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BOSTON, MASS., U.S.A.**DECISIONS IN COMMERCIAL LAW.**

LA COMPAGNIE POUR L'ECLAIRAGE AU GAZ
DE ST. HYACINTHE V. LA COMPAGNIE DES
POUVOIRS HYDRAULIQUES DE ST. HYACINTHE.
—In 1881 a municipal by-law of the city of St.
Hyacinthe granted to a company incorporated
under a general Act, C.S.C., c. 65, the exclusive
privilege for twenty-five years of manufacturing
and selling gas in that city, and in 1882 the
company obtained a special Act of incorpora-
tion, 45 Vic., c. 79, s. 5 of which provided that
"all the powers and privileges conferred upon
the said company as organized under the said
general Act, either by the terms of the Act
itself or by resolution, by-law or agreement of
the said city of St. Hyacinthe, are hereby re-
affirmed and confirmed to the company as
incorporated under the present Act, including
their right to break up, etc., the streets
and in addition it shall be lawful for the com-
pany, in substitution for gas, or in connection
therewith, or in addition thereto, to manufac-
ture, use and sell electric, galvanic or other
artificial light with the same privilege,
and subject to the same liabilities as are ap-
plicable to the manufacture, use and disposal of
illuminating gas under the provisions of this
Act." The Supreme Court of Canada held,
affirming the decision of the Court of Queen's
Bench of Quebec, that the above section did
not give the company the exclusive right for
twenty-five years to manufacture and sell elec-
tric light; that it was a private Act notwith-
standing it contained a clause declaring it to be
a public Act, and the city was not a party and
in no way assented to it; that in constructing
it the court would treat it as a contract between
the promoters and the Legislature, and apply
the maxim *verba fortius accipiuntur contra pro-*
ferentem, especially where exorbitant powers are
conferred, that the right to sell and make elec-
tric light "with the same privilege" as was
applicable to gas, did not confer such mono-
poly, but gave a new privilege as to electricity,
entirely unconnected with the former purposes
of the company; and that the word "privilege"
there used could be referred to the right to
break up streets, and did not necessarily mean
the exclusive privilege claimed.

EXTRAVAGANT WIVES' DEBTS.

Another variation of the wearisome theme of
husbands' liability for debts incurred by their
wives has just been heard in the Doncaster
County Court. A traveling draper sued a
laborer for £6 7s., due for goods supplied to
his wife. The latter admitted having had the
goods, and the husband denied liability, on the
ground that he knew nothing of the transac-
tions, and gave his wife twenty-two shillings a
week for housekeeping purposes. The plea of
the woman was like that of Eve on a historic
occasion: "The draper tempted me and I did
buy." One item in the account was a pair of
curtains at £1 3s.; a nice and suitable adorn-
ment for a house run on £1 2s. a week. Clearly
the creditor was to blame for supplying such
articles to such a customer; and probably it
was this consideration which induced the judge,
in giving judgment against the debtor, to order
the payments to be at the rate of one
shilling per month. Thus it will be nearly
eleven years before the creditor receives the last
instalment, and many things may happen in the
interval.—*Drapery World.*

—In dredging the harbor at Port Dover the
remains of a ship that has been sunk there 48
years were removed.

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