

CONSULTING ENGINEERS BECOME VOLUNTARY CRITICS.

It is not often that a Journal associated with civic affairs has the opportunity of recording the voluntary services to a municipality of a body of engineers, though it is true they were not exactly invited to volunteer their services, which were in the form of first: criticism of the Montreal Aqueduct Power Development Scheme, and second the close study of and comment on the report of a special commission appointed by the City Council to enquire into the working of the aqueduct as a consequence of the same criticism. This volunteer body was composed not of amateur critics, but of some of the best known consulting engineers in Canada, and included Sir John Kennedy, W. F. Tye, Ernest Marceau, J. A. Jamieson, R. A. Ross, Arthur Surveyor and Walter J. Francis, who acted as secretary. The principal reason for such an eminent band of professional men taking up the matter of the development scheme so seriously is that they are all ratepayers of Montreal, and consequently have a live interest in the undertaking. Whatever may be the result of their study and criticism, their fellow citizens and the Council itself have much to thank these ratepaying engineers for their practical interest in an undertaking involving millions of dollars.

In a memorandum to the City Council covering the subject the ratepaying engineers say:

Following the receipt of your letter of 25th May, 1917, undertaking to let us have details of the estimates in the report of the Board of Engineers, dated April 30th, 1917, we have recently received from the City Hall certain pages of details of the report. Having studied these in conjunction with the report, we now beg to submit our comments thereon, as promised.

Summing up our conclusion, we may say that to us it is evident that the report of the Board of Engineers agrees in almost every main conclusion with our report submitted last November. The following contentions of our report are clearly supported:

- (a) The project as designed is condemned.
- (b) Ice troubles are admitted to the degree that it is estimated the plant will be completely shut down for an average yearly period equivalent to 2.4 months.
- (c) Radical changes in design, at greatly increased cost, are shown to be necessary to obtain the amount of power claimed by the city.
- (d) Purchased power or steam-generated power is shown to be much cheaper than that which could be produced by the aqueduct.
- (e) No power from the aqueduct would be available for lighting the city.
- (f) The capital costs and annual charges are shown to be greatly in excess of the estimates made by the city.

The following is a brief comparison of statements made regarding the various features of the Montreal Aqueduct Power Development Scheme. The first paragraph in each case is based on published statements by the city up to the end of 1916. The second is based on the "Report by Ratepaying Engineers," dated November, 1916. The third is based on the "Report on Aqueduct Enlargement, Montreal Waterworks," by the Board of Engineers, Messrs. Vautelet, St. Laurent and McRae, dated April 30th, 1917.

A copy of the full memorandum can be had by applying to Messrs. Francis and Brown, Consulting Engineers, Montreal.

THE NEW COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF B. C.

Arthur N. Mouat, comptroller of the city of Edmonton, has been appointed Comptroller General of the Province of British Columbia. This department is newly created, and was formerly handled by the audit branch under the Auditor General. Mr. Mouat has been with the Corporation of Edmonton for nearly four years, first as auditor, and for the last two and one-half years as comptroller. At one time Mr. Mouat was an aspirant for Provincial Legislative honors, running as the Liberal candidate in the constituency of Pincher Creek, Alberta, but he was defeated. Since entering the service of the city of Edmonton, he has forgotten politics, and spent a strenuous few years organizing the comptroller's department, of which he was the head.

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