

## SHALL WE JUNK OUR TOWNS?

A short time back a very interesting letter was sent to our American contemporary, "The Survey," under the above title. We don't know of any towns in Canada that have suffered in the same way or to the same extent as the one suggested in the letter, but if there are any such we would be keenly interested to know, because of the effect on local economic conditions. Perhaps some of our readers may enlighten us on the subject.

The letter reads as follows:—

To the Editor: Our town possesses two or three industries well adapted to times of peace, but the demand for their product is now falling off, and the employees are moving away to get employment in places that are filling up with war industries.

Our town has built up good homes for its people, its drainage and water system has been made modern and adequate, it has a good hospital and nursing system, well-built churches and school buildings, and recreation centres. The town, in fact, is a well-organized plant to give suitable living facilities in connection with its industries.

In most communities the plant that furnishes living facilities is much larger than the factory itself, it takes longer to construct and it costs much more to junk it and start anew.

The question that interests some of us is the coming policy of our country with regard to such plants in the face of the war. Apparently we must more and more change our industries into parts of one main industry of supplying the war. In order to do this some of our workmen must be transferred from one place to another, as, for instance, in the case of shipbuilding, where the site is largely determined by suitable access to tide-water. In that case new towns must be built and organized, as is already being done.

With many other industries, however, there will be a choice to make. Shall we change over the industries of old towns for war work and keep the living plant substantially intact, or shall we add new factories and new housing at points where war work is already started and junk our old towns with all that we have been building up in the last years?

This seems wasteful in more ways than one. Is the question to be worked out on its merits, or are we merely drifting?

## A PROBLEM IN POLICE PSYCHOLOGY.

A psychological problem worth investigating is the effect of a uniformed policeman attending church in an unofficial capacity. On a certain morning the presence of a constable in a South London Church produced many an attack of nerves. His attitude was wholly devout. He sat in the back of the church, where he could be seen by few, but in less than five minutes the news that he was there had been passed from pew to pew, and everyone began to fidget. What did he want? Who was he after? Somehow it never occurred to anyone that he was a seeker after spiritual light. They imagined that he had come to arrest somebody, and they were curious to see who it could be. Even after the service was over, and the policeman had gone home without anybody a prisoner, it was interesting to watch the people. They separated into little groups, and each little group eyed some other little group suspiciously and whispered mysteriously.—London Daily Chronicle.

## RAISING THE PRICE OF THE JOURNAL.

Though the cost of the Canadian Municipal Journal has kept increasing each year since the war commenced we have up to now kept the subscription rate at the original one dollar per year, but are now compelled to raise the rate to Two dollars on all new and renewed subscriptions.

We feel sure that the many friends of the Journal will appreciate the position, brought about by war conditions, and will not only keep up their subscriptions, but will help on the great work of raising the standard of municipal Canada by inducing others to subscribe.

## MUNICIPAL THEATRES.



MR. HARCOURT FARMER  
(in costume).

Some time back Mr. Harcourt Farmer wrote an article for this Journal on "The Pageant and Its Municipal Value," which was well received. Since that article appeared, Mr. Farmer has done excellent pioneer work in urging a Canadian theatre, preferably municipal. On first thoughts it would seem out of place for such a propaganda at this time when Canada is in the midst of war, but when it is taken into consideration that Mr. Farmer's idea is to have presented to the Canadian people the best dramas at very low prices, so as to take their minds from the present low

standards of vaudeville and cheap melodrama—the only entertainment outside the movies, which they can get at even reasonable prices—the propaganda becomes meritorious and deserves every encouragement. As an illustration of Mr. Farmer's work, the following is worth recording. He recently formed a society of men and women, interested in the betterment of the drama, to stage only the best plays. Failing to secure a theatre, he rented a local hall and will shortly present Ibsen's greatest play, "Ghosts," which after being condemned for many years as immoral, has now been acclaimed as the greatest moral play of the day in Great Britain, where it is now running to packed houses. The prices will be very low—25c and 50c—the object of the society being, not to make money, but to help bring home to the people of this country the educational value of the true drama. Mr. Farmer believes that such a play could in the smaller places in Canada be given at twenty-five cents and under, if the commercial spirit was eliminated, and that can only be done in a municipal theatre, which, of course, would be run just to pay expenses, although in Germany, where every municipality has its municipal or state theatre in which the best operas and plays only are presented for very low prices, the theatre actually shows a profit, so well is it patronized. This was before the war. To-day the actors and singers, or those of them who are left, are wearing the grey garb of German militarism, and one wonders how a people who came under the influence of the best delineators of humanity, such as Shakespeare, would even be forced to such deeds of abomination as have been proved against the whole German army. But such is the domination of the Prussian military caste, that even the mildest of men are turned into beasts at its dictation. But bad as Germany and the Germans are, and they are bad enough in all conscience, we can even take a lesson from them when it comes to running municipal theatres.

## FOOD VIOLATION A COSTLY BUSINESS.

An Italian woman, a restaurant keeper, was recently in Toronto fined \$100 and costs for giving two men 32 slices of bread in violation of the Food Controller's regulations.

## A PLEBISCITE ON HALIFAX'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

The City of Halifax is to have a plebiscite on the form of government the citizens wish to have. The plebiscite asked for was, the present system of Board of Control to be abolished or not, but the bill that has passed the legislature calls for three questions to be submitted to the people—abolition of the board; government by commission, or the restoration of the former system of mayor and aldermen. The plebiscite is to take place in October.