

which has of late years caused so many deaths (41 in eleven months in Boston), says that its cost is but "a few cents" per 1,000 feet. This is the gas which is supplied to Toronto citizens.

The Water Works and Aqueduct Scheme.

Another pitfall for the innocent citizen is opened by the Aqueduct scheme. On the merits of the scheme itself we say nothing; but the attempt to force the city into an agreement to guarantee bonds or to help to float the venture was an outrageous piece of business. An Act should be passed prohibiting all bonuses and tax-exemptions, thus placing cities and citizens alike on an equality. In no case should privileges be granted to a private company which would interfere in any way with the full control by the city's officials of its water supply.

Municipal Insurance.

The much-talked-of question of municipal insurance is one that is deserving of serious consideration. The business at present is in the hands of a clever and experienced set of men, and there would be every reason for engaging the services of some of these men under a scheme of municipal insurance. Such a scheme, however, should have a much larger scope than the existing system. It should cover all insurable property, and premiums be replaced by a fire-rate. A rate equal to one-half the present premium rates would probably soon accumulate an immense surplus available for any emergency ever likely to arise; and a moderate increase in the police and fire-brigade staff, to be utilized for inspection and other duties connected with the department, would with reasonable regulations render frauds almost impossible. If the 1897 Council is to do useful work, this is one of the most important matters to be attended to.

The Hospital for Sick Children.

Another very important matter is that of the Hospital for Sick Children. If there is one case more than another in which the municipality should step in and—not aid, but—replace private charity by fully supporting a nominally charitable institution, it is the case of this Hospital. The gentleman who for many years has made it his special business to look after this charity, Mr. John Ross Robertson, deserves the thanks of every citizen for his efforts and sacrifices in its behalf. To call it his hobby, as some have done, is to sneer at the noblest efforts of the most philanthropic men. But it is time that the city placed the Hospital above the necessity of making appeals for financial support. A community which allows its waifs and strays to perish in its streets or depend for life upon the chance of meeting a charitable passer-by, is in a state of savagery.

Free Mail Service for Newspapers.

A matter which seriously affects cities as well as the country at large, is that of the free carriage in the mails of newspapers. At the late meeting of the Press Association, the Postmaster-General unequivocally expressed his opinion that a change must be made; and though there were signs among the majority of the Press men present that they hardly expected such a decided opinion, it seems to us that it would be only fair that newspapers should pay a rate sufficient to cover the cost of carriage. The present system no doubt encourages a large amount of imposition, in the shape of advertising sheets palmed off as newspapers; and a small postal rate would tend materially to reduce this fraud.