

These sections clearly indicate that the purpose of the member for North Ontario is to make the Department of Public Works of Ontario a large department, with control over the design, erection, inspection and maintenance of the county bridges of the Province.

The Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works of Ontario has done splendid service for the Province, but this attempt to load upon the Department the engineering difficulties of the counties, and to require that the counties accept designs which must be prepared in a wholesale manner and disposed of as catalogues, or in a manner somewhat similar to the much-advertised "best 100 house designs."

It would be very unfortunate for the Province if Bill No. 81 should become law. It would be unfortunate, because it would prohibit the construction of concrete bridges on county work. It would centralize at a point, in many cases hundreds of miles distant from the place of operation, the staff responsible for the construction and maintenance of the structures. It would eliminate from the design the evidence of intimate knowledge, location, traffic, possible high-water mark and that elasticity in design which makes a bridge not mar, but add to the beauty of the landscape.

The taxpayer will be the loser, for, although he might save a few dollars in fees, he would quickly remove that incentive for good work—competition—which has