

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN TORONTO.

A few days ago it seemed as though the citizens of Toronto would not select their next mayor on his merits, but that whoever was elected would secure his majority by the votes being so split up as to give no one candidate any marked preponderance. Suddenly the situation changed by the candidate, ex-Mayor Shaw, who would have polled a heavy vote given by the dominant political party, practically withdrawing from the contest.

The present Mayor, Mr. E. A. Macdonald, who went in last year on a flood tide of popularity, ventured again on the civic waters, with the result of his bark being left high and dry, driven ashore by a storm of popular disapproval. His fate is a warning to rash promisers. He gave pledges to the citizens that he would compel the Street Railway Company to find seats in cars for all passengers, so that "straps" would be abolished. On this issue he won, but the straps are still needed as much as ever. He promised also to secure cheaper gas, but this pledge also remains unfulfilled, as do several others. The public seem unwilling to understand, or incapable of realizing that a Mayor is not an autocrat with absolute powers, but an executive officer whose authority is quite limited, and whose powers are liable to be paralyzed by his colleagues in the council.

The choice of Toronto has fallen upon Mr. Oliver Howland, Q.C., ex-M.L.A., who is a son of the veteran, Sir William Howland, and brother of the late Mr. W. Howland, who, in his day, was Mayor of that city. Mr. Howland secured 12,306 votes, which gives him a majority of 4,230 over Alderman Spence, who was a strong candidate, but was weakened by injudicious political friends. Mr. Shaw secured only 990 votes, which shows that he was only nominally in the field. The voters were asked to give their verdict on the proposal for the city to buy out the local gas company and carry on the business as a civic enterprise. Out of 20,086 votes on this question, there was a majority of 7,110 in favour of a civic gas supply. We doubt whether this movement will go any further than this expression of opinion. The contest between gas and electricity is entering upon a stage which is fraught with very great possibilities of a revolution in regard to illumination. The gas industry is changing under the pressure of electrical competition, and is being directed into a course of heating, the demand for which will probably, to make up for the decreased supply for lighting. The time is rife with rumours, with expectations, and indications of change, in all of which the dominance of electricity as an illuminant and motive power are foreshadowed. Existing conditions suggest caution as desirable in making such a move as seems to be popular in Toronto. Mr. Oliver Howland has his spurs to win in the municipal field. He has capacity, energy, and ideas as to civic administra-

tion which will make him a very interesting Mayor. His private character is unsullied. To the extent of his power and influence the civic affairs of Toronto, in his mayoralty, will be conducted with honour, and the utmost regard to public interest.

THE COMING OF THE TUBE.

It has been one of the numerous complaints against industrial and social life in England, says the "Financial News," that we are leagues behind the times in the adaptation of electricity to locomotion, and the complaint cannot be gainsaid, and only partially excused. Electric trams disturb the even tenor of traffic in some of the provincial towns; in London we have not yet got one. The position up to date may be summed up as follows: The City and South London struggles with the wants of residents in a small section of London south of the Thames—a side of the metropolis wretchedly served with railways, even in comparison with London north of the Thames. Also connecting the Surrey and Middlesex sides is the little Waterloo and City line, which helps to bring the South-Western terminus within the pale of civilization. And wholly north of the Thames is the Central London, the quickly-famous Twopenny Tube, which brings the remote district of Shepherd's bush into luxurious communication with the City, and serves besides as an excellent, cheap, and easy method of getting to and fro within the centre of London if your direction be east and west and your latitude within hail of Oxford street and Holborn.

That represents the whole of London's electric railway communication at present in existence; but there are other lines authorized, and some of them in process of construction.

It may be said that the above list is not, for one city, meagre; but it must be remembered that the city in question is London and its near suburbs; and if you mark the above-mentioned lines upon a map of the metropolis, you will still find big districts untraversed by electric railways, or even projects therefor. But if the whole of the Bills for new electric railway schemes in London which will be deposited in Parliament at the end of this month come out as Acts next summer, we shall be in the way of a supply which will be approximately adequate. The inside of London at least will be fairly well served, and solitary lines will penetrate suburbanward east, south, south-west, west, north-west, north, north-east, and east, and some of them, such as the projected line to Walthamstow and that to Hendon, will go quite far afield. The advertisements foreshadow the prosecution of nine new railways and two extensions of sufficient importance to rank with quite new undertakings.