



WHERE SUMMER SUBURBAN COTTAGES WOULD BE A GREAT BOON.
From the Top of Mount Royal May Be Seen the Greatest Congestion of City-dwellers' Houses in Canada.

The Suburban Summer Shift

Getting Away from the Crowded City, a Modern Need

By W. STEWART

WHEN summer zephyrs flutter and die away in arid city streets, backyards and lanes, and the mercury climbs to ninety-odd in the shade, the townsman's fancy obstinately turns to thoughts of open country, shady bush, and breezy lake. He has had enough of the dusty thoroughfare, enough of the super-heated shop, warehouse, office, factory, and dreams of ambrosial evenings, shady walks, and refreshing sleeps. He is tempted to desert his post. He fancies well-kept gardens, where the lily, rose and violet blow in season, and pictures cultivated fields where the grain stands green or golden. The fragrant meadows and the apple blossoms call him, and the restful empty spaces and smokeless skies make forcible their summons. If not for himself, he desires for wife and children, ease, renewed health, and keener zest of life, to be had under torrid skies only by dwelling in the country and not in the town. Sending his household to cooler spots may mean separation from them in the dog days or hasty week-end trips to join them, and the time seems all too brief to hear about baby's cutting a new tooth, or Andy's running through his shoes, or Edith's equipment of new dresses. Week-end trips are too fleeting. More time is needed to lead your little son's wobbly steps, teach baby to talk, or train the older children to play. To men who feel these shortcomings of life there is a better way than by helping summer resorts to make money. This way is the suburban home.

A solution of this kind is becoming all the more needful, for the way the cost of living rises makes the outlook for pleasant holidays more dim for the city man who is not one of those who are engrossed in the business of making the cost of living rise. To send a family to summer hotels or boarding houses takes so much, mine host and mine hostess shove up their rates so high, evidently under the delusion that a city man's purse is stuffed with twenty-five-dollar bills, that you may be forced by your pocket to swear off supporting them. But so helpful are summer rests in the country, so insistently does medical science tell us of their virtue, a person feels somewhat defrauded of his rights if bereft of their enjoyment.

HOW to get room for the greatest number of people to shift their homes from the town for spring, summer, and early autumn, this is the burden of my article. It is best done by the development of widely-scattered suburbs, and by joining these suburbs with the great centre of activity by frequent suburban railway services and cheap commutation tickets. Trains leaving every few minutes and fares little above street railway fares, cottages and bungalows at low rentals; these are now a necessity for every large town. It is surprising that this accompaniment to modern civilization is not more general in this country. Most of our larger cities depend upon electric radial lines for their suburban service, but while these railways play a vital part in the development of the supporting land, people who settle along these lines do not go far from the city if they draw their livelihood from it. Transit by these electric roads is too slow to permit families whose pillars are sustained by town vocations moving to suburbs fifteen or twenty miles out and coming and going conveniently from and to their work. What serves these

persons best is a fast steam railway service. It whirls them to their destination at the rate of thirty miles or more an hour, so that a passenger can travel fifteen miles about as quickly as he can travel three miles by an electric car. A special suburban service has also to be put on to handle suburban travel.

GOOD speed in the forming of the summer residence habit among townspeople depends upon the sympathy and aid of the railway companies. Railway men are business men. To get them to start a sufficient suburban passenger service they must be convinced that it will pay. They must also have terminal room to handle the increased



A Bungalow Like This an Hour's Run From a Big City Means a Physical and Mental Revolution to a Family.

traffic. The long-distance travel comes first. In the summer also their passenger departments are busiest. They take care of so many pleasure excursions, such heavy tourist and resort travel. So to gain your end you will have to get up a league of prospective summer suburbanites, pledge a minimum amount in fares, and lay your case before the powers in control of the railways. Skilled treating with these gentlemen ought to make them see matters in your way.

