

Conservation

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Instructive Town-planning Exhibition

Demonstration of Economic and
Sanitary Importance of Wise
Direction of Cities' Growth

Perhaps the most interesting, certainly the most educating, feature of the City Planning Conference held in Toronto last month was the Town Planning Exhibit.

Through the efforts of the Commission of Conservation there were gathered together exhibits from some two hundred cities and towns of Canada, Europe, the United States and Australia, representing every phase of the subject from town-planning proper to the disposal of town refuse.

By means of the exhibits the public were enabled to understand all that is meant by "town planning" and its bearing upon the life and health of the town dweller. Never was there a better demonstration that "town planning" means infinitely more than mere beautification.

That Canadian towns and cities are alive to the importance of all that appertains to their betterment and their mutual progress was quite evident. Among the more prominent features may be mentioned the plans for greater Calgary and greater Berlin, Ont. The plans of Toronto and Saskatoon also showed that a careful study had already been made by these two cities of an area far beyond their present limits.

As regards the question of harbour improvements the plans of Montreal, Halifax, Toronto and St. John, N.B. were the most advanced, fully setting forth what can be done in this phase of town planning where organized effort is supported by government aid.

It was quite apparent that the subject of suburban development upon lines of the garden city movement has taken hold of private, if not of municipal, corporations, for there were many examples of estate development equal to those of Great Britain or Germany. Evidently the real estate man realizes there is a more profitable way to lay out land than upon the "grid-iron" principle. That this is a fact was evidenced by the exhibits of the Canadian Northern railway and of the Borden Estate, near Ottawa.

In the matter of parks and

Eradication of Slums is World's Greatest Problem

Legislative Foundation Needed—Abolition of Poverty the Question
for the Twentieth Century

"One hundred years ago Macaulay said that the time would come when one-half of the population of the United States, after getting their breakfast in the morning, would not know where the next meal was coming from. That is a condition which will come if matters are left to themselves to proceed as they have proceeded at other times and in other ages, and in other countries. History will repeat itself unless something is done to prevent it, and I put it to you that the problem that is up to the intellect of this twentieth century is whether we have brains and capacity enough to free ourselves from the prejudices and the shibboleths with which our minds are encumbered, and grapple with these present problems so that society shall control its own destinies, and avoid the evils which have dogged the footsteps of progress in the past.

"You, perhaps, are not called on to deal directly with the question of economic policy, but you must necessarily study the economic condition under which your work is to be done. You can give us what we want on the technical, the local and the municipal side. You can give us the frame work into which the ideal conditions, when discovered, are to be fitted. As to the answer to the question which I have propounded, there is in my own mind no doubt that it is impossible to give any single answer to the question. No one theory explains the fact. It is a composite problem; it requires a composite answer. So far as the physical questions involved are concerned, it is beyond a doubt that until lately the growth of congested districts followed by the growth of slums and the habits of living, which have resulted by reason of

playgrounds, Canadian towns are following in the footsteps of the most advanced cities of the world, while with regard to such live questions as radial streets, rapid and cheap transportation, limitation of heights of buildings, and better houses for the masses, there was evidence that we as Canadians are not only thinking but doing something.—C. A. H.

people for generations living in undesirable circumstances, has been in the main due to the lack of transportation facilities which would enable the residential area to be extended. Other obvious reasons are the lack of systematic oversight and foresight, crowding, and the rapid growth of population for which no adequate provision has been made. We have now arrived at the period at which if any large or growing city has not a proper system of transportation, it has only itself to blame; the remedy lies at hand, and as to other difficulties, the experience which has now been acquired is sufficient, if properly applied, to eradicate most of the evils.

"We have invited you here to help us to begin the attack on broad, comprehensive principles, and the purpose that we have in view is to secure the basic legislation which will enable the whole question of Town Planning and Housing to be carried on in Canada in a scientific, systematic, and orderly fashion. What is the best legislative foundation for this purpose will be for your consideration and discussion and I have no doubt that the result will be of the greatest value.

"What I desire to say to you in closing is that the question you are engaged upon is the greatest material question in the world to-day. It is more important than flying machines or wireless telegraphy, battleships or armies. It has to do with the health and happiness of the average citizen, with the abolition of wretchedness and unhappiness. The solution of it will bring health and happiness to increasing thousands of our fellow men."—Hon. Clifford Sifton before the International Conference on City Planning in Toronto. (Extract).

Light burning of underbrush to remove forest litter had been practised in India, with the idea that it improves conditions for teak growing. Now, after lengthy investigation, the India forest officials say that the fires are harmful; that full fire protection must be extended everywhere, and that, to be really effective, this protection must be continuous.

Conservation of Ground Moisture

Rainfall during Growing Season not
Sufficient—Tillage to Prevent Loss
of Underground Supplies

Whence do crops draw their supply of moisture? Do they draw it mainly from the rains that fall during the rainy season, or do they draw it from the store of water in the soil beneath the surface which has accumulated from the April showers, the snows of winter and the rains of autumn? This is the vital point and on it hangs the whole question of tillage. If the supply is drawn from the summer rains, our tillage must be such that the soil will quickly absorb the rain and discharge the surplus supply; if it is drawn mainly from the spring, winter and autumn precipitation, our tillage must be varied accordingly. Much will depend on the season. If the season is wet, the current rains will supply much of the moisture required, but, if the growing season is dry, the supply must be drawn from the underground supplies that have stored up the previous rains and snow.

As the amount of water lost from the soil by evaporation and by the transpiration of the plant is far in excess of the rainfall during the growing period of any ordinary season, the plant must get much of its moisture from the soil by capillarity; that is, the water travels or is drawn upward in the soil from particle to particle as required by the plant. This can easily be demonstrated by placing a few plants in crocks and setting them down into the soil, but so placed that no moisture other than the rainfall will be received by the plant. The result will be that the plants will die from lack of moisture.

This brings up the question of how to till in order to have the moisture available when needed. Fall ploughing will do much towards holding winter and spring rains. By having the soil loosened, more water is retained. Sub-soiling is often resorted to as a means of so loosening the soil that it will hold more moisture. If this is done, care must be taken to only loosen the sub-soil and not bring it to the surface. Summer tillage prevents loss of moisture. If the soil is left compact and solid, the water comes to the surface and is lost by evaporation.

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