

Editorial

WATER POWER INVESTIGATION IN NOVA SCOTIA.

The Nova Scotia Water Powers Commission, created about a year ago by the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia for the purpose of investigating and reporting on the whole question of water power administration, development and use in Nova Scotia, has recently effected a co-operative arrangement with the Dominion Water Power Branch of the Department of the Interior, covering a physical investigation of the water power resources of the whole province.

An engineer of the Dominion Water Power Branch has been attached to the staff of the commission with headquarters at Halifax, N.S., to have personal direct charge of the field surveys that will be carried on under the co-operative arrangement. For the present year the work will be confined to the power rivers of immediate importance, but will be gradually extended to cover all the rivers of the province.

COUNTIES AND THEIR ENGINEERS.

The qualifications which a county engineer should possess are pretty well defined, although not required everywhere in the same degree. Some counties, by virtue of their size, topography, population and position with respect to centres of industry, commerce or other environments, command a calibre of service which not every county engineer can give. The prevalence of rivers and streams, of roads and crossings, of materials of construction, etc., in a well-settled county materially effects the nature of its requirements as to the engineering ability of him, in whose charge are placed the duties of economical maintenance and further improvements. There are too many counties that are backward in municipal development largely as a result of placing their engineering problems on the shoulders of totally unqualified men.

The following letter is from an engineer whom we know to have viewed the particular case to which he refers, in a broad-minded manner and from the viewpoint of a man of experience in matters pertaining to municipal engineering work. The letter reads:

"It may be of interest to members of the profession to learn that for several years one of the largest and most important counties of the Province of Ontario has had occupying the position of county engineer, certain individuals who do not, with any reasonable or accepted interpretation of the term, possess any of the qualifications characteristic of a civil engineer.

"A few years ago the county council appointed to occupy this position one who was, by neither education nor training, an engineer, civil or otherwise, but who had been a councillor and when defeated had apparently to be granted some consideration by his colleagues. Last year this gentleman died and the county council soon after appointed another councillor as his successor. Although some practical and professional engineers were among the applicants for the position they were entirely ignored, the competition being between two councillors, and politics

evidently the only qualification necessary, in addition to presumption. The successful applicant was a retired farmer.

"The question as to what constitutes a civil engineer is in order, evidently, for the enlightenment of the councillors of the county in question. I know of no better than the following definition: 'One whose occupation, pursuit, or profession consists of the art and science of utilizing the forces and materials of nature for the benefit of mankind.'

"I understand the appointment of county engineer is provided for under and by virtue of the Municipal Act, and amendments thereto, R.S.O. and that the Act fails to provide a penalty in case of abuse thereof in the manner already indicated.

"It certainly cannot be maintained, nor is it tenable, that calling or appointing a farmer to be a civil engineer constitutes him such in the light of law, logic or common-sense, and any such appointment is fraudulent, and his efforts at engineering a menace to the safety and welfare of the public.

"Consider the outburst of indignation if this or any other council attempted to menace the office of county solicitor by the appointment of a farmer or any other person unqualified for that office. The County Bar Association (legal), the Law Society of Ontario, and every legal practitioner would soon be in array to squelch such impertinent and high-handed action.

"It seems clear that because the profession, occupation or pursuit of civil engineer is not incorporated in Ontario, this council considers itself free to impose on both the constituents and the engineering profession in the manner indicated, but they, nevertheless, do not escape the fact that such appointments are both illegal and fraudulent. The Act calls for the appointment of an engineer, not a farmer, jeweler, or follower of any other pursuit, and the payment of county funds to any other than a bona fide engineer constitutes the payment of such funds under false pretences."

This instance is but a companion to a number of others. The position of county engineer in this particular case is no place for an amateur. The county should awake to an early realization of the backward state of its drainage work as well as other phases of its development. It should have a competent engineer in charge. If it depends on a retired farmer plus politics to pilot it to the position it should hold among the other counties of Ontario in the matter of municipal improvements, it should not be surprised, in a few years, to find itself in advance only of those of its kind, whose shortsightedness has been still more pronounced.

"ONCE BIT, TWICE SHY."

A reader calls our attention to a letter which appeared in "La Lumière Electrique" and which is being circulated by the syndicate of engineers, boilermakers, and foundrymen of France to all firms engaged in the trades named. After offering official statements on the war in six languages for circulation to foreign clients and agents,