The suburban summer home has obvious benefits. It allows many more families to taste the sweets of country life than could do so under other conditions. Children get rid of disease germs bred in the crowded city, germs that may be costly and laden with grief later on, if not cut down at the beginning. Facilities for play are also vastly extended. Older people get a chance to rest and escape for a time the crash and grind of the city. Tired men are refreshed and go to work with keener nerves and clearer minds. Breathing fresh, cool air instead of hot, dusty air twelve or fourteen hours out of the twenty-four sometimes works miracles. To pick wild berries from vine and shrub, to gather flowers from the vale, to sip tea on the verandah, and watch the robin rob the cherry tree, or the rarer wild canary chant to his heart's con-

tent, while the trees rustle in the breeze, all these make you lean back restfully and say to yourself: "Life is really worth living after all. Pass the cream, please." It is such a change from the bustling, rattling, stifling city.

"Will it cut the cost of living?" This I hear from the practical, hard-pressed man. Well, it may if properly managed, but in places that I know it is in vogue it does not. But he may rent his city house furnished and come out the gainer in that fashion. Suburbs also have to be in style as well as towns, and prices have a bent to ascend wherever one goes. One may have to cart food and even fuel from town. But here is the reward: healthy, happy families, robust children, saved doctor's bills, force gained for making money.

FOR suburbs Montreal stands first, and almost, if not alone, among Canadian cities. With these are not classed the shack-dwellers of her outskirts. Fifty thousand people, a tenth of her population, migrate like the waterfowl in warm weather, clustering on the water's edge. Thus they live from May till October. Ten or twelve thousand suburban passengers are hauled by the railways every day on cheap commutation tickets from six score little stations. There are a thousand little summer colonies. The colonists pay in fares little more than they do for street car fares in many cases the rest of the year. The bulk of the monthly fares run from two and a half to five dollars. The greater part of this shifting population lives from five to fifteen miles from town. Some few live sixty or seventy miles out and pay twenty dollars for fifty-five trips. These summer colonies are seated along the St. Lawrence River, Lake of the Two Mountains, and Back River. On the water dozens of regattas are run off every summer, and boating, swimming, fishing, are common recreations. All sorts of houses are seen: huts, cottages, bungalows, pretentious summer residences. Some of the larger and older of these estival stations have attracted a considerable dependent population and have grown into prosperous small towns.

Whether from habitual love of ease or a just appreciation of Nature's handiwork, the founders of these summer colonies have allowed much of their natural beauty to stay. The houses are mostly coated with sanitary whitewash or with white lead, gleam brilliantly in the sun, and look cool and cosy. Their whiteness is set off by the refreshing greenness of the grass and trees. Many are sheltered and protected by ancient tall beeches, maples, elms. Waving in the moist breezes of the St. Lawrence Valley that blow from the upper lakes, down the Ottawa or up from the gulf, these trees seem to have a brighter, fresher foliage than trees that wave anywhere else except on the seashore. The beauty of these little homes captivates their occupants, and people long remember train rides past these enchanting spots.

But the money lust is sending up rents and breaking up and driving these happy colonies farther away from the heart of the city each year. Land values have risen high in a flood of speculation. Rents have doubled in the past three years. Bungalows that brought a hundred or two hundred dollars for the season now bring two and four hundred dollars. Land is being broken up into townsites at a rapid rate.

The chief reason for the success of this Montreal suburban life has been the plentiful supply of houses for renting. The dwellings were first built by French-Canadians who like to herd in hamlets and villages. Frugal, thrifty Jean Baptiste quickly seized the chance to let his little home to the city man and live in the woodshed or outhouse. He also put up more habitations for the next season's migration from town. The rent would come in handy. He would not have to work so hard, or he could hoard it, and have it to carry him through the winter if his crop failed, as Quebec crops have been often prone to do. But the advance in the value of land has made land-owners around Montreal a wealthy class and independent of crops or rent. They can sell their farms to speculators at two or three thousand dollars an arpent—we have French acres in Quebec—and retire to the city. So you often see once pitied farmers who were at one time poor and saving, slipping around town in motor-cars and showing townspeople how to get rid of money fast. It is a fact that enough subdivisions have been put on the market to furnish sites for New York and Chicago in one, but still the buying goes on. The newspaper readers are being told in news paragraphs or glowing advertisements every day of some new sale and of some fresh townsite with a novel name.

A worthy problem of the times, though I do not see it mentioned in the minutes of our busy leagues, to

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