

transit, authorities get together and freely exchange experiences, theories, and criticism; until, out of the present chaos of ideas, will come the real fundamental laws, which now no one knows. In dealing with railroad matters, the International Railway Congress is accomplishing much in the exchange of ideas around the world; and there is urgent need of a similar transit congress, which would cause the thorough exchange of ideas about electric municipal traction, and make available the results for the benefit of town planning.

There is one transit investigation which ought to be studied by all town planners, and that is the monumental work of the Royal Commission on London Traffic. Owing to unfortunate disagreements and especially to the influence of capitalists, no really satisfactory results have come from the investigation. But the report is still a mine of valuable information, and contains the most important transit project from a town planning point of view which has yet been made. The improvements proposed for London by Messrs. Meik and Beer, the well-known English engineers, contains some of the most vital ideas yet brought out. The ideas in the proposed plan are so broad and so far reaching that very few people appear yet to have comprehended their significance.

The plan briefly speaking was this: London today is a vast overgrown city, without any real rapid transit across it in spite of the tubes, and with even less facilities for rapid surface transit by vehicles or electric cars. Meik and Beer proposed quartering the city with two wide main avenues, running east and west, and north and south, built by means of excess condemnation, so as to pay for themselves in the end. The main avenues were to be new wide arteries, adequate in every respect for a city the size of London, with transit provided by fast through trains, distributing passengers locally by means of surface cars. There were to be pipe galleries, of course, to render tearing up of streets unnecessary. Recognizing at the time the possibilities of the automobile and motor truck, and the need of providing for fast through vehicular traffic as well as passenger, the main avenues were designed without any grade crossings at intersecting streets. So that vehicles could run directly and rapidly across the city in four directions, without the interminable delays which are so vexatious to day in London, and so costly in time lost to the community, all without constant danger of collision.

Ever since Sir Christopher Wren made his proposals for replanning London after the great fire, there has been constant regret expressed that his plans were not carried out. But the proposals of Meik and Beer are far more important and fundamental than Wren's, and the principles they embody should be studied by every city which would perfect itself, no matter how small the size is today. London at the present time might be compared to a huge round jelly-fish, without any skeleton or backbone, with a network of small highways choked with throngs of vehicles; while all persons who wish to travel with any kind of speed are consigned to deep tube railways, buried even one hundred feet below the sunlight of the street, moving too fast even when reached. The main avenues would change all this, and provide backbones of traffic in four directions, being connected up with