

THE EXPRESS
NORTH VANCOUVER, B. C.

C. E. SMITHRINGALE, G. H. MORDEN,
Manager. Business Mgr.

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NORTH VANCOUVER, JULY 31, 1908

GAS FRANCHISE

The application for a gas franchise for the city by the British Canadian Wood Pulp & Paper Co., information concerning which was first given the public by THE EXPRESS in last week's issue, has been received with considerable interest by the ratepayers. There are so many advantages and conveniences attached to an available supply of gas for household and manufacturing purposes, that there can be only one opinion as to the desirability of such facilities being procured by the city as early as possible, having due regard to all the points involved in the granting of so valuable a franchise.

The demonstration made at the testing plant of the company, in the presence of the mayor and council of the city, proves beyond all doubt the effectiveness of the system employed for the extraction of gas from wood, as well as the excellent quality of the gas produced. In the presence of the aldermen, one gallon of liquid extracted from a surprisingly small weight of wood by the Stanley process, was condensed to one quart and then converted into gas in sufficient quantity to run a ten horse power engine for ten minutes, less a few seconds. A jet of the gas was also lighted and exhibited powers of illumination equal to the best gas produced by the old time processes.

The proposition submitted in outline by the company, contemplates the erection of a pulp mill adjacent to the city and in close proximity to quantities of cedar or fir, from either of which the gas can be produced. It is estimated that the manufacture of twenty-five tons of pulp per day would produce sufficient gas to supply the domestic needs of a city of 5000 inhabitants. The establishment of this mill would necessitate the employment of from 100 to 200 men and would add a very desirable institution to the industries of the city, with the attendant benefits accruing therefrom.

Public thinking has taken some long strides of advancement of late years in the matter of the granting of valuable public franchises to private enterprises, and it is desirable, that this franchise, if granted, shall embody suitable clauses for safeguarding public interests. Every precaution should be taken to ensure the beginning of construction, the laying of pipes, and the supplying of gas within the shortest time which can be exacted in fairness to the company. These clauses should be fortified by means of a forfeiture clause.

The life of the franchise should be confined to a reasonable term of years. It is but right that the company which provides the city with these advantages should be given sufficient time and opportunity to establish itself upon a basis that will enable it to sustain itself successfully against any possible future competitors, but it is not in the public interests that a monop-

oly of valuable privileges should be given a company for an extended term of years.

The rate at which the gas is to be furnished consumers for various purposes should be explicitly stated. It is claimed that because of cheapness of production as compared with other methods, this company is in position to sell gas at a considerable reduction upon the rates prevailing in other cities. The fulfilment of this assertion will give North Vancouver manifest advantages, whether the gas be required for domestic or for manufacturing purposes, and the best rate possible should be procured.

Inasmuch as the British Canadian Wood Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd., is the first to proffer these benefits to the city, it is but fair that the franchise, if issued at all, should be issued to them, all things being equal. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the real value of the concessions sought, is not to be gauged by what North Vancouver is today, but by what she will become in future. This franchise, although of comparatively moderate value at present, would ultimately confer upon those who own it a business whose profit-producing capacity it is difficult to compute. The terms of the franchise should therefore be at once favorable to the city and fair to the company in all respects.

IN OPEN COUNCIL

The action of the mayor and council at last Monday's session, in directing that the report of the citizens' committee on the special audit be read in open council, is worthy of public commendation. The committee of the whole is a convenient institution, which is freely used by many boards of aldermen. The referring of matters of public business to the committee of the whole is a habit that grows unconsciously upon aldermen, with the result that there is a tendency to needlessly refer to the committee matters of public moment for which the ratepayers are seeking information, with the result that the discussion of the matter is entirely lost, and the public must content themselves with perhaps a motion formally made and passed without comment at a later session of open council, if indeed it ever succeeds in re-appearing. The action of the city council in reading and considering the citizens' report in open council, reveals a disposition to relegate the committee of the whole to its proper place and to openly deal with all questions of public import, wherever such open discussion will not prejudice the city's interests, or in any way prove detrimental to any party concerned. The ratepayers will doubtless appreciate the continuance of this policy upon the part of the city council.

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City of North Vancouver

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THOMAS SHEPHERD,
City Clerk.
City Hall, North Vancouver, B.C.
28th July, 1908.

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