

# The Canadian Engineer

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## The Canadian Engineer.

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### THE "CANADIAN MACHINE SHOP."

As announced in last issue, the publishers of the Canadian Engineer will issue this month a new magazine, the CANADIAN MACHINE SHOP, devoted to machine shop practice, mechanical engineering, and foundry work. An announcement is made elsewhere to those who wish to become charter subscribers. Charter subscribers are those who start with the first number of the first volume, and while these remain as paid-up subscribers, they will continue to receive the paper at 50 cents a year. Subscribers of the Canadian Engineer who wish to take both papers will be put on practically the same basis by getting the two papers for \$1.50 as long as they are paid in advance. If anyone should wish to transfer his subscription to the Canadian Machine Shop only, he should advise us at once.

### PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC FRANCHISES.

A special correspondent of the Canadian Engineer gives elsewhere some instructive facts concerning the evolution of the municipal ownership of civic franchises at Port Arthur and Fort William. There appears to be in the conduct of municipal affairs in these "twin towns," something of the spirit which has made Glasgow famous among the great cities of the age for the integrity and wisdom of its administration. The citizens of Port Arthur and Fort William

have only to maintain their public spirit and courage in order to give them as great a name for good government as they seem destined to have for commercial success and influence. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. The proverb is unfortunately not often enough demonstrated in public affairs to make it a mere truism; but there is nothing more certain than that a character for honor and honesty ultimately brings wealth if its possessor has the genuine article. Port Arthur and Fort William are therefore not only doing a great educational work for the other cities of the Dominion in showing that municipal ownership can be efficient and economical, but they are laying the very best foundation for their future power and wealth as commercial or manufacturing cities. They have created at no cost to themselves—except for plant—franchises, which in a day fast approaching will be worth millions. They own their own electric lighting plants, telephone systems, water-works, and street railway, and if their courage is equal to their present opportunity, they will acquire and control the power transmission line now projected from Kakabeka Falls, a power which in the near future will give them a vast opportunity for industrial expansion under the freest conditions.

Many students of municipal politics while admiring the courage and sound moral tone of administration of these towns hesitate to put the principle into practice for fear of corrupt influences in the application of municipal ownership to their own place. They are impressed with the argument of those advocates of private corporation ownership who sincerely believe that a private water-works, railway, or electric light company, whose business is conducted on business lines is safer for the public than such works under the control of aldermen of doubtful integrity. But is this a complete view of the case, and does it touch the principle on which local self-government is founded?

It will be admitted that employees of private corporations are just as apt to be dishonest as those in the service of municipalities, and, as we know, have just as frequent opportunities of being unfaithful to those they serve. And all the loss caused by the dishonest or extravagant administration of private companies falls ultimately upon the citizens out of whose pockets the revenue is derived, whether privately or publicly owned. All loss through dishonesty comes out of the citizens in any case, whereas the gain from good economy is not shared by the citizens generally, but goes into the pockets of a few shareholders, under private ownership, and some of these shareholders are often not even residents of the city from which they draw their dividends. Under municipal ownership a city or town gets just the government it deserves, and it has its destiny in its own hands. If its people are in the main honest and enterprising, they will put good men in control; if they are careless or lacking in public spirit or honor, they will get their reward, and the more certainly and more directly they reap what they sow the better for their descendants. The abnegation of their privileges, and