

# MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

## CLEANING THE STREETS OF TORONTO.

The city of Toronto has the distinction of being among the cleanest and healthiest municipalities on the continent. Its sewage service is not perfect; its water service might be improved upon, but the cleaning of its streets and lanes, the disposal of garbage and all street rubbish is performed in a thorough manner and at a small cost in proportion to the population. On this surface work alone New York annually spends between three and four million dollars. Toronto, with one-tenth of the population, but with only about 100 miles less extent of streets, has the actual work of cleaning and scavenging performed for \$104,000, while street watering costs \$20,000 more. A fairer comparison, however, is with Detroit, where, though it is a much better paved city than Toronto, the street cleaning costs about double the money.

In Toronto the work is done under the supervision of Mr. John Jones, Street Commissioner, and to his energy and ability is due in a large measure the economy of the work. The city is divided into two districts, and four sweepers are allotted to each district. Hand-sweepers are also employed on the principal streets, who are charged with keeping the asphalt streets in a clean condition.

Some idea of the magnitude of the work will be gained from the fact that last year 1,867 miles of streets were cleaned, and 45,921 loads, each of which averaged a cubic yard, were lifted and taken away. The sweepings are largely sought after as a fertilizer for lawns and gardens, but the greater portion of the refuse of the centre of the city, the district bounded by Bathurst street, Coilege and Carlton, Sherbourne and the bay, is taken to the water-front, where it is used as filling. This disposal of it will be made until a level is reached satisfactory to the City Engineer. The staff which is permanently engaged on the work is not large considering the results, but in cases of sudden emergencies it is augmented by temporary employes, who are now engaged through the Labor Bureau.

For scavenging, the city is divided into 30 districts. Every lane is overhauled at least once a week, and in the more thickly populated parts three times. The ashes are taken to one of the city dumps, as they make excellent filling material, and the offal is consumed. There are three lane inspectors and two foremen in this department, but, besides this, the carters are sent out in contingents of six, with one of the number in charge of the rest. Each cart bears a number, so that in case of inefficiency or any other misdemeanor the offender is easily discovered. So thoroughly, however, is the work performed

that last year the department had not 50 complaints in all.

The only branch of the department which remains for mention is the watering of the streets. This is divided between the street railway and the city, though the latter bears the whole cost. The railway company keeps three sprinklers, each of which holds 2,500 gallons of water, and for the work they receive 16¼ cents per mile of double track. Last year they covered 18,591 miles, and used over 37,000,000 gallons of water, the whole costing the city \$3,021. The city sprinklers proper are also three in number; two of them are of the capacity of 2,800 gallons, and the third of 2,500 gallons. For this work, too, the city is divided into subdivisions, and the number of sprinklings is determined by the class of pavement. The season for street watering begins generally on the 1st of April, and usually lasts until about the 1st of November.

## LEGAL DECISIONS AFFECTING MUNICIPALITIES.

### CHAUSEE VS. CITY OF MONTREAL.

—The action was for \$3,000 damages, brought by the plaintiff, who is the owner of a house on Amherst street, for damages caused to him by the city interfering with the flow of water from the higher levels, by raising the level on Napoleon street. The plea of the city was to the effect that it executed works of public utility, and that it had caused no damage to the plaintiff. The facts as they appeared in evidence were that the lot of land on which the plaintiff had built his house formed part of a larger extent of land, bounded by Duluth Ave., Amherst and Montana streets; that the level of this land had been lowered, since the opening of the latter streets, by the proprietors removing sand from the surface; that Napoleon street was traced on the plan of the city when the plaintiff, in February, 1893, commenced to build his house, and that he could not be ignorant that the land which was to serve as the site for Napoleon street would necessarily be raised, as in fact it was during the following autumn, this land being on the same level as that of the plaintiff. The court held that the plaintiff in building under these conditions assumed the risks of the particular situation of his property, and that it was incumbent on him to take immediately the necessary steps to protect it against the dangers to which the property owners on the higher lands exposed him. It was proved that the adjoining proprietors who were exposed to the same dangers as the plaintiff, placed drains in their yards connecting with the street drain in front, by which the surface water was easily carried off. The plaintiff should have taken the same

precautions. As his land fronted on Amherst street, he might easily have drained into the sewer on that street. The court came to the conclusion that there was no negligence or want of skill on the part of the city, and, under the circumstances, the defendant was not responsible for damages. The action was therefore dismissed.

### PELLETIER VS. CITY OF QUEBEC.—

Judgment has been rendered in the Superior Court against the City of Quebec, which teaches a lesson to city corporations that dabble in political demonstrations. The plaintiff in this case sues the defendants as tutor to his minor child, Joseph Pelletier, aged 13, and by his declaration alleges that in the month of June last his son was standing on Fabrique street, opposite the Central Fire Station, watching the procession given on the occasion of Hon. Mr. Marchand's victory, pass by; that, owing to the neglect of the firemen, who were setting off fireworks opposite the station, his son was struck by a flying rocket on the right cheek and eye, and that the eye had to be extracted, and that he is threatened with total blindness. He therefore claimed \$500 for damages and \$311.50 for medical attendance and loss of time. To this action the defendants pleaded in substance that the city of Quebec was not responsible inasmuch as the wounds inflicted on the plaintiff's son were not caused by rockets fired by any of its employees with the knowledge or sanction of the city, nor in the execution of any duty devolving on them as city employees. In rendering his judgment Judge Andrews remarked that it was sufficiently proved that the city hall and fire stations on the evening in question were illuminated, that there was a stage erected by the firemen of No. 1 station, where rockets were fired during the evening by members of the fire brigade, and narrowly escaped killing plaintiff's son; that the firing of said rockets was performed in an unskilful, dangerous and reckless manner by members of the brigade not possessed of the requisite experience in such matters, many of the rockets taking a horizontal direction and striking adjoining buildings; that the said illumination of the said fire stations and the said firing of rockets was part of a public demonstration in which the city fire brigade took a prominent part under and by the express orders of its chief, and in a manner impossible if the city authorities had not acquiesced, concurred and promoted it; and further, that up to the moment of his examination as a witness in this cause, the propriety of the act of the chief in so ordering said illumination and firing of rockets had never been questioned by such city authorities. Judgment was for the amount claimed with costs.

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