

Streets in Peterborough.

During the last three years there has been expended upon the streets of Peterborough the enormous sum of nearly \$40,000,—to be exact,—\$37,794.49. The money was expended as follows:

In the year 1896, \$14,667.73.

In the year 1897, \$14,517.43.

In the year 1898, up to November first, \$8,609.29.

Let any one go round about the town and mark well her streets, and what does he see to represent this comparatively vast expenditure? He will chiefly see an abundance of mud and rough uneven streets that would be a discredit to a country municipality. Can any person making such an inspection, by the most vivid sketch of imagination, honestly arrive at the conclusion that we have received anything coming within cannon-shot of value for the expenditure mentioned? When the streets are not in a condition of mud and rut they are plowed by sewer operations that are begun at a time when the work should have been finished, and have afforded time to put the streets in useable shape. Now the sewer trenches will be roughly covered over and the streets alongside left littered with stone. The frost will come and we will have streets as impassable for sleigh with safety and convenience, as an unopened sideline in Burleigh. The money has been expended on make-shift, slop work, with very little other permanent results than bad road-beds and rickety sidewalks. Nothing in the way of permanent work has been accomplished except the pavement laid down this summer.

It is difficult to see what value we have had for nearly \$40,000,—it will probably amount to that sum before the year is out—spent during the last three years. If we go back for the past ten years we shall have a total of something like \$150,000 spent on our streets, with nothing except some bridges which are not at all above suspicion, to show for it. We have, it is true, given employment to labor, but so far as permanent results are concerned, it would have been as well to have paid the money outright to working men without putting them to the toil of earning it in work for which there is so little to show. Would any firm or individual with haziest possession of business common sense, have expended such an amount with such results? The strongest business in Peterborough carried on on the same slipshod principles as has obtained in the administration of our streets, would have the sheriff putting up its shutters in six months.

What we want is some systematic attempt at making permanent streets, some plan by which we shall get something like value for our money. What we do we should do well. If we only build a mile of streets in a year we should do it well and it will stay done. There are roads in England in use to-day that were built at the time of Julius Caesar. They are

there because they were made right. Road-making has been reduced to a science, and to have good roads that will last they must be made right. We can't expect good results from the statute labor methods of half a century ago. If we spend money liberally on our streets we should insist on getting good value for it. If we are to give it away let the taxpayer know it, but don't let us throw it away any longer on expensive street work that has to be done over the next year at great additional expense.

We must have an end to the waste of money on our streets. We must have an end to the perpetual ripping up of our streets, that makes even passable thoroughfares a constant source of annoyance and obstruction to traffic. With half a dozen corporations digging holes in our streets at intervals, we have, with one and another, heaps of loose earth and yawning cavities in all the year round. The council must meet the emergency. It must adopt some system of operation that will lead to work being done when it is finished. Paying for a street improvement once is enough. We don't want work done on streets that will cost nearly as much next year for doing over, as a good permanent job would cost.

The Council will find that the present system has the universal condemnation of our citizens who are tired of paying taxes to be sunk in eternally muddy and unsatisfactory streets, and who demand that there be placed a limit to the random and reckless use of our streets by every corporation or individual who chooses to fill them with holes at their own sweet will. A council that is strong enough to take a bold stand on the street improvement question, and a mayor who is big enough to institute a big, broad policy, having first regard to the interest of the people, and secondly and incidentally, to the interests of the corporations, or private individuals, will both have the people at their backs and good, honest enduring streets under their feet.—*Peterborough Examiner.*

Street Sweepings.

There is, fortunately, a growing sentiment in favor of turning to commercial account all the garbage and refuse of towns and cities. Street sweepings and scrapings are in some cases applied to the land as a fertilizer; in others they are used for filling in low-lying sections; in still others no particular use is attached to them, and they are disposed of in the most convenient manner possible.

As a land fertilizer, street sweepings vary in value from nothing to something approaching good stable manure. That of least worth is taken from macadam roads, while the richest is obtained from the asphalted or stone-paved streets of crowded cities. Outside of its value as a manure, street cleanings of any description frequently have a good mechanical effect on certain soils; furnishing for ex-

ample, the necessary material to render clay more workable, and more suitable to the growth of vegetation.

What the value of street sweepings is, therefore, varies according to its quality, (dependent largely upon the class of pavement from which it is obtained) and the condition of the land to which it is applied. The price most commonly received by cities is merely enough to cover the cost of haulage and ten or fifteen cents per ton additional.

A Good Roads Parliament.

Among the numerous conventions which every autumn brings about, was the Good Roads Parliament of last month, held in Omaha, Neb. The parliament was largely attended by representative public men from all over the States, being presided over by the Hon. Martin Dodge, United States Director of Road Inquiry, Washington, D. C. The resolutions adopted by the Parliament approved of the good work of the United States Department of Agriculture in furnishing information relative to good roads. It was further recommended:

That each state agricultural college furnish a course on road construction.

That state legislation be asked to appropriate funds to aid counties in building samples of good roads.

That directors of farmers' institutes take up the subject of good roads as part of their work, and that the United States Department of Agriculture furnish lectures on good road building.

That able-bodied men in prisons be kept at work on road material, and not be allowed to come in contact with honest laborers.

That construction of good roads by country districts be encouraged.

That all states create a non-partisan highway commission, to be separate from all other boards, which shall have supervision of all public road affairs.

It may be observed that, in respect to educational measures, this province is following closely upon the lines indicated by the United States Good Roads Parliament.

The Ontario Department of Agriculture has appointed an Instructor in Roadmaking, who lectures largely, in addition to collecting and distributing information respecting good roads and their construction. Farmers' institutes, too, have taken up the matter, and the subject is thus one which is being widely discussed, the aim being to encourage the construction of better roads by country districts. All this is in harmony with the recommendations of the Omaha Good Roads Parliament.

On the other hand this province has believed it wise to abstain from "state aid" or other provincial interference; nor has the employment of convicts in the crushing of road metal been undertaken here, as recommended by the Parliament.