

CHAPTER I.

MUNICIPAL TRADING, A MATTER OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC EXPEDIENCY.

IT has now come to be generally recognized that all franchises for the establishment of public services in a municipality which touch in any way the question of public health should remain vested in the Municipal Corporation served. It is easy to see, for instance, that a duty devolves upon all populous communities to retain absolute control of their water supplies, for, in the first place, a pure and adequate water supply is one of the prime essentials to public health, and, in the second place, such a service necessarily involves the use of public streets and highways. In Canada this duty is recognized to such an extent that all large communities not only control, but conduct and levy rates for the support of their systems of water supply. It is generally admitted that the first consideration in such a service is not cost, but efficiency. As an absolute necessity to all classes of the population, it is conceded that a water service should never be dependent upon conditions of private profit, nor liable to the accidents incident to private management. It may or may not be that a community is getting its water as economically as possible; the principal consideration in the public mind is whether the supply is as pure and as plentiful as it should be. All other public services are more or less in the