

Editorial

MUNICIPAL ENTERPRISES.

One difficulty inherent to our democratic form of municipal government is the weakness in the preparation, development and execution of new enterprises. This is where a city managership should result in a great improvement. The aldermen who are elected to represent the ratepayers are often new to the office, have had no previous municipal experience and their preconception of what constitutes municipal administration often proves to be a stumbling block. But apart from this, it is well to consider how municipal enterprises are undertaken. How often have we read of candidates advocating some pet scheme which is going to do much to provide the ratepayers with an improvement which will result in great satisfaction? Street railways, water mains, sewers and pavements have been extended beyond the limits of prudence, but the anticipated results have not always been secured by the ratepayers. The benefits, if any, have been enjoyed by others.

It is true that developments on these lines have for the time been discontinued, but when more prosperous times return, it will only be necessary to sway the popular votes by eloquent speeches and golden visions to have the former unsatisfactory methods of promoting municipal enterprises repeated again despite the lessons learnt meanwhile.

It was hoped that the Canadian Civic Improvement League was launched for the purpose of promoting a better system, but after the great things which were said at its inauguration there does not appear to be very much progress made on the lines of its constitution. It may be said that the war absorbs the public attention and that our business is to concentrate on victory. If such is the argument, then the League was launched a little too soon. On the other hand, the argument may apply more forcibly after the declaration of peace, for then, after two or more years of violent political, commercial and social disturbance, the people will set to put their affairs into order once more and there will be no time to spare to think over "abstract and dry-as-dust" problems of municipal government. It will then be almost impossible to get the average ratepayer to think municipally and indeed few, outside a circle of municipal enthusiasts, will do so.

The present is Canada's opportunity to arrange her municipal house in order, whilst ordinary business is quiet and people have some leisure to ponder over problems.

WATER WASTE.

The recent continuous dry weather which has been quite general, at least through a great portion of the country, has caused those who have to do with the distribution of water in our various municipalities a great deal of concern.

The disposition to use water freely during such a season without due regard to waste is a common one. One can hardly walk along our streets without seeing evidences of undue waste of water which goes on, and doubtless if one could but see it, there is also a corresponding waste going on indoors, due to leaky faucets and other causes.

It is as true to-day as of old that the most eagerly sought commodities are those which cost the recipient nothing—waste is practiced upon other people's goods and properties in preference to our own. We seem to be built that way.

A constant dribble from a leaky faucet may easily become in the course of twenty-four hours more than the legitimate use of an entire family.

Metering would seem to be the only really equitable and economical method of dealing with this matter. Systems of inspection and prevention are used, but it is questionable if the results are lasting.

As to the detrimental effect of water meters on public health, much has been written, but it is doubtful if the slightest foundation for making such statements really exists, if the water itself is wholesome. Municipal water waste is no more justifiable than any other form of waste, and where it is persisted in something should be done to prevent it. Somehow or other people must have brought home to them the fact that they can reduce their expenses by giving more attention to water waste. A leak in the pipe is a leak in the pocket-book either directly or indirectly.

Is there any intelligent person who believes that a limit can be placed on the cost of absolutely unrestricted use of water? Double the supply, enlarge the mains and the situation will remain the same. Water famines will always be in evidence whether the per capita is a hundred or a thousand gallons.

THE TECHNICALLY TRAINED MAN IN BUSINESS.

During the past few years an ever-increasing number of technically trained engineers have been taken from purely professional work and placed in actual charge of railroads and industrial enterprises.

A few years ago the active business man looked with some suspicion upon the idea of a technically trained man as manager or holder of any kind of administrative position. Not so to-day. Modern business methods depend more than they ever did upon technical training. In the matter of mental equipment the technically trained man has, other things being equal, a distinct advantage over those who, for various reasons, have not had the privilege of a college training. He has, in a managerial capacity, opportunities to utilize his practical knowledge to better effect than the man without a scientific training. Heads of industrial enterprises are ever on the look-out for men who are not only endowed by a mental alertness which is often the direct result of a college training, but at the same time possess balance—a sense of proportion and who are safe, if not brilliant.

In the past, materials were bought on the guessing principle; the standard of the product was variable; the manufacturer felt sure he was selling at a profit. That has all passed and to-day the manufacturer, in order to be sure that he is making a profit, is following scientific methods. All this makes it necessary that he turn more than ever to the technical schools for his men if he is to meet competition successfully.

While the combination is not unknown, it is nevertheless rare to find a technically trained engineer who, in addition to his professional knowledge, possesses a work-