

# The Canadian Engineer

Established 1893

A Weekly Paper for Canadian Civil Engineers and Contractors

Terms of Subscription, postpaid to any address:			
One Year	Six Months	Three Months	Single Copies
\$3.00	\$1.75	\$1.00	10c.

Published every Thursday by

The Monetary Times Printing Co. of Canada, Limited

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA "INSTITUTE"

ONE HUNDRED civil and mechanical engineers, draftsmen, surveyors and architects in British Columbia recently sought provincial incorporation under the name of the "Engineering and Technical Institute of British Columbia." Their bill was disallowed on a technicality when first introduced, and by payment of double fees the promoters secured permission to re-introduce it. But the legislature prorogued on April 23rd without having discussed the bill, as the private bills committee had reported against it; consequently the proposed legislation is dead for this year at least and probably for all time.

Now that the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers has broadened, and has changed its name to the Engineering Institute of Canada, it would have been unfortunate had the British Columbia legislature allowed the use of so similar a name as the "Engineering and Technical Institute of British Columbia."

The bill was sought upon wrong premises. The reason for the bill, as outlined therein, was as follows:—

"Whereas it was deemed expedient for the better protection of the public interests, and for the general advancement of mechanical science, and more particularly for promoting the acquisition of that species of knowledge which has special reference to the profession of engineers, architects and technical professions, and to encourage investigation in connection with said profession, and in order to enable persons requiring professional aid in any work to which such knowledge of engineering, architecture and technical knowledge is applicable or necessary, to distinguish between qualified and unqualified members of such professions. Therefore, His Majesty enacts as follows," etc.

"Persons requiring professional aid in any work" are now partly able "to distinguish between qualified and unqualified members of such professions" by ascertaining the engineering degrees held by the engineer under consideration, or by consulting the lists of members of the Engineering Institute of Canada, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and other Canadian technical organizations or Canadian branches of American engineering societies.

It is true that some of these societies contain members who are not well qualified engineers, so that membership in any one of them is not a sure sign of ability, but surely it indicates a probability of ability, as at least nine-tenths of the membership of any such society, at a conservative estimate, are technically qualified for some kind of engineering work. There was no guarantee that the Engineering and Technical Institute of British Columbia would be more Simon pure with regard to its membership, or that its members would be of any higher grade than those of any other society or institute. As a matter of fact, the secretary of one of the other Canadian technical societies alleges that the contrary proposition is more correct.

One phase of the object of the bill is being met by the present change in the Engineering Institute of Canada. Undoubtedly the public now finds it difficult to determine just who are the qualified engineers. The man in the street often finds the same difficulty, perhaps in lessened degree, in selecting a "qualified" doctor or lawyer. Leaving out of consideration the house-cleaning that would have to be done by any society which might want membership therein to be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of engineering ability, the public does not know what membership list or lists to consult. Injustice would be done to many well-qualified engineers by consulting only one or two lists. It would be obviously unfair, for example, to assume that an individual—because his name does not appear in the list of members of, say, the Engineering Institute of Canada—is not a qualified engineer. He may be a member of any one or more of a dozen other technical societies, and he may be fully qualified. But to make it easier for the public to distinguish in this regard, the idea actuating the men who are behind the broadening out of the Engineering Institute of Canada, is to widen the Institute to such an extent that it will include all qualified engineers in Canada, in whatever branch of the profession they may practice, and to weed out the few men now in the Institute who are not well qualified, so that ultimately a reference to the membership list of the Engineering Institute of Canada would be sufficient for all "persons requiring professional aid."

The committee of the British Columbia legislature showed good judgment in reporting against the bill. The best interests of the British Columbia public will be served by the growth of the Vancouver and Victoria branches of the Engineering Institute of Canada.

## TO THOSE NOT INTERESTED IN ROADS

"EVERY engineer is, or should be, interested in every other engineer's problems, whether they are his own at the immediate moment or not," recently said H. H. Vaughan, president of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers. Perhaps we are depending too much upon Mr. Vaughan's theory in devoting this whole issue to the Canadian Good Roads Congress, but we appreciate the advisability of presenting these road speeches to our