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The Water Power Situation in Canada

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A survey of the water power situation in the different countries of the world shows that Canada, the youngest of them all, has accomplished more in actual development and in use, than any except, perhaps, Norway. The outstanding feature of the power situation in Canada is the exceedingly fortunate and advantageous location of our water powers from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Practically every large city is to-day supplied with all the hydro-electric energy it can use from water power, the sources of which can be extended to meet all anticipated demands. Where the source of power is not water power, as in the middle western prairies, there is an abundance of either gas or good steam coal within immediate reach. There is probably no part of the present settled portions of the Dominion where power cannot profitably be produced from wholly Canadian sources. In cases of necessity we can be, and in time we shall be, independent of all foreign power-producing agencies.

All substantial and reasonably necessary power requirements throughout Canada have been met and provided for, and much pioneer work has been accomplished in adapting hydro-electric energy to new and highly profitable industrial use. In fact, the water power situation strikingly demonstrates the faith of Canadians in our vast heritage. We have been extending an ever-widening network of transmission lines over our far-

flung territories so that to-day, measured by population, we have the highest ratio of water horse-power of any other nation except Norway. On the other hand, as suggesting the room still left for expansion, we have the lowest ratio of water horsepower in proportion to area. The progress of power development in Canada has, so far, been based on sound engineering and sure economic principles, and there have, therefore, been very few financial failures. This has resulted in the popular delusion of the great potential value of undeveloped water powers, and in some districts in the general public being unduly apprehensive of the profits and powers of public utility corporations which control or develop existing water powers.

The great importance of our power resources, their successful adaptation for industrial use and for furnishing so much of our modern comfort, has resulted in the general public taking a very marked interest in all questions pertaining to water power administration, investigation and use, and the question of suitable legislation covering water power administration and authorization has become one of the most important legislative topics in Canada.

On the whole we are exceedingly fortunate in Canada, especially when we compare our conditions with those of the United States. Our water power laws are, in the main, quite adequate; encouraging to development with due regard to the public