

# THE CANADIAN MUNICIPAL JOURNAL

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CEMENT MERGER.....	9
GARDEN CITIES IN ENGLAND, Hon. Jas. J. Guerin, Mayor of Montreal.....	12
THE BUILDING OF A CITY Ald. W. A. Gleason, Victoria, B. C.....	17
CIVIC ADMINISTRATION, F. A. McDiarmid, City Solicitor, Victoria, B. C.....	15
MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP IN ENGLAND.....	11
UNION OF B. C. MUNICIPALITIES, 6th. Annual Convention, Official Report.....	14
CAN. INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE ASSN. 6th. Annual Convention, Official Report.....	21
Bond Sales.....	32
Civic Notes.....	25
Editorials.....	9
Financial News.....	29
Financial Echoes.....	31
Telephones News.....	19

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## Physical Education

The annual Congress of the American Physical Education Association will be held in Montreal, February 22nd, 23rd and 24th. The meeting will be held in McGill University. Fuller particulars will be given next month. The local secretary is Miss Cartwright, Royal Victoria College, Montreal.

## Our Eighth Volume

Our Eighth Volume commences with this issue, and we have great pleasure in wishing all our many friends, everywhere,

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

## Manitoba Telephones

The news that the Manitoba Government Telephone System has resulted in a loss in the past year's operations will, naturally, be received with joy by the opponents of Public Ownership, and used by them as a powerful argument.

As a matter of fact it is the result of the injudicious purchase of an existing system, and the elimination of competition in the purchase of supplies.

When the Manitoba Government bought out the Bell Company's plant, the expert who valued it for the Government made the investigation in a couple of weeks. When the British Government purchased the plant of the National Telephone Company, Sir John Gavey for the Government saw every pole and examined every piece of apparatus, along with Mr. Sinclair, the Company's expert. They drove along every line, examining everything, and had a couple of engineers and two stenographers always with them; and they took two years to do their work. The price paid by the Manitoba Government was severely criticized at the time and the present situation supports that criticism.

As to the methods of purchasing supplies, it has been generally understood among the manufacturers and supply men that it was useless to tender. When tenders were asked, the time allowed was so short that those who could have tendered, were unable to do so.

If any enquiry is held it will be interesting to know how much has been expended on instruments, equipment and supplies, and how much of this went to one single firm!

## Supervising Electricity

The success of the Board of Railway Commissioners in solving the difficult problems arising between the railway companies and the public, led to the telegraph and telephone services having been placed under the same control. And there is no doubt but that the same equitable decisions, generally very satisfactory, are being rendered in the newer branches of public utilities.

Another public utility which would be greatly improved by such neutral supervision is the supply of electricity.

At the present time there is no final court of appeal. The public is at the mercy, in most cases, of the company supplying light and power. But this very condition curtails the opportunities for installing electricity, and prevents companies from securing franchises.

In Great Britain, when an electric installation is desired, the Local Government Board sends down an official to hold an enquiry. He examines the whole situation, hears witnesses, listens to criticisms; and if he gives his consent to the scheme, the details have been satisfactory both to the public and the investor.

In Canada immature plans are accepted; the public is dissatisfied; and the investor often regrets his investment.

If all plans, for installation, or enlargement, of electric plants could be submitted to the Railway Commission, it would lead to improved conditions for both the public and the investor.