

CIVIC JEALOUSY

One of the drawbacks to civic progress in Canada is the mean and petty jealousy that some cities have for others whom they consider their rivals. A very glaring instance of this is seen in a recent paragraph in the "Toronto Telegram", under the heading of "G. T. R. to Toronto". The editor of the "Telegram" says:—

"Montreal was chosen as the headquarters of the old Grand Trunk Railway by the London managers of Canada's pioneer road. Wreck and ruin were brought to the Grand Trunk Railway with the help of blunders by the London managers of the system. One of the worst of these blunders was the establishment of the Grand Trunk head offices in the parish of Montreal, P.Q."

Of course, the writer of this article may have meant it as a jest, but the satire—as well as the mis-statement of fact—is likely to produce ill feeling between what should be sister cities. And it shows the smallmindedness of one man, who wrote such a nasty item.

The insinuation that the headquarters were merely in a "parish", and thus the reader would suppose, out in the country, is a very low piece of writing. And the deduction that this was the cause of the failure of the Grand Trunk, is equally misleading and untrue.

The reason for placing the headquarters of the new railway at Montreal was that that city was then, and is still, at the head of ocean navigation, and therefore it was the logical point, where rail and steamer meet.

Apart from political reasons, every through line of railway would naturally follow the bent of commerce, and have its terminals where the ocean vessels would meet it. No other place is reasonable at all, even if great advantages are offered in other ways.

The causes that led to the failure of the Grand Trunk are many and various. But to suggest that the one and only cause was that its headquarters were at Montreal, is a piece of arrant stupidity or knavery.

OTTAWA'S PLAYGROUNDS

The report of the "Winter Activities" of the Playgrounds of the City of Ottawa, issued by the Superintendent, Mr. Ernest F. Morgan, has some interesting suggestive items.

There were 11 skating rinks and 7 toboggan slides, which were in active use for 50 days, no stormy days and only 4 mild days preventing their use.

Ten carnivals were held, and in the latter part of the season music, provided by means of magnavoxes, increased the attendance. The conduct of the patrons was admirable, only two having to be expelled.

The total attendance was 233,886, and as the total expense, including new equipment and maintenance, was \$10,555.30, the cost per capita was about 4½ cents.

Evidently it was a very economical investment for the City of Ottawa, not only to provide healthy exercise for all, but to keep out of mischief many who would have made trouble, but for the occupation afforded them.

TEACHING CIVICS

The schools all over the Dominion have been closed for the holidays, and the pupils have dispersed, some to return when schools re-open, some to enter the universities, or business life.

They have been learning a great variety of lessons, some of which will be of actual value, and some of which are only useful for exercising the mind.

But it seems sad to think that none of the budding citizens have learned anything at all about the way to govern their own country.

Among the pupils are the future Mayors, Aldermen and Councillors of the various municipalities of Canada. But they leave school with no idea of what that most important part of any nation's life is—that is the government which affects the citizens most directly and intimately, the municipal government.

We boast of being a free country, in which the citizens govern themselves, and the boast is well founded. But would it not be wise to train our rising generation as to how they are governed, and how the government should be carried on?

In too many cases, the child is taught to fear the policeman, who is held up as a bogey, instead of being represented as the friend of every good child, and only the terror of the bad one.

Then, too, in the English schools particularly, the pupils are not trained to act as they may have to do, by being taught to speak in public. Our French-Canadian fellow citizens are not only natural speakers, but improve their natural talent by proper training in schools. How many of our English citizens can address a public meeting acceptably? And yet the children growing up are those who have to supply public men as their parents drop away.

Surely public education could be made more practical from the municipal point of view.

INTERNATIONAL ROADS CONGRESS TO MEET

A certain indication that after eight years of war and upheaval the world is beginning to return to a normal state is contained in the announcement that the International Road Congress, which ceased operations in 1914 because of the European conflict, is to resume its deliberations early next May at Seville, Spain. The program for what promises to be the greatest and most important conference on highway improvement ever held has just been received from the office of the general secretary in Paris.

Thousands of delegates representing national and state governments and good roads associations will participate in the Congress and exchange views and experiences for mutual benefit. English, French and Spanish, have been adopted as the official languages.

Canadian delegates will go to the meeting determined to bring the next Congress to Canada. The first Congress was held at Paris in 1908, the second at Brussels in 1910, and the third at London in 1913.