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AN ACT TO MAKE CIVIL ENGINEERING A CLOSED PROFESSION IN PENNSYLVANIA.

During the past few months several of the American States have been considering the question of making engineering a closed profession. The Bill before the Pennsylvania Assembly is typical of Bills being considered by other States.

The terms "civil engineer" and "civil engineering" as employed in these Bills are very wide in their interpretation, and mean that branch of engineering which relates to the construction or care of roads, bridges, railways, canals, aqueducts, harbors, drainage, and sewage works. It does not appear to be so wide, though, as the term used in Canada, which also includes the mechanical and electrical engineer.

Should this bill become law, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council will have power to appoint a civil engineering council, which shall supervise and pass upon the official actions of the board of examiners, and shall issue all licenses for civil engineers, prefer charges for dismissal for incompetency, dishonesty, etc. The board will be under the control of the Government, and shall be composed of men recognized in the profession as having had at least seven years' standing as engineers or holding positions as professors in an engineering college.

Each applicant for license as a civil engineer shall be examined in writing upon such subjects as the board of examiners may deem necessary, and, upon a favorable report from the board of examiners and the council of civil engineers, the license shall be granted allowing him to practise within the State. It will be noted that persons holding certificates of proficiency in civil engineering from any college or university within the State and recognized by the council shall not be required to take the examinations. Suitable regulations and penalties for the enforcement of the Act are provided.

Although this Act will make engineering within the State a close corporation, it does not place the control of the membership in the hands of the profession. That will remain with the State. The great weakness of the measure, as we see it, is not that it does not protect the profession, but rather that it will build up a large number of separate organizations, and make very limited, indeed, the number of men of experience and training from which a selection may be made by those requiring the services of an eminent engineer. It would be an unhappy day for the profession in Canada and for the community at large were it ever to transpire that the engineers in a Province should be compelled to confine their efforts to the work within the Province, or to be under the necessity of belonging to nine separate organizations.

The working out of these new measures in the American States will be watched with considerable interest by the profession in Canada.

THE MCCHARLES PRIZE.

As yet, in Canada, the prizes for research work have been very limited, both in number and value. As the country becomes more wealthy, the process of methods more refined, and the competition keener, the necessity for greater improvement and greater refinement will become apparent, and it is to be expected that corporations and individuals, both from selfish motives, and