

Editorial

SAVERS OF TIME AND MONEY.

That technical journals save engineers much time and many journeys was shown in the remarks made two weeks ago before the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers at Montreal by R. F. Hayward, chief engineer and general manager of the Western Canada Power Company. Mr. Hayward had travelled nearly 3,000 miles to be able to discuss with other engineers the difficulties and interesting problems he had encountered in the construction of the magnificent power plant at Stave Falls, B.C.

In reply to a vote of thanks for his having travelled so far, Mr. Hayward stated that there were practically no technical libraries in the West, and that the engineers of the West frequently longed for advice from their fellow engineers, and that he personally had found that a 3,000-mile journey for the sake of five minutes' conversation with another engineer, had paid for itself over and over again.

If it were not for the medium which technical journals afford for interchange of ideas and knowledge by widely separated engineers, a very large proportion of the engineers would have to take a great many more such journeys than are now required.

TOWN PLANNING.

The term "town planning" has been interpreted in different ways. Some associate the phrase with the beautification of towns and cities by laying out picturesque boulevards, pretty gardens, fine parks, impressive civic centres, and so on. All these things add materially to the aesthetic appearance of a city, but there are other interpretations of town planning, namely, the economic considerations in providing for the future in the matter of health, homes, traffic, etc.

Germany, not long ago, was held up as a model nation in this and other respects. German examples of town planning were advertised abroad; volumes were written to show that Germany was much ahead of English-speaking countries in these matters. In many respects, Germany has led the way. She had formulated laws and organized the work of town planning before the other nations were cognizant of the importance of the movement. Incidentally, the awakening of the English-speaking nations was largely due to the work of a humble British author named Ebenezer Howard. It must, of course, be acknowledged that there was already a considerable measure of static enthusiasm for this movement, and doubtless Howard's effort helped to convert it into a dynamic force, which has done much in Britain to effect changes in the few years since the publishing of his book.

It is interesting to learn that the British conception of town planning has done more for the people than has been the result of work in Germany. The "Town Planning Review" recently referred to the following convincing facts:

There are, on an average, five persons per house in Manchester and eight per house in London, but in Berlin there are 77 per house, and in some houses there are 250

families in occupation. The number of inhabitants per square kilometer (or two-fifths of a square mile) is 32,000 in Berlin and 15,000 in London.

The number of deaths of persons between 15 and 25 years of age is 30 per cent. less in London than in Berlin. London has 50 per cent. less tuberculosis than Berlin. The manhood of Berlin cannot be endowed with a magnificent stamina when 33 per cent. of the men in that city were declared unfit for the army. The idea of town planning in Germany seems to be the provision of fine open spaces by the removal of some buildings and increasing the height of others. The effect of this has been, as in New York, the enhancement of the price of land. Landowners have speculated on the health, comfort and happiness of the people, to their own advantage. Thus we see that Germany does not, after all, afford us the inspiring example that was claimed for her.

The Commission of Conservation is contemplating the organization of a conference of town planning societies, etc., to discuss various subjects of importance. Mr. Thomas Adams has already shown that he belongs more to the practical school of town planning than to the aesthetical school; or, better still, he measures aestheticism and practical advantages of town planning by the dollar. We want art and health, beauty and comfort, pleasure and business, city lungs and city homes, fine gardens and ideal dwellings. If we have to declare for artistic buildings or for robust health, then we unhesitatingly stand for the latter. If we have to choose between parks and homes, the latter must always win, for the city, after all, should be established on homes.

There is a temptation to proclaim for a city that it possesses magnificent parks and boulevards and to be purblind to filthy slums, contaminated water and neglected thoroughfares. There are cities on this continent that boast of their natural beauties and are willing to spend millions on schemes which will enhance such conditions, while the real important questions of life and death to the community are inadequately considered. This is not the true meaning of town planning. It means the development of the city in a rational way, each requirement being satisfied, each section of the community receiving attention, each civic service organized and each department administered as far as the resources of the city permits, and without undue discrimination. If the proposed conference, under the direction of Mr. Thomas Adams, will help to bring the people to a better appreciation of the real function of town planning then the Commission of Conservation will have achieved something which will be of inestimable value to Canada, for scores of cities in this Dominion are in the early process of development, and errors which have been committed by older cities should now be avoided in a large measure, so that true economy can be attained in all branches of city life.

At the recent International Engineering Congress held at the Panama Exposition, Mr. Nelson P. Lewis, chief engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, New York City, made an "appeal to the engineer to take a broader part in the development of the city than merely making the surveys and carrying out the ideas of others."